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EDITORIAL: THREE UPGRADES

Three significant upgrades have been made in the editorial and publishing processes at *AUSS* in the past few months. The most visible improvement you hold in your hands. New technology that transfers the print image directly from computer disk to printing press makes possible much higher resolution and clarity of type faces. To see the full significance of this advance, it is necessary to briefly introduce a bit of *AUSS* history.

The first ten volumes of *AUSS* (1963-1972) had both typography and printing by E. J. Brill, Leiden, Netherlands. Dr. Leona Running, who has been on the editorial staff since the beginning, recalls her sense of risk when Dr. Siegfried Horn mailed the only typewritten copy of the journal from Michigan to the Netherlands, without even a photocopy for backup. Providentially, none of those first ten issues were ever lost en route.

The next eight volumes (1973-1980) were printed by the University Printers, Berrien Springs, Michigan. As the University Printers became the Andrews University Press (editorial offices only; no longer printing), *AUSS* was again printed off-campus. The next eleven volumes (1981-1991) carried the note: Composition by Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, Indiana; Printing by Thomson-Shore, Inc., Dexter, Michigan. Thomson-Shore continued to be the printer for three more years. Since the fall of 1994, the lithographer has been Patterson Printing, Benton Harbor, Michigan.

A change of font throughout the fall issue of 1991 is evidence of the transition to in-house composition, using WordPerfect—the leading desktop publishing software at the time. From then through the spring of 2008, typesetting and page layout for *AUSS* were done on WordPerfect. Pages were transferred from digital file to paper and delivered “camera ready” to Patterson Printing, where they were transferred to film and then from film to the metal plate used in the offset press. In the sequence of printing, photography, plate making, and then printing again, each step involved microscopic erosion of the image, inevitably degrading the clarity of the finished product.

Some years ago, Patterson Printing acquired the technology to transfer images directly from digital file to printing plate without the intervening steps that degrade the resolution of the image. In the summer of 2008, *AUSS* upgraded our publishing to Adobe InDesign. Now we can transmit the entire issue to the printer electronically. Most of the Autumn 2008 issue, except the table of contents, used the new technology. This issue, Spring 2009, is the first to be completely composed on the new software.

A second significant upgrade is new software for our circulation records, billing, and mailing. Since the early 1990s, circulation records have been kept on a database developed by graduate students on the old Microsoft Access platform. It had been periodically modified and updated, but still retained some idiosyncratic limitations which the circulation manager had to monitor and sometimes reset manually to prevent errors in billing and/or mailing. Thanks to circulation managers with gifts for paying high attention to details,

the old database has served us for almost 20 years. Before the mailing of the Autumn 2008 issue, Karen Abrahamson, Managing Editor, and Jessica Wahlen, Circulation Manager, with additional data entry from Linda Wooning-Voerman, essentially completed the transition to a commercial software, QuickBooks, which should be more efficient, dependable, and maintenance free.

Both these improvements have been contemplated for several years, but are now coming to fruition largely because the *AUSS* Board, in April 2007, created a new 32-hour/week position of Managing Editor for Karen Abrahamson, who accepted the challenge of leading out in the above innovations.

A third upgrade results from a generous offer by the General Conference Department of Archives and Statistics, in Silver Spring, Maryland. The full text of *AUSS* from 1963 to 2005 is now available in fully searchable form (DjVu) on the web site <http://www.adventistarchives.org/documents.asp?CategoryId=174&SortBy=0&ShowDateOrder=True>.

I thank the editorial staff for their persevering work to bring about these improvements, and our subscribers and readers for their patience during this transition period. JM

**INVESTIGATING THE PRESUPPOSITIONAL REALM OF
BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY,
PART I: DOOYEWEERD ON REASON**

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*Introducing the Article Series*¹

It has long been recognized that the field of biblical theology has an enormous plurality of competing and often mutually exclusive methodologies (e.g., literary, form, canon, structuralist, new, reader-response, sociopolitical, and depth-psychological criticisms),² resulting in many different theologies.³ Together with the often-lacking awareness of the foundation of one's own methodological approach, this situation has complicated and politicized many dialogues. As a result, biblical theology, with its great methodological discord is, as such, becoming increasingly disreputable. Biblical theologians who take this diffuse methodological situation seriously and invest in theoretical thinking can be divided into two trends.

Adherents of the first trend seem to believe that the potential for developing completely new methodologies is exhausted. Here one either (a) discusses which methodologies should be ruled out or (b) accepts the intentionalities of the different methodologies as justified but limited aspects of biblical hermeneutics. As biblical hermeneutics is concerned with examining the relationship between the biblical text and its reader, it basically comprises

¹I want to thank especially Danielle Koning for helping me to polish my English and Sven Fockner who took the time to proofread my article.

²See Steven McKenzie and Stephen Haynes, eds., *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999); John Barton, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Manfred Oeming, *Biblische hermeneutik: Eine Einführung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998).

³Representative for the discipline of biblical theology, Rainer Albertz describes the present situation in OT theology as follows:

“Auffällig ist die verwirrende Vielfalt der über 20 Theologien, die seit 1933 erschienen sind. Mag man dies noch als Ausdruck der Lebendigkeit der Disziplin werten, so muß doch nachdenklich stimmen, daß auch 60 Jahre, nachdem der erste Band der epochemachenden Theologie von Walther Eichrodt publiziert wurde, immer noch kein Konsens darüber erreicht werden konnte, wie die Aufgabe, der Aufbau und die Methode einer Theologie des Alte Testaments zu bestimmen sind. Im Gegenteil, die Divergenz der Ansätze hat sich in jüngster Zeit eher noch erhöht.

“Hinzu kommt eine verblüffende Gesprächsunfähigkeit zwischen den verschiedenen Entwürfen. Kaum ein Verfasser einer neuen Theologie geht auf die vorangehenden ein, versucht, sie zu diskutieren, ihre Schwächen aufzudecken und zu einer nachweisbar besseren Lösung zu gelangen” (“Religionsgeschichte Israels statt Theologie des Alten Testaments!” in *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie* 10 [1995], 6).

the effective aspect of the author, the linguistic corpus, and the reader in the process of understanding. For biblical scholars who accept the intentionalities of different methodologies as justified, it is the different unbalanced emphases on hermeneutical aspects that underlie the methodological differences. This unbalanced treatment of hermeneutical aspects causes author-, text-, and reader-oriented methodologies.⁴ Since the hermeneutical process of reading requires all three of these foci for a proper understanding, multiple methodologies are accepted as legitimate if their limited vantage point is recognized.⁵ Since the intentionalities of the different methodologies are understood to represent the different possible, complementary, and necessary hermeneutical perspectives, methodological plurality is considered to be positive. This positive attitude, however, does not come without emphasizing the inherent limitations of the individual methodologies and, therefore, their exclusivist claims are also critiqued.⁶ Hence, attempts are made to order them according to an appropriate procedural sequence.⁷

⁴Literary criticism, sociohistorical exegeses, historical psychology, and new archaeology are considered author-oriented approaches. Structuralism, new literary criticism, canonical criticism, and discourse analysis represent text-oriented approaches. Reader-response criticism, depth-psychological exegesis, liberation-theology exegesis, and feminist exegesis are considered reader-oriented.

⁵Eep Talstra does not agree “that adopting a new method implies that an earlier method has become superfluous” and thus states that “there is no need to present them in historical order” (“From The ‘Eclipse’ to the ‘Art’ of Biblical Narrative: Reflections on Methods of Biblical Exegesis,” in *Perspectives in the Study of the Old Testament and Early Judaism: A Symposium in Honour of Adam S. van der Woude on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*, ed. F. G. Martinez and E. Noort [Leiden: Brill, 2002], 5). The order that is suggested by Talstra is thus of a procedural rather than a historical nature. To him, the methodological plurality is rooted in the plurality of the reading process. Consequently, methodological pluralism does not need to be overcome, but only critically organized.

⁶Like Talstra and Manfred Oeming, Barton has worked on the allocation of the many methodologies within the hermeneutical process of reading texts and (as a result) argues for the limitations of each method. However, he does not develop an order of methodologies. Similar to Barton, but with much more clarity, Oeming, 175, stresses the need of methodological plurality by quoting Merklein, “Die neueren Zugänge zur Bibel und die herkömmliche historische-kritische Exegese sind nicht als Alternative zu verstehen. Es handelt sich um unterschiedliche Fragestellungen, die sich in methodischer und hermeneutischer Hinsicht gegenseitig ergänzen. Wie die Verzahnung zu erfolgen hat, ist noch nicht abschließend geklärt.” Oeming predictably concludes: “Keine Methode kann mit Gründen exclusive monopolansprüche anmelden.”

⁷Epp Talstra suggests that, after having allocated the different methods with their aspects in the reading process, the theologian needs to start with the analysis of the text. Here the analysis of the text’s linguistic system is prior to the analysis of the text’s rhetorical composition. The specific methods developed for linguistic and rhetorical criticism find their application in this first step (text-orientation). Second, the analysis

The second trend is represented by those biblical theologians who do not consider the different methods to be complementary. Adherents of this trend, in their dissatisfaction with existing methodologies, see the need and possibility for further methodological development.⁸ The plurality of methodologies is often not only problematic due to methodological incompatibility, but also because many methodologies are founded on a metaphysic that is foreign to the biblical testimony.⁹ The latter obstructs a satisfactory understanding of the biblical text. Some scholars are therefore motivated to dispose of the Greek-Occidental metaphysic that forms the presuppositional character of most theological methodologies.¹⁰ However, although the deconstruction of problematic metaphysical presuppositions is often made from a philosophical

of the author's intention, i.e., the background to the text's production and history, follows (author-orientation). Here the different historical-critical methodologies that focus on the author's intention are applied in order to reconstruct the text and its textual tradition. The third step is focused on the reader and his position in being confronted by the text (reader-orientation). Here reader-response criticism and poststructuralist methodologies can be applied in order to help the single reader or religious community to become part of the long hermeneutical tradition of participating in the biblical testimony ("Texts and Their Readers: On Reading the Old Testament in Context of Theology," in *The Rediscovery of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Janet Kyk et al. (Maastricht: Shaker, 1999), 101-120; idem, "From the 'Eclipse' to the 'Art' of Biblical Narrative," 1-14; idem, *Oude en Nieuwe Lezers: Een inleiding in de methoden van uitleg van het Oude Testament* (Kampen: Uitgeverij Kok, 2002), 81-83, 97-120.

The practice of ordering methods in terms of procedure can also be found in Oeming's work. However, he disagrees with the procedural order of Talstra and starts with author-oriented methodologies (Oeming, 175-184).

⁸A variety of thinkers could be mentioned here. After critically surveying the methodological scenery, Gerhard Hasel concludes "that a basically new approach must be worked out" (*Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991], 194). The dissatisfaction about the methodological situation led Christof Hardmeier to develop a text-pragmatic study of literature (*Erzähldiskurs und Redepragmatik im Alten Testament: unterwegs zu einer performativen Theologie der Bibel* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005]). Contrary to Hardmeier, Rainer Albertz distances himself from methods that focus on the establishing of an OT theology by arguing for a history-of-religions approach (*A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999]).

⁹E.g., the "loss of the author" within structuralistic methods could be mentioned.

¹⁰A good example is Christof Hardmeier, who tries to dissociate from the classical idea of "theology" as the designation of doctrinal display of the Christian credence. In contrast to "theology," he develops the idea of "theo-logy," in order to focus on the biblical text as "speaking about and speaking of God" ("Systematische Elemente der Theo-logie in der Hebräischen Bibel: Das Loben Gottes—ein Kristallisationsmoment biblischer Theo-logie," in *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie* 10 (1995) in *Erzähldiskurs und Redepragmatik im Alten Testament. Unterwegs zu einer performativen Theologie*, FAT 46 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), S. 339-354.

perspective, the construction of new methodologies seems to lack a newly developed basic metaphysical conception.

The two trends share a commonality in that they critically study the methodological situation and its hermeneutical backgrounds. This attitude is obligatory for any biblical theologian who desires to find a reasonable way to understand Scripture and who desires to be faithful to the discovery of truth. The present unsatisfactory situation of methodological plurality demands a thorough investigation of its very foundations in order to choose or develop one's own working methodology. Within Seventh-day Adventism, Gerhard Hasel has pioneered the critical investigation of methodologies used in exegesis and biblical theology.¹¹

However, aside from praising both trends for their critical stance, I see a problem in their procedure. In order to better understand this problem, it is helpful to examine methodology from the perspective of the human act of interpretation. Fernando Canale explains that the human act of interpretation "moves from the subject that interprets to the issue or thing that is interpreted. The human act of interpretation, then, has a beginning, a movement, and an end. The end is the issue (object) interpretation seeks to understand. The movement is the process through which we interpret the issues. The beginning includes the thing (reality) and the perspective (presuppositions) from which we start the interpretative act."¹²

The problem, then, in the usual procedure of examining methodologies, is that methodologies are primarily judged in terms of functionality, focusing on what a specific methodology claims and is able to perform. The present debate, therefore, especially focuses on the methodological aspect of movement, i.e., on the procedure or functionality of a specific methodology. It loses sight of the importance to critically investigate methodological presuppositions, i.e., starting points. Generally, the application of functionalistic criteria does not take place in ignorance of philosophical presuppositions. The point is, however, that these presuppositions are not deeply examined.¹³ James Barr stresses this observation in his critique on classical historical criticism by saying that "To this day there does not exist any really clear and philosophically valid

¹¹See Hasel, *Old Testament Theology*; and idem, *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

¹²Fernando Canale, "Evangelical Theology and Open Theism: Toward a Biblical Understanding of the Macro Hermeneutical Principles of Theology?" *JATS* 12/2 (2001): 20.

¹³E.g., Hasel has given an insightful critical analysis of the methodological plurality within biblical theology in his *Old Testament Theology*. However, although he engages the crucial issue within the debate of his time by pointing out that "the distinction between what a text meant and what a text means is at the core of the most fundamental problem of OT theology" (30), he still remains on the level of functionality and procedure. Although he recognizes the philosophical dimension that lies behind the "what it meant" and "what it means" problematic, he does not involve himself in a critical philosophical examination.

account of what traditional biblical criticism was doing!”¹⁴ In his sensitivity to the situation, John Barton is aware of this imbalance. He explains that the core problem of methodological plurality will not be exhaustively tackled by a mere comparison of the functionality and knowledge-generating ability of methodologies. Barton asks for a thorough examination of the role of method as such.¹⁵ This conclusion targets the epistemological foundations of methodology, which Barton describes as the “metacritical” issue that demands proper and specifically philosophical analysis.¹⁶ However, like many other critical thinkers, Barton himself does not attempt to investigate the presuppositional level, as he does not consider himself to be an expert in the field of philosophy.¹⁷

Thus, on one hand, there is a general awareness by critics of methodological plurality, that methodology cannot be reduced to procedures that help one to arrive at an understanding of the specific objects in focus (e.g., the biblical text); rather it also includes philosophical presuppositions. However, on the other hand, the main focus in the evaluation of methods still remains on the practical ability of methodologies to deliver justified and relevant result, i.e., they remain procedure oriented. An examination in terms of functionality helps to grasp the consequences, i.e., the results or ends of specific methodologies for biblical exegesis. It does not go to the theoretical core of the problem, but remains on the surface level of practice.

¹⁴James Barr, “The Synchronic, the Diachronic and the Historical: A Triangular Relationship?” in *Synchronic or Diachronic? A Debate on Method in Old Testament Exegesis*, ed. Johannes C. de Moor (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 9.

¹⁵John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 4.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷The result is that Barton critiques the different methodologies in regard to their applicational shortcomings and limitations. Contrary to Hasel, he does not eventually make a proposal for a basically new approach in methodology, but rather argues against the pursuit of a “correct” methodology, although he has not investigated the metacritical issue that he considers to be the root of the entire problem (*Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996], 237). Consequently, Barton’s suggestion, 246, is dissatisfying, hinting that the diversity of methods will only become a problem when a single method is perceived to be “correct,” i.e., the only way of approaching the human act of reading and understanding a text. Thus, the absolutization and exclusivity of a specific method is considered problematic, not the methods as part of a hermeneutical whole. If the latter would be critically analyzed, much more far-reaching and promising methodological considerations could be developed, as Klaus Berger states for the biblical historicist “Die Konsequenzen dieser Selbstbesinnung [Berger refers to the critical metaphysical reflection] des Historikers auf seine eigenen Möglichkeiten könnten erheblich sein, insbesondere angesichts der häufig zu konstatierenden Überfremdung der Historie durch Metaphysik aufgrund mangelnder Lust oder Bereitschaft der Historiker, sich auf systematische Erwägungen einzulassen” (*Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments* [Tübingen: A. Franke, 1999], 63).

Our situation within biblical theology is, however, far too serious for limiting our critical attitude to the watchword “whatever works is fine for me.”

Although we appreciate the efforts taken to critically examine the problematic pluralistic methodological situation, we need to look for new criteria that are able to examine not only the ends of methods, but their beginnings. An analytical frame needs to be developed that goes beyond a critical reflection on the pragmatic efficiency of methodologies to their very foundation. Any methodology is undergirded by a specific concept of human cognition (epistemology).¹⁸ Thus if we really want to understand methodology in general and our present situation in particular, we need to come to grips with the structure of epistemology and its ontological foundation.¹⁹ Through such a framework, both beginning and end, i.e., presuppositional starting points and theological consequences, can be critically examined.

The current methodological debate within biblical theology has been especially kindled through the conflict between the students of the history-of-religions approach (Lemche, Thompson, Albertz, Davies) and the adherents of the classical approach to OT theology.²⁰ Joachim Schaper’s latest contribution to this debate comes to the same conclusion that I am suggesting.²¹ He reasons that it is because of the unawareness of the epistemological foundation of science that some thinkers create the impression of being naïve and ignorant.²² According to Schaper, and I wholeheartedly agree, a reflection on

¹⁸Any research methodology implies an understanding of how one can come to true knowledge. Therefore, a concept of the process of cognition and knowledge in general is a precondition for any methodology.

¹⁹Any concept of human cognition already assumes a general understanding of what can and cannot be known. Hence there is no concept of the epistemic (specific epistemology) without a concept of the ontic (specific ontology). On the other hand, a concept of the ontic is dependent on the very process of cognition and the understanding thereof. Ontology and epistemology, then, are independent.

²⁰See the debate in *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie* 10 (1995), and in the latest critical contention of Jens Kofoed, *Text and History: Historiography and the Study of the Biblical Text* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005).

²¹Joachim Schaper, “Auf der Suche nach dem alten Israel? Text, Artefakt um ‘Geschichte Israels’ in der alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft vor dem Hintergrund der Methodendiskussion in den Historischen Kulturwissenschaften Teil I, II” *ZAW* 118/1, 2 (2006): 181-196.

²²Schaper, 8, writes, “Aus den Äußerungen Lemches, seines Kopenhagener und seines Sheffielder Kollegen sprechen eine bemerkenswerte Naivität und eine geradezu atemberaubende Unkenntnis der epistemologischen Problematik.” He, 10, also states that the contributions of the history-of-religions approach are “erkenntnistheoretisch völlig haltlos, einerseits in ihren naiven Forderungen nach ‘Tatsachen’ und ‘Beweisen’ einem spätestens seit Droysen obsoleten Vulgär-Rankeanismus huldigen und andererseits in der Art ihrer grundsätzlichen Infragestellung aller bisherigen historisch-philologischen Exegeses des Alten Testaments als ‘tendenziöse Rekonstruktion einer fiktiven Vergangenheit, die fundamentalistischen Absichten dient.’”

the epistemological foundation of science is needed if any further debate is to remain fruitful and if a solution to the current methodological crises in biblical theology is to be found.²³ Schaper, an OT theologian, shows how OT theology in general creates the impression that it has not yet reflected on the epistemological understanding of Max Weber.²⁴ He further shows how the history-of-religions approach is breathtakingly ignorant of the epistemological problem.²⁵ Schaper argues that serious biblical theologians can no longer work on the basis of the Rankian positivism, but need to acknowledge the shift toward the “autogenesis of cognitive reality” initiated by Heinrich Rickert and Max Weber. The idea of the “autogenesis of cognitive reality” supposes that the criteria for truth need to be sought within the logical realm of the subject and not within the material realm of the object, which is never accessible as *Ding an sich*. This shift automatically generates a change in the understanding and meaning of historical facts, ancient texts, and archaeological artifacts as objects of scientific research.²⁶

Although Schaper concludes that epistemological reflection is necessary for a reorientation in the field of OT studies, he is surprisingly uncritical of the Kantian idea of a “universal logic of science” (universal *gültige Logik der Forschung*).²⁷ This is astonishing since the ontological foundation of the Kantian idea of the universality of the subject’s logic has been convincingly critiqued within postmodern philosophy. The latter has shown that science can no longer “rest on the absolute, unmovable ground of human reason, but on the hypothetical foundation of human imagination.”²⁸

However, we see how Schaper shifts the basic issue in the current debate from the text-oriented “material” or procedural questions to the call for a proper understanding of the formal structure of human reasoning. We can consequently conclude that the debate about the problematic diversity of methodologies is no longer limited to discussing procedures of method that do not seem to do justice to the biblical text, its authors, and its readers, but points beyond procedure to the understanding of human reasoning

²³Schaper, 5, formulates the need “das eigene Vorgehen auf der Höhe des geschichtstheoretischen Erkenntnisstandes epistemologisch zu reflektieren.”

²⁴See Max Weber, “Die ‘Objektivität’ sozialwissenschaftlicher und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis,” in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. Johannes Winkelmann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1982), 146-214. For a short introduction to Weber’s methodological understanding of science of culture and history, see Friedrich Jäger and Jörn Rüsen, *Geschichte des Historismus: Eine Einführung* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1992), 156-160.

²⁵Ibid., 8.

²⁶Ibid., 8-9.

²⁷Ibid., 9, 11.

²⁸Fernando Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration: Searching for the Cognitive Foundations of Christian Theology in a Postmodern World* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2001), 9.

(epistemology) that methodological procedures necessarily assume.²⁹ Thus the call for an examination of the epistemological ground of biblical studies increases in volume.³⁰

So far, the need and duty of the biblical theologian and science to understand the epistemological foundation of methodologies and critically develop his or her own understanding in this matter is introduced. My goal in this series of articles is to contribute to critical and analytical thinking in order to stimulate further methodological deconstruction and development. In the first two articles, I will introduce the ground-breaking work of the Dutch Reformed Christian philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd (current article) and the Argentinean Christian philosopher and theologian Fernando Canale (second article) in regard to their respective structures and interpretations of human understanding from a radical Christian perspective.³¹ Their pioneering work, in which they critically analyze the widely held claim of the neutrality of human

²⁹Since epistemology lies at the foundation of any science, an understanding of epistemology in general and the development of one's own epistemology in particular will be most fruitful for both the inner theological debate and the encounter and debate with any other science. It is not only in the realm of theology in general and biblical theology in particular that a problematic methodological plurality is found. In every scientific activity, whether in the humanities or natural sciences, we encounter the same problematic (Roy Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality: An Essay on the Hidden Role of Religious Belief in Theories* [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005]). The lively debate within the field of linguistics among cognitive, generative, and functionalistic linguists is a good example of this reality. However, although the situation is different within theology, linguists recognized much earlier both the impact of epistemological conceptions and critically investigated them in order to uncover the origin of competing linguistic theories (cf. William Foley, *Anthropological Linguistics: An Introduction* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], 81-245; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* [New York: Basic, 1999]).

³⁰Besides Schaper, Kofoed, 247, should also be mentioned. In his latest extensive analysis of the methodology of the Albertz-Lemche-Thomson-Davies school, he stresses that "matter of method and presuppositions have been largely overlooked in the debate over the epistemological and historiographical value of biblical texts." However, we need to acknowledge that a critical analysis of the philosophical presuppositions involved is only one part of the story. Critical analyses of procedures and characteristics of data (object; e.g., Bible) are needed as well. Consequently, a critical assessment of the methodological analysis needs to include three aspects: man as subject with his presuppositional contribution, the characteristic of the data to be researched as object, and the methodological strategy as procedure for gaining understanding about the data.

³¹I will primarily follow Herman Dooyeweerd's thought as presented in his *magnus opus* (*A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, vols. 1 and 2 [Lewiston: Mellen, 1997]). The basis for the presentation of Fernando Canale's line of thinking will be his dissertation, *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions*, Andrews University Dissertation Series (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1987).

reasoning, responds to the present call for epistemological reflection, putting them ahead of their times. In a unique and intriguing way, Dooyeweerd and Canale involve themselves in a philosophical analysis of the structure of human understanding by which they are able to develop an analytical framework for deconstructing methodologies. It is this kind of analysis and framework that is demanded if we want to arrive at clarity for our methodological struggles. In the third article, I will first show how Dooyeweerd's and Canale's critical analyses of human understanding can be utilized to investigate the ontological foundations of specific methodologies. Then I will explicate the differences between Dooyeweerd's and Canale's thinking (through comparison). In the last article, I will attempt to critique Dooyeweerd's and Canale's analyses in order to prepare the work of transformation and further development. In this last step, I hope to suggest epistemological criteria that can enrich the framework of critical reflection on methodologies, their nature, and their impacts. Since all the articles will draw heavily on my philosophical research at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, I will often refer to that research.

My general expectation is that, by means of this series of articles, the reader might become more sensitive and critical to the realm of methodologies and realize that a reflection on biblical epistemology and ontology is not only fruitful for biblical theology, but for all scientific disciplines. Specifically, I expect that these articles will support the reader in reinterpreting the hermeneutical relation between author/event, text/artifact, and interpreter from the perspective of a biblical understanding of epistemology and ontology. This calls for the reader to involve himself or herself with constructing a biblical perspective on historical progression that integrates both normativity and subjectivity. The latter will enable a careful thinker to have a fresh look at the diversity of biblical-text tradition as well as the inner textual diversity of the biblical testimony.

Part I/IV: *Dooyeweerd on Reason*

1.1 Introduction to Dooyeweerd's Thought

It is widely held that rational thinking and its application in science and philosophy as theoretical thinking is neutral. It is this belief that is the foundation of many philosophical traditions and sciences, and even functions as a legitimatization and justification for the reliability of the latter. At the foundation of the claim that rational thinking is neutral lies the assumption that rational thinking is autonomous.³² The central unity that the many different philosophical schools experience in their general assumption

³²Autonomy is the presupposition for neutrality. This is because autonomy includes the idea of practical or material independence, i.e., self-sufficiency. Consequently, something which proposes to be autonomous cannot be influenced or determined in its being by something or someone else since the power of determination is of and in itself. If reason is considered to be neutral and as having the potential of "pure judgments," it is claiming an autonomous status.

about the neutrality of rational thought, however, stands in tension with the diversity of fundamental conceptions of the autonomy of rational and theoretical thought.³³ Unity is experienced in the claim that rational thought is autonomous, but not in the argumentation for the autonomy of rational thought. In the field of science and philosophy, the rationality of thought finds its most abstract application in theoretical thinking. If there is no unifying idea about the nature of theoretical thought, how can one claim unity in the idea of the neutrality and autonomy of theoretical thought and claim that science is neutral? How can one claim the autonomy of reason if there is not even an agreement about what reason is?

Behind this problem lies the answer of why, perhaps, the philosophical discourse of the twentieth century became increasingly a discourse of misunderstanding, unable to beget mutual apprehension among different philosophical schools. The doubt about the pretentious claim of neutrality of theoretical thought even increases when one considers the results and conclusions of depth psychology and existentialism, which show that in matters of truth, human reason cannot function as ultimate judge.³⁴

This background urges any thinker to examine the deeper reason why there are so many conceptions about the nature of the autonomy of reason and what role and determining influence different presuppositions play in the formulation of a conception of reason. Dooyeweerd was motivated to inquire into the universal inner structure of theoretical thought itself. An understanding of the universal inner structure of theoretical thought promises the possibility for understanding the origin of the different philosophical conceptions of reason and their claim of the autonomy of reason. In addition, it might help the diligent thinker to grasp the underlying problems that are involved in philosophical discourse and provide answers about whether theoretical thought is really neutral.

The analysis of the universal structure of theoretical thought goes beyond an immanent analysis that looks for the inner logical consistency of any concept about reason. Such an analysis will even go beyond a transcendent analysis of reason that investigates the differences between existing conceptions. “Transcendental,” here understood as a technical term, refers to the formal conditions that are needed in order to allow for the acquisition of philosophical and theoretical knowledge.³⁵ That is why Dooyeweerd calls his

³³Cf. Yong Joon Choi, *Dialog and Antithesis: A Philosophical Study on the Significance of Herman Dooyeweerd's Transcendental Critique*, Hermit Kingdom Studies in History and Religion (Cheltenham, PA: Hermit Kingdom, 2006), 76.

³⁴Herman Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought: Studies in the Pretended Autonomy of Philosophical Thought* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1960), 2.

³⁵The term “transcendental” is taken from Kant's philosophy, but receives a radical new interpretation that assumes a creational ontic order and that functions as the condition for our thinking (René van Woudenberg, “Theorie van het Kennen,” in *Kennis en werkelijkheid, Tweede inleiding tot een christelijke filosofie* [Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1996], 62-69; L. Kalsbeek, Bernard Zylstra, and Josina Van Nuis Zylstra, *Contours of a Christian Philosophy: An Introduction to Herman Dooyeweerd's Thought: A Supplement*

analysis of the structure of theoretical thought a transcendental critique since it inquires into the “universally valid conditions which alone make theoretical thought possible, and which are required by the immanent structure of this thought itself.”³⁶ An analysis of the universal structure of reason will consequently be of transcendental character since it goes beyond the dogmatic examination of conceptions into the analysis of the structural realities. These realities are involved in any formulation of any theoretical conception. Only a critique that transcends any transcendent and immanent critique to become a transcendental critique will be able to critically inquire into the dogma of the autonomy of theoretical thought. We will see that through its ambition the transcendental critique receives a strong hermeneutical character.

The supposition that theoretical thinking is not neutral is based on the tension between the common claim of the autonomy of reason and the different contradicting conceptions of it. This supposition, along with the insights of depth psychology and existentialistic philosophy, shows that Dooyeweerd’s call for a transcendental critique is justified. The conclusion of his inquiry into the universal inner structure of theoretical thought shows that the dogma of the autonomy of theoretical thought, whether found in philosophy or science, can no longer be upheld. According to Dooyeweerd, the structure of reason itself shows that theoretical thinking is in need of a religious choice that cannot be found in reason itself, but necessarily transcends it.³⁷

Dooyeweerd developed two analyses of the inner nature of theoretical thought—the first and second ways, which can be understood as two different possible routes for a transcendental critique. Both ways are built upon Dooyeweerd’s modal theory. Thereafter I will focus on the second way, as it draws more strongly on the modal theory and represents the later Dooyeweerd, which I am here focusing on.³⁸ Because of the dependent relation between the transcendental critique and the modal theory, I will first give a short explanation of Dooyeweerd’s modal theory before I describe his second way of analyzing the structure of theoretical thought.

1.2 Model Theory: On the Plurality of Being

1.2.1 *Interpretational Choice and Universal Structural Data*

Within the history of philosophy, the interpretations of the nature of empirical data in temporal reality can roughly be categorized into two opposing perspectives. The first perspective, taken in its extreme form, constitutes

to the *Collected Works of Herman Dooyeweerd* [Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2002], 172-174).

³⁶Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, 1: 37.

³⁷Choi, 52-53.

³⁸For the *first way*, see Oliver Glanz, “Time, Reason and Religious Belief: A Limited Comparison, Critical Assessment, and Further Development of Herman Dooyeweerd’s Structural Analysis of Theoretical Thought and Fernando Canale’s Phenomenological Analysis of the Structure of Reason and Its Biblical Interpretation” (M. A. Thesis, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2006), 32-38.

the notion that the idea a person has when he or she experiences a thing (e.g., an event, an object, a living being) is the representation of the thing in itself. Human beings, therefore, have an objective understanding of the thing outside themselves. The second perspective, taken in its extreme form, constitutes the notion that the idea a person has when he or she experiences a thing is a representation of his or her (mental) creation of the thing he or she is experiencing. Human beings, therefore, have only subjective access to the thing outside themselves and can never know what is really external to their own subjective state. In this rather complex age-old and ongoing dilemma between the subjective and the objective perspective, Dooyeweerd wants to formulate an interpretation of the nature of empirical data in temporal reality by adopting a radical Christian starting point rather than joining either the subjective or the objective perspectives. In this way, his modal theory is nothing other than an interpretative analysis of the universally shared experience of temporal reality.³⁹

According to Dooyeweerd, the naïve experience of temporal reality with all its diversities can only be interpreted correctly when one takes the sovereignty of God as the creator of reality (i.e., both of the thinking human being and his or her object of thought and experience) as the ultimate starting point for one's interpretation. Only when this starting point is taken, will one be able to do justice to the experienced datum that is present to anyone irrespective of his or her religious faith and philosophical frameworks.

Although interpretation can take place only when one chooses a starting point or basic paradigm of interpretation, critical inspection takes place by comparing the interpretational concept with the experienced datum.

Being aware of the different routes that interpretation (from a starting point as interpretational framework and the experienced datum toward a formulation of a concept of temporal reality) and critical inspection (from experienced datum towards the formulated concept of it) take, Dooyeweerd stresses that one cannot arrive at the same interpretation and analytical conclusion if one does not share his starting point. Thus, seen from the direction of the rational activity of interpretation, the construction of his interpretation of temporal reality is impossible if one does not accept the biblical God as being the creator of temporal reality.⁴⁰ However, seen from the direction of the rational activity of critical inspection, verification by thinkers who do not share his interpretational starting point is possible. Such a verification process can take place on the basis of empirical data (as state of affairs) and his many philosophical arguments, which stay strong even without his interpretational starting point. Consequently, Dooyeweerd's philosophy

³⁹For Dooyeweerd, temporal reality is the naïvely experienced everyday reality. However, temporal reality is not the only realm of creation. He also knows of the created supratemporal self, which will be introduced in the course of this article. Here "temporal" refers to reality whenever the daily experienced reality is meant.

⁴⁰Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought*, 53.

can have a persuasive impact on those who do not share the same religious choice.⁴¹

1.2.2 *Interpretation of Naïve Experience*

To avoid misunderstanding Dooyeweerd, it is important to see that the structural datum he is speaking of does not represent an ontology; rather, it refers to the empirical data of experienced temporal reality.⁴² The structural datum that represents the reference for the justification of philosophical conceptions is the human experience of temporal reality. This experience is a universal datum that is independent of ontological conceptions. It is the task of philosophy to find conceptions and interpretations of the structural datum that can be justified by the experience of temporal reality. The structural datum then functions as the central focus of theoretical conceptualization and as the background for any critical assessment of theoretical concepts.

In order to introduce the modal theory as an attempt to interpret reality as structural datum, I would like to describe two characteristics of human experience as datum: naïve experience and experience of scientific analogies.

Rene van Woudenberg provides examples of structural datum that show that the diversity of experience of a particular thing among different persons raises the question of the origin of this diversity.⁴³ His example demonstrates how diverse the experiences of the same concert can be among different persons: This is not worth the money! What a scratching of horse hairs on cat's bowels! What an uplifting social atmosphere! What a pure music! These various opinions about the same experience reveal differing economic, biological, social, or aesthetic perspectives.

How, then, is it possible that the same thing is experienced in such a variety of ways? Further, how is it possible that everyone understands what is meant by the diverse expressions of others and relates it to the same event they themselves have described differently? As referred to at the beginning of 1.2.1, there are, in principle, two different answers given within the history of philosophy: the concept of the thing in focus is either the projection of the subject on the object, or it is the projection of the object on the subject. In some strands of postmodern philosophy, the latter opinion can no longer be taken very seriously since it is difficult to explain that the object projects different impressions on the different subjects unless one allows for the determinative nature of the subject's interpretational framework itself.⁴⁴ Dooyeweerd's approach to this question is different since he can see that all the different expressions relate to the different modes of being inherent to anything that is experienced and observed.

⁴¹Ibid., 57-58.

⁴²Choi, 61.

⁴³René van Woudenberg, *Gelovend Denken: inleiding Tot Een Christelijke Filosofie*, Verantwoording (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 2004), 66-70.

⁴⁴Alvin Plantinga, *On Christian Scholarship* (http://www.calvin.edu/academic/philosophy/virtual_library/articles/plantinga_alvin/on_christian_scholarship.pdf).

All things exist by a multitude of modes and express several aspects of their being simultaneously. The economic, biological, social, and aesthetic perspectives that were chosen by the people in our example refer to the different modes of concert-being. The different emphasis that is brought in through the subject's side reveals both the diversity of the observed thing and the aspectual perspective the subject chooses while describing the experienced thing. Thus both the object and the subject contribute to the interpretation of the structural datum. Such a modal interpretation helps to do justice to two moments of the structural datum. First, it explains why in our naiveté we feel that we have not understood the phenomenon of a thing fully by interpreting it from a certain modal perspective (the concert seems to have more functions than just a biological function). Second, it explains why people who have different expressions about the same thing can still understand each other and know what the expressions refer to.

The diversity of expression, then, can often find its background in the individual focus on a specific mode of a thing's being—a mode that anyone can recognize and talk about, although their subjectively chosen focus might be different. Thus, for example, a concert can be understood not only economically (and thus cannot be reduced to the economical perspective alone), but also reveals many other aspects. This is why a diversity of expressions about the same thing does not hinder communication about the thing, thereby making mutual understanding possible. In a certain way, then, diversity is inherent to the things themselves, independent of their observers.

The second characteristic of human experience concerns the scientific realm of human activity. From the scientific perspective, there is a drive to discover, through the application of a certain discipline, specific processes and laws. The results of this drive can be seen in the formulation of analogies. In biology, for example, the principle of "life" as the struggle for survival is applied to all of reality. Consequentially, all aspects of reality (e.g., religion, business, society, or morality) are understood to be a part and expression of the biological struggle to survive. The analogies of the biological aspect find themselves in words such as "religious life," "business life," "social life," and "moral life." The analogies of the psychic aspect find themselves in formulations such as feeling "for logical coherence, cultural feeling, linguistic feeling, aesthetic feeling, legal feeling, moral feeling."⁴⁵

These analogies can tempt a scientist to place the origin of religion, business, society, or morality within the basic biological life-death struggle. This drive to understand all of reality through discovered principles, laws, and processes of a specific science shows that it is difficult to reduce any science to another since the reduced science (e.g., neuron-physics reduces psychology to a subcategory of neuron-physics) can also reduce any science to its own subcategory. Where such a reduction through the absolutization of one's scientific discipline takes place, we speak of the phenomenon of "isms" (e.g., biologism, physicalism, psychologism).

⁴⁵Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought*, 10-11.

Because Dooyeweerd interprets the structural data of the temporal horizon of reality from his Christian starting point, he cannot allow any part of creation to become the originator of any other part. Therefore, he does not allow the absolutization of any aspect of reality or scientific discipline, but instead interprets the existence of a diversity of sciences. Further, he allows for the fact that the absolutistic attempts of any science, together with the diversity of naïve experience, does not hinder interpersonal communication, but actually hints toward the modal diversity of reality itself. Thus he can philosophically justify and support the existing diversity of scientific disciplines since different irreducible perspectives on reality are possible due to the multimodality of being.

As science has shown, there are laws and norms within reality that have a structural nature and which belong to reality itself. Since there are irreducible perspectives to reality, we relate the different modal laws not hierarchically but horizontally to each other. The laws of the psychic aspect of things cannot be explained by and do not originate from the biological-aspectual laws. Although one aspect is related to the other and necessarily dependent on the other modalities, this relation is not of a causal character.⁴⁶ The laws of one modal aspect cannot explain the laws of the other modal aspects, although mutual influence takes place in the sense that one modal aspect is present within any other modal aspect in an analogical sense.

1.2.3 *Being as Temporal Being*

Besides the fact that the structural data show that different expressions by different people about the same thing are possible without hindering communication and understanding, they also show that a person can decide to have different perspectives about something without experiencing a fragmentation of that thing. Thus, although different perspectives can be chosen, the structural datum always expresses coherence and unity. This is why it makes sense that Dooyeweerd describes the structural datum, which consists of a diversity of modal aspects, as a diversity of coherence rather than an antithetical diversity. The many modal ways in which we experience reality (*ervaringswijzen*, manners of experience) are of a coherent character pointing to a central unity. Therefore, the economic and aesthetic aspects of a concert are not experienced as contradicting or antithetical, but as integral parts of the concert.

Due to his Calvinistic viewpoint that accepts God's essential being as timeless⁴⁷ and his creation as temporal, Dooyeweerd concludes that time is the common factor of all modal aspects and that through time all aspects are bound into an inner coherence as indissoluble interrelations.⁴⁸ Cosmic time, as

⁴⁶Herman Dooyeweerd, "Het Tijdsprobleem in de Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee," *Philosophia reformata: orgaan van de Vereeniging voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte* 5 (1940): 200.

⁴⁷On the difference between Dooyeweerd's understanding of timelessness and the Greek understanding of timelessness, see note in Glanz, 16, n. 20.

⁴⁸Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, vol. 3 (Philadelphia:

created temporality, holds all modal aspects of reality together and guarantees the naïve experience of inner coherence of any particular thing and reality in general. Because of this temporal coherence between different modalities, analogical relations within the different scientific disciplines are possible from the perspective of any modal aspect (e.g., the analogical moments of the biological aspect of being find their expression in, for example, the economic, religious, moral, or inner life).⁴⁹ The reason for the coherence-function of time can only be understood when we see that Dooyeweerd interprets the different aspects of being as aspects of cosmic time or time-modalities. Time is, therefore, experienced in its diversity of modalities of being. The modal laws are nothing other than laws of cosmic time or, as Dooyeweerd puts it, “orders of time.” Every aspect of reality is characterized by a typical time-law. Dooyeweerd discerns fifteen different time-laws as temporal aspects of reality:⁵⁰

-numerical	-historical (experience of the cultural manner of the development of social life)
-spatial	
-kinematic	
-energetic (physicochemical relations of empirical reality)	-linguistic (symbolic signification)
-biotic	-social
-psychic (feeling/sensation)	-economic
-logical (analytic manner of distinction lying at the foundation of all concepts and logical judgments)	-aesthetic
	-juridical
	-moral
	-faith

In “Het tijdprobleem in de wijsbegeerte der wetsidee” (the problem of time in the philosophy of the law-idea), Dooyeweerd explains his understanding and interpretation of time, detailing how every modal-law-sphere is a temporal order. Time expresses itself in different ways through the modal aspects. These aspects differ from each other in the ways they manifest themselves in time. For example, in numeric modality the order of numbers is to be understood in the temporal order of earlier and later numbers; in kinematic modality, time expresses itself as an order of succession of movement; in biotic modality, time is revealed through the order of the development of organic life (e.g., birth, maturing, becoming older, dying); in logical modality, item-order is expressed, for example, through the logical *prius* and *posterius*. The sovereignty of a modality is identified by its *zinkern* (meaning-kernel) and

Presbyterian and Reformed, 1958).

⁴⁹Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought*, 10-11.

⁵⁰These orders of cosmic time are relating themselves in an anticipatory and retrociprocity temporal order of analogies. For the sake of this article series, it is not necessary to explain this any further. An introductory explanation can be found in Woudenberg, *Gelovend Denken*, 76-78.

its *wetskring* (circle of law).⁵¹ The *zinkern* (meaning-kernel) refers to the central identity of a single modality. In the case of numeric modality, this would be the “discrete *quantiteit*,” which means that any particular thing can also be described by focusing on the aspect of its countability.⁵² The modal meaning-kernel of every aspect guarantees the irreducibility of the specific modality.⁵³

Besides the modal meaning-kernel, any modality can be characterized by its *wetskring* (circle of laws). The modal-specific circle of laws is an expression of the modal meaning-kernel. In the case of the numeric modal meaning-kernel of “countability,” the numeric circle of laws finds expression in the laws of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.⁵⁴ The different modal laws refer “backward” and “forward” to other modal laws. In the same way, the spatial aspect refers back to the numeric aspect since there is no space without the modality of “more and less.” On the other side, the spatial aspect refers forward to the kinematic aspect since it is through movement that this aspect exists.⁵⁵ Thus all laws unite in their basic characteristic of referring and expressing to one another.

In order to better understand Dooyeweerd’s differentiation between naïve and theoretical thinking in his analysis of the structure of philosophical and theoretical thinking, it is necessary to introduce another concept. In the Dooyeweerdian view, everything that is created is subject to modal law. However, the ways in which created things are subjected to modal law differ extensively. To prevent a disproportionate introduction into Dooyeweerd’s thing-structures, I will discuss only two relevant terms: subject-function and object-function.

What is meant by thing-structures is that all things have all modal aspects, either as subject or as object.⁵⁶ For example, water does not have a subject-function, but it does have an object-function in its biotic aspect. That is, water does not live, but is needed for the life of other created things and beings. Consequently, plants and water relate to each other in their biotic aspect in the form of a subject-object relation. A stone can serve as another example. A stone does not have a subject-function in its linguistic aspect since it cannot speak, but it does have an object-function in this specific modality because one can speak about it. The stone’s linguistic object-function is only activated if it stands in relation with the linguistic subject-function of another entity. A subject-subject relation is also possible when two things have one or more subject-functions in specific modalities in common. For example, when two human beings communicate with each other, there will be a subject-subject relation within their linguistic modality.

According to the modal theory, time embraces and penetrates all reality. Being is always being in time and is always full temporal being. Within

⁵¹Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought*, 9.

⁵²Woudenberg, *Gelovend Denken*, 75.

⁵³Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought*, 9.

⁵⁴Woudenberg, *Gelovend Denken*, 76.

⁵⁵Ibid., 76-80.

⁵⁶Ibid., 83-84.

creation, nothing transcends the dynamic temporal horizon of being except the supratemporal heart, as I will show. The supratemporal heart transcends time, but not creation, as it is itself created. Time expresses itself in temporal reality in a diversity of mutually irreducible functions or means of being. This is of utmost importance if one wants to understand Dooyeweerd's critique of classical philosophy. To him, even space is a time-category and was mistakenly taken for a static-timeless reality, creating a dichotomy between temporal and timeless reality.⁵⁷ To him, creation is characterized as meaning-being, a term referring to the radical dependence of creational being. This dependence can be seen on different levels. On the modal level, every law-sphere necessarily refers to other law-spheres and all temporal law-spheres to a supratemporal central unity.

On the supramodal level, the unity-heart refers to its own origin, as I will show. In fact, there is no self-sufficient created-being. Created-being is through its dependence on a [non-Greek]⁵⁸ timeless God. Consequently, timelessness and supratemporality should not be confused! Timelessness is a characteristic that belongs only to the self-sufficient creator-God. Supratemporality exists only within the realm of creation. Everything that exists through God's creation is meaning-being. Meaning-being, on one hand, is relative being because it expresses a radical dependence on the creator. On the other hand, the relativity of meaning-being is expressed through its interdependent relationship with the rest of creation that is subject to the same law.⁵⁹ This radical character of creation's dependence on the creator is also referred to by the term "concentric law."⁶⁰ The law, then, is the absolute boundary between God and his creation, and the origin of the law is God's sovereign creative will.⁶¹

1.2.4 Coherence and Unity—Time and the I

In Dooyeweerd's thinking, there are at least two elements that contribute to human naïve experience as an experience of inner coherence. On one hand, we have the many analogical moments that time makes possible and which enable us to experience modal diversity not as antithetical diversity, but as a diversity of coherence. The modal aspects are the simultaneous *Seinsweisen* of a thing.⁶² On the other hand, the experience of this diversity within inner

⁵⁷Dooyeweerd, "Het Tijdsprobleem in De Wijsbegeerte Der Wetsidee," 167.

⁵⁸Since Dooyeweerd's conception of the timelessness of God is explained as being different from the Greek-Aristotelian understanding of timelessness (cf. n. 47), I will from here on refer to Dooyeweerd's timelessness of God as [non-Greek] timelessness in order to prevent confusion. See here Glanz, 20, n. 35.

⁵⁹Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, 4.

⁶⁰Ibid., 12.

⁶¹Choi, 17.

⁶²Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought*, 6.

coherence refers necessarily to a basic unity as central totality.⁶³ This experience of unity is made possible through the self or the human heart that is created with the ability to bring the inner coherence of temporal modal diversity to a supratemporal unity. This is of crucial importance to understand.

Humanity was created in the image of God as an expression of the unity of the creator. The human self, then, is of supratemporal character since it makes humanity's unity-experience of the temporal modal aspect problematic and reductionistic.⁶⁴ Humanity's unity-self, however, receives its unity-ability only through God's creating man and woman as *imago dei*.⁶⁵ Thus the unity-self is not independent but dependent and, therefore, refers not only to the unity of the creator, but to the expression of the unity of the creator who is beyond created temporality and created supratemporality. Thus the supratemporal self-unity is dependent on and refers to the timeless unity of God. Further, it is within the creational order of time, which is broken into a diversity of time-aspects that stand in an indissoluble interrelationship. In this interrelationship, every aspect refers within and beyond itself to all the others. The temporal coherence, then, refers to a supratemporal unity, which, in turn, refers to the timeless unity of the creator God.

1.2.5 *The I and Living*

To briefly summarize, all being is temporal being and all being is expressing and living the whole temporal order of reality. It is only humanity that can transcend this temporal order through the self by expressing through its supratemporal unity-self the timeless divine unity-creator. Although Dooyeweerd does not seem to elaborate more on what he understands by the timelessness of God, he stresses that he does not have the Greek-Parmenidean idea of timelessness in mind.⁶⁶ This step from time to supratemporality should not be understood as creating a similar dichotomy as form and matter. To Dooyeweerd, the being of things is not matter, but the real thing as it is in time. Also to him, the relation between the temporal thing and its timeless creator is not a relation through which a phenomenon is pointing to the thing in itself, but is a necessary relation of a thing in itself that points to its creator.

As mentioned before, it is because of the created supratemporal characteristic of the self that the I which lives within temporal reality cannot be identified with a modal aspect. The I cannot be reduced toward a biological, psychological, or rational I. Therefore, the idea of *cogito ergo sum* is a fundamental misconception that identifies the I with a single temporal-order and forgets that rational thinking is an act of a human I. The I is the subject of any human temporal action. It is through the supramodal characteristic of the self that its acts and experiences are taking place within an inner coherence and unity. In contrast to the *cogito ergo sum* idea, the ego is expressing a meaning-totality,

⁶³Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, 4.

⁶⁴Dooyeweerd uses the terms "self," "heart," and "I" interchangeably.

⁶⁵Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, 4.

⁶⁶Cf. n. 47.

i.e., a “totality in the coherence of all its functions within all the modal aspects of cosmic reality.”⁶⁷ But this meaning-totality itself is meaning and therefore created. Meaning, however, has the universal structure of referring and expressing (as the central law of meaning). Every thing that has meaning is referring to and to a certain extent expressing something else within creation but also beyond creation, hinting to the origin of creation itself. This necessary ontic dependence is referred to as concentric law. In the heart’s dependence on the divine creator-unity it can find its identity; in the relation with its temporal acts and experiences the self can realize its identity within as an identity of freedom and responsibility that is made possible through its *imago dei*—being as an expression of the being of God as meaning-totality. The self is through this radical dependence on the creator God experiencing the call to responsibility and through its relation with the diversity of temporal-order it is experiencing the limited focus and field of its responsibility.

In order to understand the relation of responsibility of the self toward the modal diversity, it is necessary to return to the architecture of a single modality.

Cosmic time is to be understood as having a cosmonomic and a factual side.⁶⁸ The cosmonomic represents the time-order, while the factual side represents the duration of time-order as an activation of temporal order.⁶⁹ What is meant by this is that the cosmonomic side as time-order is referring to all the different modal meaning-kernels that are expressed in the form of the different modal *wetskringen* (circles of laws). The factual side refers to the specific living out of the modal laws as time-order by a thing or individual. Any thing or individual is subject to the time-order and creates through this subject-being an individual expression of the modal laws it is bound to. For example, the biological time-order of birth, maturing, adulthood, aging, and dying will find different expression in different subjects. The law-side of reality as time-order does not exist outside of being, but only as a *Seinsweise* (manner of being) of a subjective being. In reality, there is no time-order without time-duration, no law-side without a subject; the one cannot exist without the other.⁷⁰ This interrelation expresses creational reality. Without the subjective being of things the modal-laws would not exist. The time-order, then, is an order that has potentiality. In the realization of this potentiality within individual things or human beings, this potentiality becomes duration and actuality.⁷¹ The result of this theoretical insight is that the opposition between rationalistic and irrationalistic conceptions can no longer be upheld. The cosmonomic side cannot be understood apart from its different individual expressions within the factual side. In this sense, the being of a thing or individual is always the factual actualization of the cosmonomic side of any

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid., 28.

⁶⁹Dooyeweerd, “Het Tijdsprobleem in de Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee,” 194.

⁷⁰Ibid., 195-196.

⁷¹Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, 105.

aspect. Any absolutization of the cosmonomic side will result in the loss of human responsibility, as any absolutization of the factual side will result in a loss of normativity. Since both responsibility and normativity belong to the structural data of our naïve experience, this theory claims to do justice to this universal datum.

Because of the two sides of created cosmic time (cosmonomic and factual), expressed through all modal aspects, and because of the need of positivization of the modal norms as a call that is addressing the supramodal self, the self can, within the boundaries of the norm-structure, freely decide how it wants to respond. Humans are not free in the sense of whether they should respond, but free in the sense of how they will respond.⁷² As such, the relation between the self and the modal diversity of reality is not a deterministic one, but characterized by responsibility.⁷³ Within the realm of the modalities that have normative time-orders, the self will creatively respond to them in either positivizing them in a faithful direction toward the meaning of the *imago dei* or with an unfaithful direction away from God. The normative creational modal structure of reality is the “universally valid determination and limitation of the individual subjectivity which is responsibly subject to it.”⁷⁴ The self’s relation to its creator as *imago dei* enables the awareness of its call to individually, creatively and in a faithful manner disclose the potentiality in created reality. The self can realize its identity fully and only in temporal reality when it transcends it. As Viktor Frankl puts it: “Nur Existenz, die sich selbst transzendiert, kann sich selbst verwirklichen” (Only existence, which transcends itself can come to self realization.)⁷⁵ In regard to theoretical and philosophical thinking, the self only does justice to the *imago dei* as it develops a view of reality that allows for a concept that does not absolutize anything within the structural datum. To be able to do this, the self needs to acknowledge that of which it is an image as the truly absolute origin of any meaning-being.

1.2.6 *The Logical Modal Aspect*

As we have seen, the logical aspect is considered to be one aspect of reality, one *Seinsweise* of being that is lived through the self and is not to be identified with the self. Dooyeweerd describes the *zinkern* of the logical modal aspect as the “analytic mode of distinction.”⁷⁶ Making distinctions as qualifying characteristic of any act of analysis and conceptualization is one of the many modal ways of human being.⁷⁷ Dooyeweerd distinguishes between two attitudes

⁷²To Dooyeweerd, positivization is still on the law-side, while the specific living out of the positivization is placed on the subject-side.

⁷³Woudenberg, *Gelovend Denken*, 87-88.

⁷⁴Choi, 13.

⁷⁵Viktor Emil Frankl, *Der Mensch vor der Frage nach dem Sinn: Eine Auswahl aus dem Gesamtwerk*, Neuausg. ed. (Munich: Piper, 1998), 225.

⁷⁶Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, 2: 118.

⁷⁷The analytic mode of distinction finds its technical expression in the *principium*\

of thought, i.e., naïve thought and theoretical thought. Logical distinction can take place in a naïve attitude of thinking as well as in a theoretical attitude of thinking. The difference between these two is that in our naïve attitude we distinguish entities and things as a whole, while in our theoretical or scientific attitude we make distinctions within entities by abstracting the modalities in which they function. Thus in the naïve attitude we do not isolate the thing's ways of being, i.e., the modalities from the thing itself, but leave them in their inner coherence as belonging inseparably to the thing under observation. We can recognize the different ways of being but these ways are still experienced as characteristics that belong to the thing that exhibits them.

By the abstract attitude of theoretical thinking, we isolate a single way of the being of a thing, i.e., one of its modal aspects, and focus our "analytic eye" on one characteristic itself. We thus theoretically separate a nonlogical modality from a thing. Therefore, contrary to the naïve state of experience where the modal diversity is experienced in an intermodal cosmic coherence, in which no single aspect is experienced in singularity,⁷⁸ theoretical thinking by its analytic activity of distinction brings the modal diversity of temporal reality to a distinct consciousness. The modal diversity is made explicit and the modal nonlogical aspect that functions as the object of the theoretical thought-act is theoretically disconnected from the intermodal coherence in which it is experienced in the naïve state of living as it is given in the structural data. The theoretical attitude of thought thus breaks the intermodal coherence into many possible antithetical relations in which the nonlogical modality in focus is functioning as the *Gegenstand* of the logical aspect. The English translation of the German term *Gegenstand* would be "standing in opposition." The *Gegenstand* as object of theoretical thinking contrasts the object of our naïve thinking.⁷⁹

In Dooyeweerdian terminology the relations that we experience in the naïve state are subject-object relations (or subject-subject relations),⁸⁰ while the relations that we experience in our theoretical thought-act are *Gegenstand*-relations.⁸¹

The basic understanding of the logical aspect will give us enough background to enter Dooyeweerd's transcendental critique.

dentitatis, principium excludendae contradictionis, and principium exclusi tertii. Cf. Woudenberg, *Gelovend Denken*, 89.

⁷⁸Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, 3.

⁷⁹*Gegenstand* is used "by Dooyeweerd as a technical term for a modality when abstracted from the coherence of time and opposed to the analytic function in the THEORETICAL attitude of thought, thereby establishing the 'Gegenstand relation.' 'Gegenstand' is therefore the technical precise word for the object of SCIENCE, while 'object' itself is reserved for the objects of NAÏVE EXPERIENCE" (Kalsbeek, Zylstra, and Zylstra, 348).

⁸⁰Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought*, 14-16.

⁸¹Choi, 44.

1.2.7 *Summary*⁸²

Through the lens of his modal theory Dooyeweerd finds nothing in created reality that is by nature independent or self-sufficient. Rather, he stresses that every single aspect of reality is dependent on every other aspect of reality and that, in the end, all of reality is dependent on the creator. Through these dependence structures, explained as different time-orders, reality is lived as meaningful in its being in time.

The modal theory, here only briefly covered, can however not fully account for the diversity of human judgments that goes beyond the modal diversity of a thing that is experienced. It does not account for the different theoretical conceptions of reality resulting from different abstract interpretations of the structural datum. There is more to the diversity of interpretations than the diversity of modal aspects. Man can, with different attitudes, choose different modal perspectives. Having said this, the next section will give a description of Dooyeweerd's transcendental critique of theoretical thought.

1.3 Theoretical Thinking and Its Religious Presuppositions

Dooyeweerd states that the great turning point in his philosophical thinking was his discovery that thinking itself necessarily has a religious root. The validity of this conclusion can be shown by two ways of argumentation. The differences of the two ways stem from the direction they take in order to come to the same conclusion. The first way starts from an analysis of the nature of philosophy. The second way starts from the inner structure of the theoretical thought-act as the actualization of the logical aspect of temporal reality on its abstract, nonnaïve level. Both ways end up with the enigmatic question: what is the identity of the self that philosophizes and that involves itself in theoretical thinking? Both ways of critique target the question of what the self brings into its thought-act as determining factor in the process of conceptualization. Dooyeweerd tries to show that the conceptualization of the modal diversity of the structural datum (as a result of theoretical thinking) necessarily involves the religious identity of the self.

Because both ways are assuming an influential difference between philosophical/theoretical thinking and naïve thinking, without which the inner structure of thought cannot be understood, first the present differentiation that was already introduced in 1.2.6 will be elaborated. After that the second way of Dooyeweerd's transcendental critique will be presented.

1.3.1 *General Characteristic of Theoretical Thinking versus Naïve Thinking*

In order to understand Dooyeweerd's distinction between theoretical thinking and naïve thinking, one needs to keep in mind the general modal diversity with its analogical relations and specifically the meaning of the analytic modal aspect.

⁸²Cf. Glanz, 27.

The logical aspect, as the seventh aspect of the fifteen modal aspects, is the first aspect which is different from the earlier six aspects with regards to human action, in two ways:

1. The modal *zinkern* (modal kernel) contains specific norms and not laws in its *wetskring* (circle of laws). The difference is that the time-orders of these normative aspects, represented by the *zinkern*, can be violated. They function therefore much more as an appeal to the human freedom to live responsibly, to be recognized, and applied positively. Thus, in living out these norm-modalities we can choose to live them out in a responsible way. Here the theoretical distinction between *normbeginsel* (norm-principle) as the cosmomic side and *normpositivering* (norm-positivization) as the factual side of time reappears. There are many different positivizations of norms possible without transgressing or violating the norm. These modal norms are therefore not only appealing towards the human freedom for responsibility but are also an appeal to the human creativity to choose one positivization out of many good positivizations of the potentiality of the cosmomic side belonging to all of reality.

2. Man is the only creature that has subject functions in the modal aspects seventh to fifteenth. This underlines what has been said above, that the norms of the *zinkern* are appeals to human responsibility and creativity. Human beings are by creation subject to these norms and therefore called to positivize them.

In order to prepare the explanation of how man's responsibility comes to the fore in his theoretical thought-acts, one needs to understand the difference between the theoretical and naïve attitudes of analytic distinction.

Contrary to theoretical abstraction, naïve experience, or so-called "common sense" experience, lacks any antithetical modal constructions. In the naïve state, man experiences concrete things not in a theoretic-synthesized but in a systatical way.⁸³ Derived from the Greek συστασις/συνιστημι (in contrast to εκστασις/εχιστημι), systase means "staying conjoint with each other" or "staying united." The reason why we experience the temporal continuity of things in our naivety in a systatical way is theoretically explained by the subject-object relation in which all the different modal aspects relate to all the different modal aspects of the thing/event experienced. These modal relations can either take the form of a subject-object relation or a subject-subject relation.⁸⁴ In the integral cosmic coherence, things cannot exist by themselves but are dependent on other things for the realization of their subject or object functions.

1.3.2 *Transcendental Critique*⁸⁵

Dooyeweerd argues in the *second way* from what the ego does when it is thinking theoretically. Thus the structure of the theoretical thought-act is the

⁸³Woudenberg, *Gelovend Denken*, 128.

⁸⁴Cf. Glanz, 32.

⁸⁵For the *first way*, see *ibid.*, 32-28.

focus of the *second way*. Dooyeweerd argues that theoretical thought, in order to be able to conceptualize the inner coherence of the structural datum, is structurally in need of a self that brings in a religious decision that functions as a starting point beyond the *Gegenstand*-relation.

When Dooyeweerd looks at the inner structure of theoretical thinking, he uncovers three universal problematic characteristics of abstract thinking. The universal characteristics of any theoretical thought-act are abstraction, synthesis and the necessity of critical self-reflection.

1.3.2.1 The First Problematic Characteristic:

The *Gegenstand*-Relation

The first characteristic of theoretical thought is the abstraction of the subject-object and subject-subject relations of naïve experience into different *Gegenstand*-relations. Thus, this first problem refers back to a previously mentioned distinction between the theoretical and pretheoretical attitudes of the ego.

In the critical inquiry into the inner structure of theoretical thought, we see that modal aspects are intentionally and theoretically uprooted from their temporal coherence into antithetical relations and the logical aspect relates antithetically to the nonlogical aspect under investigation. Without this abstract attitude, the modal diversity of temporal reality could not be discovered with distinctiveness, for the subject-object relations do not experience an antithetical modal diversity of temporal reality within the pretheoretical attitude.⁸⁶

It is important to notice that theoretical abstraction is not understood as abstracting reality from time. Theoretical abstraction only abstracts intentionally from the temporal coherence but not from temporal diversity. Since theoretical thought cannot transcend the realm of temporality, it remains not only in the realm of diversity but also within the realm of coherence. The inner coherence of the modal diversity belongs to the creational order from which the self cannot detach its theoretical thinking. Theoretical thinking therefore necessarily involves all modal aspects. As any other act, man's theoretical acting has a psychic, biological, aesthetic, etc. aspect. Consequently, the antithetical situation that the logical aspect enforces between all modalities and between its own modal structure and the *Gegenstand* is not a real, i.e., an ontic, but a theoretical, i.e., a specific epistemic, problem. This is testified to by the resistance the *Gegenstand* displays when one attempts to conceptualize it in logical terms.⁸⁷ This resistance necessarily evolves, because the logically qualified concept of the *Gegenstand* cannot account for its nonlogical modality that is not logically qualified. The different modal nonlogical analogies are even present when a modality is abstracted into a *Gegenstand*. The abstracted modal aspect (*Gegenstand*) expresses its ontic coherence with all other aspects

⁸⁶See Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, 42-43.

⁸⁷Ibid., 39-40.

through the cosmic temporal coherence (expressed in analogical moments; cf. 1.2.3/4) from which theoretical thought intentionally tries to abstract.

The basic question that arises from the first problematic characteristic in regard to the act of theoretical thinking is: what is the meaning of the continuous bond of coherence in the diversity of modalities that we cannot grasp through theoretical thought? This question cannot be answered because the real coherence is lost through intentional abstraction at the very moment one takes a theoretical attitude. Thus, in our theoretical attitude we lose the inner coherence that we are searching for.⁸⁸ Theoretical thought cannot autonomously establish a concept of modal coherence without having an idea of coherence that goes beyond theoretical thinking itself. With this in mind, one can understand why Dooyeweerd cannot accept the philosophical dogma of the autonomy of theoretical thought, that pretends to penetrate reality as it is by means of theoretical thought.

1.3.2.2 The Second Problematic Characteristic: The Search for Synthesis

If it is the aim of abstract thinking to form a theoretical concept of the pretheoretical datum, and this datum cannot be conceptualized without losing its coherence, how then can an explicit and theoretical formulation of the implicitly, naïvely experienced coherence be possible? The first problem addressed in the transcendental critique automatically leads to the second.

In order to be able to formulate a concept that does not defeat the coherence of the pretheoretical datum, one must have an idea as reference point that goes beyond the logical opposition and theoretical thought as a whole, and can thereby direct the process of theoretical thinking. This idea can allow for the possibility to theoretically formulate the inner coherence of reality as theoretical synthesis. It can function as a point of central unity that theoretically relates the modal aspects that were dissociated. We need a transcendent reference point from which we can receive an idea of such a central unity. To defend the dogma of the neutrality of theoretical thought, it is necessary to find this central reference point for theoretical synthesis within the *Gegenstand*-relation. The modal theory, however, has shown this to be impossible, for the *Gegenstand*-relation “offers in itself no bridge between the logical thought-aspect and its nonlogical ‘Gegenstand.’”⁸⁹ If the central reference point is sought in the *Gegenstand*-relation, it will lead to the absolutization of a specific modal meaning-kernel and reduce all other modalities to subcategories of the *Gegenstand*-relation.⁹⁰ It will cut all the lines of temporal coherence of the other modalities and will merely allow the analogical moments of the particular *Gegenstand*. If this takes place, there are as many possible theoretical syntheses as there are *Gegenstand*-relations. The theoretical syntheses that flow from the dogma of the neutrality of

⁸⁸Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought*, 12.

⁸⁹Dooyeweerd, *A New Criticism of Theoretical Thought*, 45.

⁹⁰Cf. Glanz, 41, n. 101.

theoretical thought lead to multiple types of reductionisms (biologism, physicism, historicism . . .). These types can be encountered in modern science and philosophy.⁹¹ To Dooyeweerd this multitude of reductionisms proves that they are not results of theoretical thought itself but testify to the possibility of different supratheoretical decisions that are brought in by the thinking I. By the structure of theoretical thought, the starting point for theoretical thought cannot be found in thought itself, but most come from a supratheoretical decision of the thinking I. This decision, which is basically a religious one, will determine the outcome of the theoretical synthesis.⁹²

How then can one find a supratemporal reference point that transcends the theoretical antithesis in such a way that the act of theoretical synthesis takes a direction that does justice to the structural datum? In asking this question, one is searching for a starting point that offers a total view on reality and is a necessity for any scientific thought at the moment it involves itself in synthetical thinking. This leads to the last problem in our theoretical thought-action. The self as the subject of all thinking activity is reflecting about itself.

1.3.2.3 The Third Problematic Characteristic: The Need of Self-reflection

Since a reference point for synthesis cannot be found in any law-structure of a single modality, unless one thinks reductionistically, the search for a supramodal starting point leads to that which guarantees the experience of the diversity-coherence: the modal-transcendent self. Structurally seen, theoretical thought is in need of a self that chooses a starting point that in turn makes theoretical synthesis possible. How can you get to the self, how to become aware of the self, and what actually is the self?

The question cannot be answered without self-knowledge. But how can you know yourself when a concept of the transcendent self is impossible? How can you arrive at self-knowledge when true self-reflection cannot be of theoretical character?

Biblically seen, the mystery of the central human ego is that it is nothing in itself. The central ego cannot be found in the modal diversity. In fact, as “soon as I try to grasp the I in a philosophical concept it recedes as a phantom and dissolves itself into nothingness. It cannot be determined by any modal aspect of our experience, since it is the central reference-point to which all fundamental modes of our temporal experience are related.”⁹³ If the transcendent self is intrinsically dependent, in which dependence relation can the I come to self-understanding? Is it the human I-thou relation, where we only seem to understand that our selfhood is nothing without the other?⁹⁴ Dooyeweerd answers in the negative, as this relation is as unable to come to

⁹¹Woudenberg, “Theorie van het Kennen,” 51.

⁹²Choi, 53.

⁹³Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought*, 25.

⁹⁴Ibid., 28.

self-realization as our relation to the temporal horizon of its experience. The reason for this is that the encounter with the thou confronts us with the same mystery as our own selfhood.⁹⁵

Clearly seen in the first way, the self necessarily needs to find its origin through its participation in the Archimedean standpoint, if it wants to be able to give its thought-acts a direction towards totality. Within the Archimedean standpoint the self comes to an understanding of the origin of its being and meaning. Because of the inner structure of theoretical thought, an ultimate idea of origin, also called "God," necessarily needs to be chosen.⁹⁶ True self-knowledge is therefore dependent on the knowledge of God; understanding of man is dependent upon the understanding of God. This understanding is generated through the relationship of the transcendent self with the divine creator, in whose image man is created, and who reveals himself through the words of the prophets within the human heart. This supratemporal self-identity penetrates all temporal activity and being of man in his experience and understanding, and allows man to engage in true theoretical synthesis in both science and philosophy.⁹⁷ Only by the understanding of the sovereignty of the true God, all idols (absolutizations of created parts) are excluded and all aspects of creation are taken as creation and not as gods. In contrast to real self-understanding, the transcendent self that does not truly understand itself always fails in its attempt to create a nonreductionist theoretical synthesis because of its reductionistic starting point.

To summarize, theoretical thought, seen structurally, needs a starting-point. The self will either find its true origin or will search for an idol that replaces the true origin. Idolization leads to a reductionistic concept of the totality of meaning, which in turn raises dualistic tensions, as the structural datum does not allow for any type of reductionism.⁹⁸

1.3.3 *The Religious Ground-motive*

Both ways of the transcendental critique of theoretical thought reveal the necessity of a supratemporal starting point. The supratemporal starting point supplies the self with the answers to the three supratemporal questions of philosophical thought. The need for these transcendental ideas (idea of coherence, unity, and origin) was revealed through the different theoretical thought-act problems that belong to the universal structure of theoretical thought. Dooyeweerd includes all the three transcendental ideas in the so-called cosmomic idea. The first idea concerns the modal coherence-diversity. It is the transcendental idea of the whole of our temporal horizon of experience with its diversity of modal aspects and their mutual interrelations. The second idea concerns the central unity. It is referred to by the idea of coherence as that which guarantees the unitary totality of the coherence-diversity. The

⁹⁵Ibid., 29.

⁹⁶Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, 55.

⁹⁷Ibid., 472.

⁹⁸Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought*, 31.

third idea concerns the origin of the totality of meaning. It relates all that is relative to the absolute and relates man as *imago dei* to the *deus*.

All three ideas are transcendental in character, for they spring not from the temporal diversity nor the transcendent self. They are instead provided by the religious ground-motive or man's religion.⁹⁹ This ground-motive functions as a *dynamis* that keeps a religious community together. The "religious ground-motive is the central mainspring of the entire attitude of life and thought"¹⁰⁰ and the condition for the specific content of the three transcendental ideas that express the starting point for any theoretical action. Because the transcendental ideas are required by the nature of theoretical thought, it is by means of the religious ground-motive that philosophical thought is controlled and a basic framework of interpretation created.

According to Dooyeweerd, every untrue religious ground-motive is of dialectical nature. "Dialectic" here means that there are two absolutizations of something creational that contrast irrevocably with other aspects of creation. The result of this dialectical antithesis is that the theoretical synthesis that is produced under its influence has many irreconcilable tensions and always lacks real unity. The source of the absolutizations of two creational aspects is to be found in the dogma of the autonomy of reason. This dogma motivates man in his theoretical pursuit to search for unity and coherence in aspects of temporal reality. The absolutization of a specific *Gegenstand*-relation automatically forces another modal aspect (functioning opposition) into a divinization, to battle its reduced status as mere subcategory. Dooyeweerd describes this process when he says "any idol that has been created by the absolutization of a modal aspect evokes its counter idol."¹⁰¹ The reason for such a "counter-divinization" is that the modal diversity is characterized by an indissoluble interrelation in which all modal aspects are relative. They relate analogically and not genetically to each other on the basis of their sphere sovereignty. Only the biblical religious ground-motive can provide an "undialectical" starting point, as it warns against any absolutization of the relative-creational.

1.3.4 Summary

We have seen by means of the second way of the transcendental critique that neither philosophical nor theoretical thought by its very inner structure can be autonomous, but necessarily demands a religious starting point of supramodal or supratheoretical character. Any religious starting point that is chosen, whether it is of real supramodal character or expressed in a *Gegenstand*-relation, structurally functions as supramodal and determines theoretical synthetical conceptions by directing the ideas of coherence, unity, and origin. In both ways of the transcendental critique, the need of a theoretical synthesis is the crux of philosophical thinking generally and

⁹⁹Woudenberg, "Theorie van het Kennen," 52.

¹⁰⁰Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, 63.

¹⁰¹Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought*, 37.

theoretical thought specifically. Thus, philosophical and scientific thought cannot be absolute, but is fallible like every other human activity. Only the origin of creation has an independence-status that can be considered truly absolute.¹⁰² The religious starting point of man's thinking is delivered in the revelation of the creator God, which leads our fallible human activity to come to increasingly understand the meaning of relative reality.

It is the dogmatic view of the neutrality of theoretical thought that turned fallible and relative human activity into something absolute and consequently leads to exclusivistic, reductionistic ideas.

One needs to keep in mind, however, that with the discovery of the nonneutrality of abstract rational thinking, rational normativity was not lost. Rational thinking is through the normative principles of the logical modal aspect of universal normative character. At the same time it is also relative.

1.4 Conclusion

For our reflection on methodology within biblical theology, Dooyeweerd's analysis is impacting. Dooyeweerd's transcendental critique of thought triggers the question to what extent the exegetical methodologies developed so far are influenced by transcendental ideas that absolutize one modal aspect of created reality. Is the unity and coherence of the writings of Holy Scripture not often sought in a *wetskring* of a specific modal kernel?

Let me give two examples that seem to affirm the latter question:

1. The depth-psychological approach of biblical exegesis tries to explain the value and truth of the biblical writings exclusively from the viewpoint of the Freudian principle of "individuation" and other related perspectives. For theologians like the well-known Eugen Drewermann, exegesis is performed in complete analogy to *Traumdeutung* as basically developed by Freud and Jung.¹⁰³ Biblical narratives and teachings are therefore primarily seen as the objectification of complex inner psychological processes which are to be decoded. Thus, the origin and motivation for the development of biblical/religious texts is located in the psychological *wetskring* of the complex process of man's self-discovery. Such argument results from the absolutization of the psychic modality.

2. Sociohistorical methodology (cf. Albertz, Lemche, Crüsemann, Schottroff and others) attempts to find the coherence and origin of biblical texts as of crucial methodological importance.¹⁰⁴ As consequence, the history of religion is made equivalent to the history of socioeconomic development. Thus, biblical descriptions of God's intervention in human history are easily reduced to interests of specific social classes. This type of exegesis results from the absolutization of the economic or social modality.

As Dooyeweerd pointed out, theoretical thinking runs the risk of absolutizing an aspect of created being. The laws of creational aspects can

¹⁰²Ibid., 54.

¹⁰³Oeming, 103-104.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 46-51.

start to deliver the content of the transcendental ideas, which influence the development of methodologies by which we interpret the world in general and biblical texts specifically.

Consequently, Talstra's call (see "Introduction") for "order" in regard to the plurality of methodologies is not enough. To move beyond our problematic methodological situation, one needs to uncover the transcendental ideas that are at work in specific methodologies and give them their proper nonautonomous place within the complex activity of interpretation.

However, this last suggestion cannot be realized without acknowledging that human reason is fundamentally dependent on transcendental ideas. Dooyeweerd explained that the very dogma of the autonomy of reason is responsible for the many different and mutually exclusive conceptions of reason. This dogma allowed the many absolutizations of theoretical abstractions to go unrecognized and thus a diversity of opposing philosophical views concerning human experience of reality were formulated—all of them lacking a truly critical justification. Thus, critical self-reflection for the biblical theologian is urgently required if he wants to receive his transcendental ideas from the One who is really autonomous.

These conclusions are drawn in the awareness that Dooyeweerd's argumentation has not yet been critically analyzed. This analysis will be featured in the following articles. However, the reader might already sense that there are persuasive reasons to appreciate Dooyeweerd's modal theory and his conception of the nonneutrality of human thinking to a certain extent, even though his line of argument must also be criticized.

Having introduced Dooyeweerd's structural analysis of the theoretical thought-act, we are prepared to compare and contrast it with the phenomenological structure of Reason and its biblical interpretation as it is presented by Fernando Canale. The understanding of the phenomenological structure of Reason will help us to set up a critical perspective on Dooyeweerd's understanding of thought-acts and allow us to provide an even deeper insight into the general structure of human understanding. The second article of this series, then, will introduce the phenomenological structure of Reason and its biblical interpretation.

THE EYE OF CHARITY: JÜRGEN MOLTSMANN'S PRACTICAL THEODICY

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Introduction

In recent decades there has been a significant shift toward privileging practical approaches to the theodicy problem. It is frequently argued that the conundrum of God and human suffering by its very nature does not lend itself, existentially speaking, to detached theological reflection. The purported “answers” provided in such discursive fashion are portrayed as irrelevant at best and complicit in justifying radical evil at worst. In this article I will examine the validity of such claims by highlighting some of the key theological impulses entailed in Jürgen Moltmann’s practical theodicy that can be helpfully clustered around the fundamental tropes of hope, solidarity, and life. It will be noted how Moltmann’s approach to this problematic can only be properly elucidated when situated within the wider ecology of his theological convictions. In the concluding remarks of this article I will provide a brief critical overview of his theological contribution to the issue in question.

1. Theodicy and the Promise of Hope

The confluence of eschatology and praxis has been a trademark of Moltmann’s theological thinking since at least the publication of the *Theology of Hope*¹ in 1967. More than just a mythologized appendix to more urgent theological themes, “the teleological principle of thought,” so Moltmann contends in his seminal work, “penetrates the very heart of the Christian message.”² Consequently, Christianity is best defined as “eschatology, hope, forward-looking and revolutionizing and transforming the present.”³ Whenever this hope is abandoned, argues Moltmann, we are left with a world purged of transcendence. Consequently, we are doomed to a pathos of apathetic sameness,⁴ encapsulated in a worldview “in which nothing new can ever happen. It is the world of the eternal return of the same thing.”⁵ The

¹Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, trans. James W. Leitch (London: SCM, 1967).

²Jürgen Moltmann, *The Future of Creation: Collected Essays*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 90.

³Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 16.

⁴For an excellent critique of postmodern formalistic conception of hope, see James K. A. Smith, “Determined Hope: A Phenomenology of Christian Expectation,” in *The Future of Hope: Christian Tradition amid Modernity and Postmodernity*, ed. Miroslav Volf and William H. Katerberg (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

⁵Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, trans. Margaret Kohl, Gifford Lectures: 1984-1985 (San Francisco: Harper & Row,

only possible notion of transcendence that could possibly be conjured up here is one where the “qualitative infinity of heaven is . . . replaced by the quantitatively indefinite endlessness of the universe’s extension . . . [a] transformation of qualitative infinity into quantitative endlessness.”⁶

Moltmann is equally critical of Ernst Bloch’s rendering of the category *novum* in purely immanentist terms, where the revolutionary capacity of the future is seen as contained within the present possibilities of the world and is expected to evolve within the process of future’s becoming.⁷ “According to Bloch’s ontology,” writes Douglas Meeks, “. . . the future comes from the not-yetness of the present: the *futurum* comes out of the process of the womb *physis* (nature).”⁸ Starting from such a vantage point, “Bloch’s philosophy of utopia presents certain inalienable, not-yet-conscious and not-yet-realized potentialities of the human self, providing an alternative to the alienated, reified existence of the capitalist money economy.” The potentialities in question “offer hope for a revolutionary future utopia, beyond the oppressive bureaucratization of life by the State.”⁹ Moltmann as a Christian theologian rejects this approach and argues to the contrary that the *novum* of Christ’s resurrection contains something beyond our possibilities, something to be brought about by God’s free act in the future.¹⁰ The resurrection of Christ is seen as the *novum ultimum* standing over against “the similarity in ever-recurring reality and also as against the comparative dissimilarity of new possibilities emerging in history.” As such, “the resurrection of Christ does not mean a possibility within the world and its history, but a new possibility altogether for the world, for existence, and for history.”¹¹

In the aftermath of the *Theology of Hope*, however, questions have been raised whether terms such as “promise” and “hope” betray the presence of a modified eschatological theodicy that inadvertently allocates evil a redemptive space within some grand divine teleology. Moltmann responds to these criticisms by saying that eschatology, at least on his terms, “is not a final theodicy according to the motto: if the end is good, everything is good.”¹² In distinction to some other forms of theodicy, the theology of hope is not to

1985), 163.

⁶Ibid., 163-164.

⁷For the role of Bloch’s thought in Moltmann’s theology, see M. Douglas Meeks, *Origins of the Theology of Hope* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 16ff.

⁸Ibid., 85.

⁹Kornel Zathureczky, “A Critique of the Messianic Theology of Jürgen Moltmann through the Messianic Philosophy of Walter Benjamin: Staying with the Negative” (Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Methodist University, 2005), 42.

¹⁰Meeks, 86.

¹¹Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 179.

¹²Jürgen Moltmann, *Hope and Planning*, trans. Margaret Clarkson (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 50.

be taken as a disguised attempt at justifying suffering. While being aware that any belief in a benevolent God has to fall back on the notion of trust sooner or later, he at the same time dispenses with those theological narrations that locate such trust in the “mystery of the divine counsel,” in predestination, in God’s pedagogical employment of affliction, i.e. in all those attempts at reconciling evil and providence. In place of such explanations we are offered a fiduciary certainty that God will eventually work everything out perfectly. Moltmann’s eschatological theodicy is not an explanation; it is a confession. It is an invitation to believe despite God’s chilling silence on this matter.

But doesn’t all this smack of ideology, one could ask, a finely-tuned device for postponing justice until some imaginary future? Moltmann would certainly say, No! “Only in its aberrant forms,” argues Richard Bauckham on behalf of Moltmann, “and probably less often than is sometimes supposed, has resurrection faith been an opiate, a justification for leaving this world unchanged.” A prayerfully nurtured eschatological consciousness has “often sustained people in otherwise unbearable conditions which they had no means of changing and enabled them to resist the dehumanizing power of such conditions.”¹³ Real hope is a mobilizing power leading to action, because “hope finds in Christ not only the consolation *in* suffering, but also the protest of the divine *against* suffering.”¹⁴ Such anticipatory consciousness is a “poetic imagination” or “productive fantasy” of sorts that helps us envision “the still unrealized future in order to anticipate and shape it in thought and pictures.”¹⁵ Here Moltmann takes on Nietzsche’s revulsion against Christianity’s supposed other-worldliness by defining Christian hope as that which “moves men and women to ‘remain true to the earth’, even in the face of individual, collective and universal death.”¹⁶ A biblically faithful and culturally relevant political theology is but a concrete outworking of this vision and as such presents, as Moltmann specifically claims, “the practical answering to the theodicy problem.”¹⁷ Such political theology offers a clear reminder that our penultimate efforts, our little hopes are not useless, but are, instead, set “within a horizon of ultimate meaning and hope,” ensuring that “none need be left without hope.”¹⁸ “The question

¹³Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995), 45-46.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁵Jürgen Moltmann, “Where There Is Hope, There Is Religion,” in *The Experiment of Hope* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 23.

¹⁶Jürgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 264. Also see Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, trans. Walter Arnold Kaufmann (New York: Viking Press, 1966), Prologue, §3.

¹⁷Jürgen Moltmann, “Theology as Eschatology,” in *The Future of Hope: Theology as Eschatology*, ed. Frederick Herzog (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), 47-48. For this quote I am indebted to Bauckham, 85.

¹⁸Bauckham, 45.

of theodicy,” adds Moltmann, “leads us into these struggles. Only the future of the coming God leads us out of them.”¹⁹

But how long? the cry goes. Isn't the prolongation of suffering a theodicy problem *par excellence*? “Why then does the kingdom of freedom,” as Moltmann puts it, “not arrive all at once? What justifies its delay? Doesn't the problem of theodicy return to Christianity in the form of ‘delayed parousia?’”²⁰ Isn't this simply a veiled attempt at begging the question? Moltmann does not provide an answer, nor can he, given the self-imposed conceptual restrictions. He can only repeat his basic axiom that “no one can answer the theodicy question in this world, and no one can get rid of it. Life in this world means living with this open question, and seeking the future in which the desire for God will be fulfilled, suffering will be overcome, and what has been lost will be restored.”²¹ Indeed,

only with the resurrection of the dead, the murdered and the gassed, only with the healing of those in despair who bear lifelong wounds, only with the abolition of all rule and authority, only with the annihilation of death will the Son hand over the kingdom to the Father. Then God will turn his sorrow into eternal joy. This will be the sign of the completion of the trinitarian history of God and the end of world history, the overcoming of the history of man's sorrow and the fulfillment of his history of hope.²²

2. Theodicy and Kenotic Solidarity

When we turn to Moltmann's other seminal work, *The Crucified God*, we note that the notion of *promissio* as developed in the *Theology of Hope* has been “deepened by the additional theme of God's loving solidarity with the world in its suffering.”²³ The question now becomes, where is God *now* in our suffering? Throughout the book he has “in mind those people who because of their exposure to suffering are not receptive to the anticipation of a future resurrection but still could be reached with the message of the crucified one.”²⁴ He takes seriously Ivan Karamazov's version of protest atheism and admits the force of his challenge:

¹⁹Moltmann, *Hope and Planning*, 51.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 44.

²¹Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 49.

²²Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, trans. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (London: SCM, 1974), 278. For this quote I am indebted to Kenneth Surin, *Theology and the Problem of Evil* (London: B. Blackwell, 1986), 129.

²³See Bauckham, 11.

²⁴Hermannus Heiko Miskotte, “Das Leiden Ist in Gott,” in *Diskussion Über Jürgen Moltmanns Buch Der Gekreuzigte Gott*, ed. Michael Welker (Munich: Christlicher Kaiser, 1979), 90. Translation by the author.

It is in suffering that the whole human question about God arises; for incomprehensible suffering calls the God of men and women in question. The suffering of a single innocent child is an irrefutable rebuttal of the notion of the almighty and kindly God in heaven. For a God who lets the innocent suffer and who permits senseless death is not worthy to be called God at all. Wherever the suffering of the living in all its manifold forms pierces our consciousness with its pain, we lose our childish primal confidence.²⁵

Moltmann essentially sides with Ivan's refutation of traditional theism and admits that the value of human dignity does not allow for something beyond itself that would justify the ruining or extinction of human life. "There is no explanation of suffering," he claims, "which is capable of obliterating pain, and no consolation of a higher wisdom that could assuage it. The person who cries out in pain over suffering has a dignity of its own which neither men nor gods can rob him of."²⁶ He admits that

suffering as punishment for sin is an explanation that has a very limited value. The desire to explain suffering is already highly questionable in itself. Does an explanation not lead us to justify suffering and give it permanence? Does it not lead the suffering person to come to terms with his suffering, and to declare himself in agreement with it? And does this not mean that he gives up hope of overcoming suffering?²⁷

The traditional theistic response will not do any good, so thinks Moltmann, because "the question of the existence of God is, in itself, a minor issue in the face of the question of his righteousness in the world." According to him, "this question of suffering and revolt is not answered by any cosmological argument for the existence of God or any theism, but is rather provoked by both of these."²⁸

Moltmann's iconoclastic deconstructing of divine *apatheia* rests significantly on his persistence in asking the question, "what does the cross of Jesus mean for God himself?"²⁹ On his count, what sets Christ's death apart from other otherwise horrible deaths is the ontological aporia that Jesus experiences in the fear of his eternal separation from the Father. It is a death marked by "a unique abandonment by God,"³⁰ claims Moltmann, where we find God taking side against himself.³¹ In this event a "stasis" within the being

²⁵Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 47.

²⁶Ibid., 47-48.

²⁷Ibid., 53.

²⁸Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 221.

²⁹Ibid., 201. For a recent defense of divine impassability, see David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

³⁰Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 149.

³¹See Bauckham, 89.

of God takes place so that Jesus' cry of dereliction could be modified so as to say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken thyself."³² "We must not allow ourselves," he writes, "to overlook this 'enmity between God and God.' . . . The cross of the Son divides God from God to the utmost degree of enmity and distinction."³³ "There God disputes with God; there God cries out to God, there God dies in God."³⁴ In this process the Father and the Son are so united in their will "that they present a single surrendering movement."³⁵ Accordingly, the cross presents us with a new threshold even for God. It is an event that "reaches into the very depths of the Godhead and . . . puts its impress on the trinitarian life of God in eternity."³⁶ At this cross-section of the trinitarian history of God, then, something happens that "does not pass God without leaving a trace"—the crucified God becomes God's eternal signature.³⁷ Tyron Inbody summarizes Moltmann's point here as follows:

Although God is not changeable in every respect, God is free to change Godself, able to allow Godself to be changed by others of God's own free will by the incarnation in Christ. Furthermore, God does not suffer like creatures; creatures suffer unwillingly, but in Christ God voluntarily opens Godself to the possibility of being affected by another. Suffering, therefore, is not a deficiency in God, but God suffers out of the fullness of God's being, that is, out of God's love.³⁸

More could be said of that, particularly on the issue whether Moltmann's grammar of God with its apparent *patripassian* tendencies presents a confusion of God and history.³⁹ Of our immediate interest, however, is the undeniable power of Moltmann's vision that leads us "beyond the poverty-stricken God-concepts of theism," presenting us not so much with a "new idea of God," as a "new God-situation."⁴⁰ It clearly speaks to the truth that God, by taking into himself the contradiction of the world and identifying himself with its condition, becomes vulnerable and susceptible to the mutability that the experience of suffering brings with itself. A person that suffers, that is blinded by pain and afflicted, cries out to God in the incomprehensibility of his or

³²See Miskotte. The citation of Moltmann is from *The Crucified God*, 151.

³³Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 152.

³⁴Moltmann, *The Future of Creation*, 65.

³⁵Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 174.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 173.

³⁷Moltmann, *The Future of Creation*, 76. For a further exploration of this theme, see, e.g., Eberhard Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).

³⁸Tyron Inbody, *The Transforming God: An Interpretation of Suffering and Evil* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 170.

³⁹For a recent critique of this position, see Hart, 155-175.

⁴⁰Meeks, 147.

her situation, looks at the crucified God and is able to see, not the silence of divine aloofness, but the ultimate pathos of God. “This in itself brings his liberation from suffering. . . . In the experience of God’s love the sufferer recovers his sense of human worth and the hope which maintain his protest against suffering and enable him to resist its dehumanizing power.”⁴¹

Only under the presupposition ‘God in the face of the crucified one’, i.e. God no longer as the heavenly opponent but rather as the earthly and humane God in the crucified one, does the cross of Christ acquire its full judicial significance and future meaning within the question of theodicy. God is no longer the defendant in the human question of theodicy; rather, the answer is found in this question itself. The cross of Christ then becomes the ‘Christian theodicy’—a self-justification of God in which judgment and damnation are taken up by God himself, so that many may live.⁴²

For Moltmann, therefore, the cross event rightly understood could indeed be a message of comfort to those that suffer. Theodicy is resolved, argues Dorothee Sölle, “into *theophany*: the God who is not an executioner must become a co-sufferer, one who indwells (incarnates) himself in the suffering realities of his creation.”⁴³ As Moltmann puts it,

Among all the un-numbered and un-named tortured men and women, that ‘Suffering-Servant of God’ is always to be found. They are his companions in his suffering, because he has become their companion in theirs. The tortured Christ looks at us with the eyes of tortured men and women. Of course, not every tortured person feels this subjectively, not even every tortured Christian. Of course, ‘the dark night of the soul’ is to be found too in the torture chambers and the isolation cells, that night where all bearings are lost and every feeling dries up. But objectively the tortured Christ is present in the tortured, and the God-forsaken Christ in the God-forsaken.⁴⁴

Although Moltmann would be first to admit that that does not solve the problem of suffering, it is such interpretation of reality that makes God an ally in all forms of liberating praxis through which conditions of suffering are exposed and challenged. The matrix of interpretation that legitimizes abusive, violent, and annihilating conditions, relating them in some way to God’s purpose, is here radically deconstructed. God is on the side of the victims; he suffers and is crucified with them. “Christ’s cross stands between all the countless crosses which line the paths of the powerful and the violent, from Spartacus to the concentration camps and to the people who have died of hunger or who have ‘disappeared’ in Latin America.”⁴⁵

⁴¹Bauckham, 89-90.

⁴²Moltmann, *Hope and Planning*, 43.

⁴³Surin, 119.

⁴⁴Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 65-66.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 39.

3. *Theodicy and the Affirmation of Life*

There is no doubt that the increasing dominance of pneumatological categories in Moltmann's theology has led to some very exciting and intricate theological insights. His particular take on the *filioque* debate, his sharp criticism of Barthian revelation/experience dualism, his development of ecclesiology, where the church is defined as an eschatological creation of the Spirit—these among others are issues Moltmann tackles with creative lucidity. However, it is his treatment of the Holy Spirit as the *fons vitae*, the Well of Life, that is particularly relevant for this discussion. Starting from the conviction that “God is in all things and all things are in God,” Moltmann begs for a theology of life that is critical, among other things, of excessive anthropocentrism, of all rhetorical evocations of power, domination, violence, and of all legitimatizations of the “culture of death” we inhabit. In such a theology the traditional theological language of justification and sanctification is pushed beyond its original soteriological ramifications in a concerted effort to affirm life in all its complexity and interconnectedness. Accepting the christological origin and eschatological goal of God's Spirit, he goes on to develop a pneumatology expanded beyond its traditional redemptive and ecclesiological confinements as found, for instance, in Yves Congar. A widened cosmological framework, or the “discovery of God's cosmic breath” as Moltmann has it, enables him to construct a doctrine of the Holy Spirit relevant to the concerns of humanity at the beginning of a new millennium. “The purpose of Moltmann's revision of Western pneumatology,” writes Kornel Zathureczky,

is to re-infuse the doctrine of the Spirit with the eschatological energies found in messianic expectations. It is on the horizon of these messianic expectations that the artificial and detrimental separation between Christology and pneumatology, immanence and transcendence, and finally creation and redemption is irrevocably removed.⁴⁶

One of the more interesting moves Moltmann has made in developing his pneumatology was to appropriate the insights of early rabbinical theology and the kabalistic doctrine of the Shekinah. The indwelling Spirit of God, the Shekinah, permeates the entire cosmos with life-giving energy, preserving it in life, and all the while transforming it into a new life. “Through the powers and potentialities of the Spirit,” Moltmann writes, “the Creator indwells the creatures he has made, animates them, holds them in life, and leads them into the future of his kingdom.”⁴⁷ It is a life-giving energy of healing and wholeness, an ever-present force wooing and prompting us toward different forms of penultimate integrative existence. The Shekinah is not to be seen simply as “a divine attribute. It is the presence of God himself. But it is not God in his essential omnipresence. It is his special,

⁴⁶Zathureczky, 102.

⁴⁷Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 14.

willed and promised presence in the world.”⁴⁸ It also draws our attention to the “*sensibility of God the Spirit*. The Spirit indwells. The Spirit suffers with the suffering. The Spirit is grieved and quenched.”⁴⁹

To fully articulate the kenotic ecstasy of primordial Beauty, Moltmann draws together all the threads of the Shekinah-concept and weaves them into a tapestry in which the Holy Spirit of God is understood as the immanent-transcendence of God in time and space as both God’s self-identity and God’s self-differentiation. Here Moltmann calls upon Franz Rosenzweig’s use of the Hegelian term of “God’s self-distinction” as the most appropriate terminology in that it

preserves the sovereignty of God above the suffering history of his Shekinah. If we talk about a divine ‘self-distinction’ of this kind, then we are assuming a difference in God between what distinguishes and what is distinguished, between the self-surrendering and the self-surrendered God, but we are still at the same time holding fast to the identity of the One God.⁵⁰

This concept of the Shekinah, according to Moltmann, “points towards the *kenosis of the Spirit*. In his Shekinah, God renounces his impassibility and becomes able to suffer because he is willing to love. The theophany of the Spirit is not anthropomorphism, but is made possible through his indwelling in created being.”⁵¹ Such pneumatological rendering of the Shekinah helps us flesh out the idea of God’s solidarity beyond God’s unique historical identification with suffering humanity on the cross. We are not just consoled by the fact that God became a human being, and that through his life and death he has shown us that he genuinely participates in our sufferings, but also that he feels our pain and identifies with us as in the here and now.

Unfortunately, all too often we seem to be “paralyzed by a chilly apathy.”⁵² Our society’s attitude “toward the starving people of the third world, the hardcore unemployed, the migrant workers, the prisoners, the handicapped, and the so-called unfit” is, according to Moltmann completely unacceptable. “People such as these are ruined not because of their inability but because of our indifference.”⁵³ We are not any longer moved by misery. In such a context, “knowledge doesn’t mean power any longer. Knowledge means powerlessness. . . . Humanity is likely to die of apathy of soul like this

⁴⁸Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 49.

⁴⁹Ibid., 51.

⁵⁰Ibid., 48.

⁵¹Ibid., 51.

⁵²Jürgen Moltmann, “The Passion for Life,” in *The Passion for Life: A Messianic Lifestyle*, ed. Jürgen Moltmann and Douglas Meeks, trans. Douglas Meeks (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 21-22.

⁵³Ibid., 20.

before it founders in social or military catastrophes.”⁵⁴ The unfortunate consequence is that “instead of an open and vulnerable society, we have a closed and unassailable society with apathetic structures. The living, open, vulnerable life is poured into steel and concrete. That is the modern death called apathy: life without suffering [*Leiden*], life without passionate feeling [*Leidenschaft*].”⁵⁵ In response, Moltmann proposes a spirituality of life able to “drive out the bacillus of resignation, and heal painful remembrances.”⁵⁶ The *ruach* of God “quickens our senses” and we can again “participate in life.” This “sensuousness of the divine Spirit”⁵⁷ breaks down the cancer of apathy individually and socially. We sigh with the oppressed and express a solidarity that has always been “the real sign of the Holy Spirit in history.”⁵⁸ Such spirituality of life is one of conscientization, deconstructing apathetic structures in which we seem to be enmeshed. It is a protest theodicy *par excellence*, a pneumatological infusion of the power of resurrection which calls us to cry, but not despair; to experience pain, yet have an unquenchable hope; longing for the face of God, yet decrying the forces of death today. It reminds us that loving God means to “believe in the beauty of bodies, the rhythm of movements, the shining of eyes, the embraces, the feelings, the scents, the sounds of all his protean creation. . . . [Because] the experience of God deepens the experiences of life. . . . It awakens the unconditional yes to life.”⁵⁹ It propels us to a determined commitment “to guide all things towards their new being.”⁶⁰

4. Theodicy as Vision and Praxis

John Swinton in his book *The Rage of Compassion* defines practical theodicy as “a mode of resistance that addresses issues of evil and human suffering through engagement in particular forms of specifically Christian practices that are carried individually and corporately.” The goal of such an approach is that “by practicing these gestures of redemption, to enable people to continue to love God in face of evil and suffering and in so doing prevent tragic suffering from becoming evil.”⁶¹ Swinton himself proposes the following practices as specific embodiments of the universal call to Christo-praxis:

⁵⁴Jürgen Moltmann, *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 21.

⁵⁵Moltmann, “The Passion for Life,” 21-22.

⁵⁶Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 95.

⁵⁷Moltmann, *The Source of Life*, 86.

⁵⁸John J. O’Donnell, *Trinity and Temporality: The Christian of God in the Light of Process Theology and the Theology of Hope* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 122-123.

⁵⁹Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 98, 96.

⁶⁰Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 224.

⁶¹John Swinton, *Raging with Compassion: Pastoral Responses to the Problem of Evil* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 85.

listening to silence, lament, forgiveness, thoughtfulness, and hospitality.⁶² Moltmann could not agree more. As we have seen, it is his contention—to use Bauckham’s summary of Moltmann’s position—that any “adequate theological response to the problem of suffering must contain an initiative for overcoming suffering. If it is not to justify suffering, it must, on the contrary, help maintain the protest against suffering and convert it into an initiative for overcoming suffering.”⁶³ Such a praxis-centered impetus is clearly derived from the wider ecology of his theological convictions, here grouped under the key theological tropes of hope, solidarity, and life.

It is clear then that the theodicy question in Moltmann’s thought has undergone a significant conceptual relocation. He clearly realizes that the “discrepancy between the ‘explanatory space’ occupied by the modern theodicy, for whom theodicy is essentially a matter of making judgments, and the ‘explanatory space’ inhabited by those who seek to combat evil in all its historical manifestations”⁶⁴ is simply too great to be overlooked. We can no longer be satisfied with treating the theodicy question as a puzzle-solving exercise. By moving this perennial question, as Moltmann has done, into the realm of political praxis and spirituality, we have changed the nature of the problem, making it explicitly a religious one; a problem whose only proper articulation is to be found in the liturgies, creeds, narratives, practices, songs, and prayers of the *communio sanctorum*.

Approached from another angle, we could say that Moltmann’s theodicy rests on a rhetoric of radical *metanoia*, an act of strategic reorientation of our gaze to the reality of God as the Ground of emerging *novum*, the self-diffusive Good manifested through the nonviolent Eucharistic hospitality of the crucified Christ. Such ocular conversion—“seeing” God for who he *really* is—invites us to affirm the fundamental goodness of God as one who is for us and with us. Our God is a suffering God who took our pain into himself. He is in solidarity with us, gives us hope, and quickens us to life through the Spirit of life. To recall one of the images mentioned above, his cross is one cross among many crosses; or as Alfred N. Whitehead’s famous adage aptly puts it, “God is the companion—a fellow-sufferer who understands.”⁶⁵ Gone then is the understanding of God as an inflated and apathetic Loner, “possessing a number of clearly specifiable characteristics”⁶⁶ such as omnipotence and omniscience that then have to be brought into congruence with existing reality by inventing some forms of causality, some ways of linking suffering to God. Such reconciliatory exercises with their palette of powerful euphemisms are exposed as handy devices for ideologically tainted justifications of evil.

This reminds us of the kind of argument that David Bentley Hart is

⁶²See *ibid.*, 245.

⁶³Bauckham, 81-82.

⁶⁴Surin, 21.

⁶⁵Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York: Free Press, 1978), 351.

⁶⁶Surin, 4-5.

pursuing in his *Doors of the Sea*,⁶⁷ where the answer to the theodicy problem—in so far as we can call it an “answer”—lies in this sort of ocular conversion.⁶⁸ The answer in question is not arrived at through some modally Leibnizian logical deduction—he after all affirms Ivan Karamazov’s “rage against explanations”—it is a matter of conversion of sight, of seeing a different world. Hart builds upon thinkers such as Gregory of Nyssa, Bonaventure, Maximus the Confessor, and Thomas Traherne in crafting his own aesthetic response to the theodicy problem, where we are cajoled and invited to view the world as suffused with God’s benevolent presence despite the reality of unrelenting evil.⁶⁹ Like Job, the Christian is schooled

to see two realities at once, one world (as it were) within another: one world as we all know it, in all its beauty and terror, grandeur and dreariness, delight and anguish; and the other the world in its first and ultimate truth, not simply “nature” but “creation,” an endless sea of glory, radiant with the beauty of God in every part, innocent of all violence. To see it this way is to rejoice and mourn at once, to regard the world as a mirror of infinite beauty, bas glimpsed through the veil of death; it is to see creation in chains, but beautiful as in the beginning of days.⁷⁰

Moltmann’s theology is fertile with conceptual resources to help us sustain precisely such a vision of cruciform Beauty.⁷¹ We could say then that theodicy on this count does not take the form of a tightly reasoned argument for the simple purpose of supplying us with a logically consistent discourse on the nature of God; the framework is not one of justification, but the conversion of “sight.” Clearly, the proper dealing with this existential aporia necessitates

⁶⁷David Bentley Hart, *The Doors of the Sea: Where Was God in the Tsunami?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

⁶⁸For a highly illuminative discussion of the centrality of ocular conversion, see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 1, *Seeing the Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1982), esp. §I. Note in particular the twofold aspect of the theological aesthetics: theology of sight and theology of rapture.

⁶⁹Miroslav Volf, dealing more specifically with memories of wrongs suffered, proposes his own version of ocular orientation, that of remembering. He reminds us that “every single Christian confession is an exercise in memory” (*The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006], 97.) One important way in which we are to address such memories is to juxtapose them and in turn define them in light of sacred memories such as that of identity, community, and God (96-102).

⁷⁰Hart, *The Doors of the Sea*, 60-61. For a helpful discussion on the consolatory power of mystical experience, see chap. 8 of Michael Stoeber, *Evil and the Mystics’ God: Towards a Mystical Theodicy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

⁷¹What Hans Urs Balthasar notes about Augustine on this point is certainly true of Moltmann as well: “He . . . sees Christ’s *kenosis* as the revelation of the beauty and the fullness of God” (*The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 2, *Studies in Theological Styles: Clerical Styles* [San Francisco: Ignatius, 1983], 123).

a discourse of personal and communal transformation. If someone like Pseudo-Dionysius, to name but one example, is correct in his claim that the correct understanding of the divine is fundamentally dependent on the spiritual and moral aptitude or receptivity of the Christian⁷²—the patristic epistemological principle of *analogia* between the knower and the known is evoked here—than we can see how an authentically Christian engagement of the theodicy question cannot itself be separated from this sort of spiritual initiation. Because “to see the world as it should be seen, and so see the true glory of God reflected in it” as a counter-resonance to the pervasive presence of evil, “requires the cultivation of charity, of an eye rendered limpid with love.”⁷³

While I could not agree more with the conjoining of this specific brand of theological aesthetics and praxis, there are still nagging questions that remain. For one, Moltmann does not tell us anything about the nature of God’s impotence, or to state it differently, the reasons for God’s nonintervention in some or most instances of human suffering. For it does not seem that Moltmann’s God cannot intervene, if by “cannot” we imply some sort of metaphysical restriction as we have it in deism, pantheism, process panentheism, or some form of open theism. That is to say, if Moltmann believes that in the coming kingdom of God all our wrenching queries will be given a satisfactory answer, we need to wonder about the sort of answer he envisions we will receive. If it is not to be found in the meta-framework of God’s inscrutable providence, or in metaphysical purification implied in Irenaeanian soul-making theodicy, or perhaps in some sort of divine self-limitation as in different variations of warfare theodicy, what is it then? While Moltmann does not need to give us an explanation—after all, as Hart rightly observes, our “Euclidian” minds are profoundly limited in grasping the nature of ultimate reality⁷⁴—he at least needs to tell us *why* it is that we don’t have an explanation. A simple fallback to practical theodicy that does not attend to this issue is an intellectual sleight of hand; it wrongly assumes that our claims to ignorance somehow make us impervious to the devastating effect of Ivan’s critique. The paradox of a compassionate, suffering, yet powerful God who is mute in the face of senseless suffering is *the* existential question we are faced with; there is nothing obscene, spiritually speaking, in struggling with this issue. In this regard, Terrence Willey’s blanket claim that traditional approaches to theodicy are to be seen as addressing “abstract individual ‘intellects’ which have purely theoretical problems of understanding evil,”⁷⁵ is an oversimplification to say the least.

⁷²See *ibid.*, 175.

⁷³Hart, *The Doors of the Sea*, 60.

⁷⁴See *ibid.*, 38.

⁷⁵Terrence W. Tilley, *The Evils of Theodicy* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, n.d.), 229. For a recent exploration of the problem of evil in modern philosophy, see the important study by Susan Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

Perhaps changing the emphasis would be more fruitful. The problem with traditional theodicy “answers” is not that they are always essentially misguided as proponents of practical theodicy tend to argue—one should resent the imputation that the search for such answers makes one somehow complicit with evil—but that they always come too early or too late when our own personal pain or the pain of those within our circle of concern is addressed. The unanswerableness of the theodicy question is thus essentially tied to our human finitude marked by an ontology of concentricity. The further “out” someone on my circles of concern is—my family, my church, my neighborhood, my city, my country, and so on—the more the emphatic pathos naturally weakens, and the more I am able to offer a general theodicy.⁷⁶ I am only really able to ask, “Why me?” or “Why my wife, child, friend?” So theodicy fails not in the sense that it doesn’t offer an good explanation—Alvin Plantinga’s free-will defense provides in my view a more-than-cogent response to the question, *Si Deus est, unde malum?*—but that I am not able to absorb it, completely anyway, at the moment when it is most needed. The reason again being that my finitude carries with it a sense that my life and the life of those I am concerned with most is somehow of exceptional value. In other words, it is not necessarily that the fallacy of theodicy is exposed for what it is in the experience of suffering—an abstract language game perhaps—but that such boundary situations seek to lay claim to and, in turn, to define God in ways I *know* him not to be.

To use an illustration here. Perhaps the “answer” that C. S. Lewis had given in the *Problem of Pain* was later rejected by him in his *A Grief Observed* as inadequate not because it was wrong, although it well might have been, but because in the wake of his wife’s struggle with cancer the “answer” could not be existentially absorbed, the way one might absorb it without qualms were we referring to the death of a completely unknown. Thus it is either the state of detachment or the state of universal unconditional attachment of which only God is capable of that makes theodicy “rational.” In other words, we are encountering a paradox where our ability to “answer” the problem of suffering is inversely correlated to empathy. Quite apart from the discussion of what “answer” is more biblically faithful than others, acknowledging the structural limitation of “answers” does not mean demonizing them or rendering them useless; it simply means allocating them their proper role, be it apologetic or otherwise. In that case, the either/or reasoning of abstract versus practical theodicy should be rejected as an unhelpful dichotomy.

These reservations aside, we feel a fair degree of indebtedness to Moltmann for the strong incentives to compassionate service his practical theodicy leaves us with. The proposed path is not easy, as it clearly pushes us beyond detached and noncommittal objectivity. It is a path of discipleship, a path of kenotic solidarity resting on the conversion of sight and heart that

⁷⁶In exceptional circumstances our altruism extends to unknown others who have been brought to the forefront our conscious. But even then the collective catharsis often moved by genuine empathy not infrequently hides guilty feelings of, “I am glad it is not me.”

constitutes the existential pathos of *imitatio Christi*. It is also rooted in the deep realization that the question of the goodness of God, conveyed in Moltmann's theology through a doxological narration of trinitarian ecstasy, is indeed the central and most fundamental question of all theology.

**RESPONSE TO REVIEW ARTICLES OF
*FLAME OF YAHWEH***

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I express my appreciation to David Instone-Brewer² and Andre Claris Lombart³ for their willingness to review *Flame of Yahweh*, and for their perseverance in working their way through its 844 pages of text. They have accurately grasped and articulated the overarching objective I was seeking to accomplish, and for the most part have fairly represented my views in their summaries of the book's contents. After my initial read of their review articles, I was content to let the reviews stand, relieved to have received generally favorable marks from eminent scholars whom I respect. But upon further reflection, I could not resist the *AUSS* editors' kind offer to allow me a brief response to clarify various issues that were raised in these perceptive reviews.

I respond first to several points made by Instone-Brewer. Having written extensively on various issues dealt with in my book, Instone-Brewer is well qualified to pose questions in areas where he detects potential problems with my conclusions. I commend him for pinpointing many of the thorny issues with which I have wrestled the most in my twenty-five years of research and writing this book. I do not claim to have final answers to various knotty problems that appear in the biblical text. I have done my best to account for all the relevant data, have changed my mind more than once on several of these issues, and am willing to change my mind again as further evidence is forthcoming.

Regarding the issue of monogamy/polygamy, it is true that I make what Instone-Brewer calls an "unusual claim"⁴ in arguing that the HB consistently upholds the ideal of monogamy. The foundational biblical evidence is found in Lev 18:18. I have been persuaded by the penetrating studies of Angelo Tosato⁵ and Gordon Hugenberger,⁶ augmented by my own research, that the Qumran interpretation is the correct one: this verse proscribes all polygamy, not just sororal polygyny (polygamy involving two consanguine sisters). I have

¹Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: A Theology of Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007).

²David Instone-Brewer, "Review Article, I: Richard M. Davidson's *Flame of Yahweh: A Theology of Sexuality in the Old Testament*, *AUSS* 46 (2008): 245-250.

³Andre Claris Lombart, "Review Article, II: Richard M. Davidson's *Flame of Yahweh: A Theology of Sexuality in the Old Testament*, *AUSS* 46 (2008): 251-255.

⁴Instone-Brewer, 247.

⁵Angelo Tosato, "The Law of Leviticus 18:18: A Reexamination," *CBQ* 46 (1984): 199-214.

⁶Gordon P. Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: Biblical Law and Ethics as Developed from Malachi*, VTSup 52 (Leiden: Brill, 1994; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 202.

found the many lines of evidence—semantic, syntactical, literary, contextual, and theological—too formidable to interpret in another way, and I have not seen any studies that successfully challenge the conclusions based upon this evidence. I have found the other HB passages dealing with polygamy to be consistent with this foundational passage of Lev 18:18, in condemning the practice, either explicitly or tacitly. Instone-Brewer contrasts my position with “most other scholars” who “argue that, in light of ANE laws allowing polygamy . . . the HB disapproved of polygamy while permitting it.”⁷ Actually, I agree with this position of other scholars as stated by Instone-Brewer. I argue that the HB disapproves of polygamy (in that it is presented as opposed to God’s ideal plan), but that polygamy is, at the same time, “permitted” (i.e., tolerated) in that there is no punishment set forth for this prohibited practice. The law of Lev 18:18 is an example of what Hugenberger calls *lex imperfecta*: “a law which prohibits something without thereby rendering it invalid (reflecting a society which would have lacked the requisite means of enforcement in any case).”⁸ Many other practices in Scripture are morally condemned by God, but not illegal from a civil standpoint (see, e.g., the tenth commandment, which morally prohibits coveting but provides no civil punishment for breaking this command).

With regard to the death penalty for adultery, Instone-Brewer suggests that “Davidson allows his theology to somewhat overpower his conclusions from the text.”⁹ Such may appear to be the case, but in actuality I was driven to my conclusion *by* the text. At least on this point, it was definitely not my theology that overpowered my conclusions because in all drafts of my book manuscript until the last year or so I adhered to the view presented by Moshe Greenberg and others that the death penalty for adultery was absolute and noncommutable. (In fact, I unwittingly allowed this language to remain on at least one page of the first printing of *Flame*,¹⁰ and it was removed in the second printing.) It was only very late in my research process that I came upon the evidence presented by Joe M. Sprinkle, Bruce Wells, Hilary B. Lipka, and others, that strongly suggests the possibility of commuting the death sentence under certain (unspecified) circumstances.¹¹ There may be another way of

⁷Instone-Brewer, 247.

⁸Hugenberger, 118, cited in *Flame*, 197.

⁹Instone-Brewer, 247.

¹⁰*Flame*, 175.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 373-375, 391-392; see Joe M. Sprinkle, “The Interpretation of Exodus 21:22-25 (*Lex Talionis*) and Abortion,” *WTJ* 55 (1993): 237-243; and *idem*, “Sexuality, Sexual Ethics,” *Dictionary of the OT: Pentateuch*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 744; following Bruce Wells, “Adultery, Its Punishment, and the Nature of OT Law” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Orlando, Florida, 20 November 1998). See also Hilary Lipka, “‘Such a Thing Is Not Done in Israel’: The Construction of Sexual Transgression in the Hebrew Bible” (Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 2004), 220-223.

encompassing these two apparently contradictory strands of evidence (found together in close proximity, for example, in the book of Deuteronomy), but I have adopted the conclusion that seemed to best account for all of the relevant evidence. On one hand, adultery is indeed an absolute crime against God and the regular prescribed punishment is the death penalty, with no gradation of punishment based upon social standing or varying intentions as elsewhere in the ANE. Yet on the other hand, there apparently could be some kind of extenuating circumstances in which this death penalty was commuted.

The possibility of commuting the sentence of adultery seems implied in passages such as Hos 1–3 and Prov 6:35. I also find it implied (although I may have argued it “weakly,” according to Instone-Brewer¹²) by the fact that laws concerning several other high-level crimes such as murder and idolatry explicitly prohibit clemency (see Deut 7:16; 13:8; 19:13, 21; and 25:12), but such prohibitions never occur with regard to adultery. Inasmuch as I dealt with this possibility of leniency only in the concluding and more practical “Divine Grace” section of the chapter on adultery, I did not develop my argument as much as I might have. But the full discussions of the evidence by Sprinkle et al., as referenced in a footnote,¹³ to me were persuasive. In addition to the OT evidence, I find further affirmation for this position in Jesus’ own example in commuting the death sentence for adultery under certain circumstances (John 8:1-12).

With regard to the issue of divorce, I recognize and rejoice that Instone-Brewer has written a whole book on this topic,¹⁴ from which I derived much benefit, especially with regard to ANE parallels. I am gratified to see that Instone-Brewer finds persuasive my arguments that the unusual *hotpaal* form of “defile” in Deut 24:3 should be translated “she has been caused to defile herself.”¹⁵ I am still convinced (but have apparently not [yet!] fully convinced Instone-Brewer) that since the phrase “defile oneself” elsewhere in Scripture implies the equivalent of adultery, therefore according to Deut 25 the husband who divorced his wife has in effect caused her to commit adultery when she is forced (by need for financial security) to remarry. I argue that Jesus’ statement in Matt 5:32 seems to point to his awareness of this implication of the *hotpaal* form when he states: “whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery.”

Instone-Brewer finds contradictory my conclusion that (in his words) “the fault for which she [the woman in Deut 24] was divorced appears to be sexual, but it must have fallen short of adultery else she would be executed (even though he [Davidson] said at the end of chap. 8 that death could be commuted).”¹⁶ Here again, I seek to account for all the data involved,

¹²Instone-Brewer, 248.

¹³*Flame*, 373, n. 132.

¹⁴David Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

¹⁵Instone-Brewer, “Review Article,” 248.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

assuming a consistency in the Mosaic legislation. I argue that it is important to make a distinction between what is stated *de jure* and what may have happened *de facto*. According to Mosaic law, adultery was to be punished by death and hence legally (*de jure*) would not be regarded as one of the assumed grounds for divorce in the case law of Deut 24. Yet, inasmuch as there might be some unusual mitigating circumstances in which the death penalty for adultery might be commuted, the possibility cannot be ruled out that in practice (*de facto*) the fault of the woman being divorced may have included adultery. This section of my book was originally written when I still assumed that there was no commuting of the death penalty for adultery, and after broadening my understanding to include the possibility of such commutation under unusual circumstances, I sought to integrate the two sets of data in a meaningful way. Perhaps there is a better way to bring such integration, and I am open to such an alternative that is faithful to all the evidence.

Instone-Brewer also finds contradictory that (again in his words) “he [Davidson] finds no HB grounds for divorce, and yet concludes that . . . divorcees could remarry.”¹⁷ Here again (as with the issue of polygamy) I maintain that it is crucial to distinguish in the HB between what is legal and what is moral. With regard to Deut 24, I argue for the existence of an implied ultimate divine moral disapproval of all divorce, even as divorce is legally “permitted” to take place. Though not illegal, divorce is not morally pleasing to God. Divorce, and hence remarriage, was not forbidden or punishable in the HB, but while it is permitted in Moses’ legislation there is nonetheless a hint in that very legislation that calls back to the Edenic ideal of permanence in marriage. This hint becomes explicit in Mal 2:16 where God states: “I hate divorce!” Thus I can argue (without any contradiction, at least as far as I can see) that while divorce was never God’s will morally, yet legally (as Instone-Brewer states it in his summary of my view) “women as well as men were able to divorce in ancient Israel.”¹⁸

Instone-Brewer correctly points out the absence of pertinent Jewish and Greco-Roman background in the Afterword dealing with the NT. This was a deliberate omission due to the immense amount of material involved and (especially) because the Afterword was specifically focused at showing implications of the OT materials for the NT views of sexuality. I freely acknowledge that a theology of sexuality in the NT still remains to be written. Perhaps Instone-Brewer, with his specialty in NT, is willing to tackle this task!

Turning now to the issues raised by Lombart, I first commend him for providing the reader with a succinct summary of the basic points in a theology of sexuality as I see it emerging from the OT. Lombart has insightfully discerned that the “issue of gender is at the heart of the book.”¹⁹ While his suggestion has merit that the word “gender” might even have been added to the subtitle, I believe that my broader definition of “sexuality” to include

¹⁷Ibid., 250.

¹⁸Ibid., 248.

¹⁹Lombart, 254.

gender issues as well as other concerns is defensible and appropriate, even if not in line with distinctions made by some social scientists.²⁰

Lombart has correctly recognized my “egalitarian interpretation of the Genesis account,” but he has provided an incomplete and thus potentially misleading statement of my position on Gen 3 when he writes: “He [Davidson] maintains that this principle of ‘husband servant leadership’ is necessary in a sinful world to preserve harmony in the home.”²¹ What I argue is that God instituted a “husband servant leadership” in the Garden after the Fall (Gen 3:16) as a temporary stopgap measure *where it might be* necessary in a sinful world to preserve harmony in the home. But I go beyond this to suggest that God’s ideal in a sinful world continues to be egalitarian marriage (as presented in Gen 1–2), and the biblical materials consistently reveal God’s attempt to call couples back toward this ideal whenever possible. It is for this reason that I do not present more examples or practical illustrations of “servant leadership” in biblical families, as wished for by Lombart.²²

When I illustrate the principle of “servant leadership” by suggesting, for example, that the husband be the first to say, “I’m sorry,” Lombart finds it tempting to see here the implication that “the husband is to be subservient and subordinate to his wife, thereby contradicting the ‘egalitarian’ postulations by the author.”²³ However, I do not find a contradiction here, but rather, the principle of “mutual submission” as expressed in the NT (e.g., Eph 5:21).

Lombart rightly warns against misuse of narrative theology, and suggests that I may have stepped over the line in implying the sexual consummation by Adam and Eve on their wedding night. He wonders if consistency should demand that there be a parallel between the time of betrothal outside of Eden and a similar time of “longing, waiting, and appreciating” after the couple’s creation before sexual consummation.²⁴ The suggestion is an interesting one, but in my estimation consistency points more strongly in another direction: outside of Eden the regular practice was that the sexual consummation took place on the wedding night and, according to Mosaic legislation, this was even expected and necessary (see Deut 22:13-21). The sexual union was the indispensable means for the consummation of the marriage, and may well have been regarded as the covenant “oath-sign” of the marriage.²⁵ The consistent parallel in Eden would then be consummation of the marriage on the wedding night.

Despite Lombart’s proper caution about the potential for misuse in narrative theology, I remain persuaded that the narrative clues in Gen 3 point to the conclusion that Adam and Eve consummated their marriage union that first Friday evening of creation week. There was indeed a time of “longing,

²⁰See *Flame*, 2.

²¹Lombart, 254.

²²*Ibid.*

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵*Flame*, 382, n. 26, following the suggestion of Hugenberger, 279.

waiting, and appreciating,” but in the unique case of the first couple, it came already *before* Eve was created; as Adam named all the animals, he saw that they all had partners and experienced the “hunger for wholeness” that God then supplied by creating Eve. God created Eve perfectly matched to be Adam’s equal partner (Gen 2:18, 20), and both Adam and Eve were uniquely created as fully formed adults, ready for marriage.

If God had intended that there be an extended period of betrothal-like experience for Adam and Eve before their marriage, this could have been accomplished by delaying the wedding. But Gen 2 portrays God officiating at the couple’s wedding immediately after introducing Eve to Adam. Adam’s first recorded statement after God brought Eve to him contains unmistakable covenant-making terminology, constituting what we would call the wedding vows (v. 23). After the depiction of the first wedding service, the narrator immediately adds that this wedding is a model for all future weddings: the “one flesh” sexual consummation is to follow after the “joining” of the marriage covenant (v. 24-25). Song of Songs also presents this pattern, as the sexual consummation of the marriage follows immediately upon the heels of the wedding service (Song 4:16; 5:1). Just as the first account of the creation week in Gen 1 is climaxed by the holy Sabbath (Gen 2:1-3), so the complementary account in Gen 2:4-25 is climaxed by the holy institution of marriage, with its implied sexual consummation of that marriage in the “one flesh” experience of Adam and Eve (2:22-25). The sexual intimacy and union on the horizontal level between Adam and Eve within the sacred *space* of the Eden sanctuary (2:15-25) is the counterpart of the spiritual intimacy and union on the vertical level between God and humans within the sacred *time* of the Sabbath (2:1-3).

Lombart succinctly and accurately summarizes the ten facets of a theology of sexuality that I set forth in chap. 1, but then asks why I selected these ten and not others. The answer is that these facets are the ones that emerged from my exegetical study of Gen 1–2. An earlier study of these passages uncovered seven facets,²⁶ but further study expanded these to ten. I may later find additional facets, but these are the ones that have inductively emerged from my exegetical research thus far.

Regarding the “pastoral” and “moralistic” tones that surface in the book on occasion, to this charge I must plead guilty! I tried to rein in my pastoral-moralistic tendencies, and my editor applied the scalpel to the manuscript more than once. Yet some traces definitely remain. It is my contention that in biblical theology, contrary to Semler, Gabler, Stendahl and others who separate between what the text meant and what it means, what it “meant” is what it still “means” (see the work of my mentor, Gerhard Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*), and thus it is appropriate in an OT biblical theology to draw practical applications for today. I did try to keep these to a minimum, however, and put them in footnotes wherever possible. I also justified (rightly or not) inclusion of certain practical insights

²⁶Richard M. Davidson, “The Theology of Sexuality in the Beginning: Genesis 1–2,” *AUSS* 26 (1988): 5-24.

such as the “twelve steps to moral integrity” in the hymnic Wisdom literature²⁷ by noting that the overall thrust of the Wisdom literature was a practical-moralistic one, and hence I was being faithful to the spirit of the biblical genre I was interpreting!

Lombart is correct that the section on the Song of Songs could have been shorter, or could have been a separate book on its own. I seriously considered publishing the Song of Songs material as a separate monograph, especially partway through my long journey of researching this material when I despaired of ever completing the entire project! But in retrospect, I am glad I did not excise any of this material or publish it separately. After all, the Song of Songs represents Scripture’s major statement on sexuality—a whole book given over to celebrating the beauty and joy of married sexual love! Should it not be given as much space as needed to develop the rich theological material contained therein? Furthermore, the Song of Songs implies that it is an interpretation of the Garden of Eden experience, a “Return to Eden.” Only by placing the material on Gen 1–3 in the same context as the material from the Song of Songs could such interpretation and development be demonstrated. I have tried to balance these two parts of the book by setting them apart as the matching opening and concluding sections, entitling them “In the Garden” and “Return to Eden” respectively, and by assigning them each two chapters.

Once again, I thank David Instone-Brewer and Andre Claris Lombart for their incisive book reviews. I freely acknowledge that there is much yet to learn (and unlearn!) about sexuality in the OT, and look forward to ongoing dialogue with these and other scholars as we continue to explore this vital subject together.

²⁷*Flame*, 375, n. 138.

**METHODISM AND THE ORIGINS OF
BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY: THE
WILLIAM FOXWELL
ALBRIGHT STORY**

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I. *Introduction*

Methodism and biblical archaeology have a closely entwined history that previously has not been fully addressed in the literature of either discipline.¹ The close relationship between the discipline and the Church may be attributed to the childhood of William Foxwell Albright (1891-1971), a son of Methodist missionaries, who became the father of biblical archaeology in America.² While there is little debate about the significance of Albright's scholarship and that of his students who continued his work as part of the "Albright School," there is little awareness of the profound impact Methodism had on his personal life. This article seeks to remedy this situation by attempting to understand Albright's childhood experiences that molded him into the adult scholar he would later become. It addresses not the scholarship, but the person behind the scholarship, specifically focusing on one single incident in his life that he himself portrayed as being the first step in his journey toward becoming the father of biblical archaeology.

Albright was born in Chile in 1891 to Methodists who had grown up on neighboring farms in Fayette, Iowa, married, and become William Taylor missionaries in 1890.³ He described his parents as evangelicals in his unpublished 1916 dissertation at Johns Hopkins University,⁴ noting that his

¹This investigation is based on the pioneering work of Burke O. Long, *Planting and Reaping Albright: Politics, Ideology, and Interpreting the Bible* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 124-125.

²His biographers prefer to use the term "Dean of Biblical Archaeologists" (Leona Glidden Running and David Noel Freedman, *William Foxwell Albright: A 20th Century Genius* [Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1991], 2-3).

³For more on Taylor, see David Bundy, "Bishop William Taylor and Methodist Mission: A Study in Nineteenth Century Social History," *Methodist History* 27 (1989): 197-210. For more on his missionary work in Chile and South America, see G. F. Arms, *History of the William Taylor Self-Supporting Missions in South America* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1921); William Taylor, *Our South American Cousins* (New York: Nelson and Phillips, 1878); and O. Von Barchwitz-Krauser, *Six Years with Bishop Taylor in South America* (Boston: McDonald and Gill, 1885).

⁴William Foxwell Albright, "The Assyrian Deluge Epic" (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1916), "Vita."

family returned to America on furlough in 1896-1897, where he injured his hand for life on his grandmother's Iowa farm. The family remained in Chile from 1897 to 1903, when it returned again to Iowa. Albright attended Upper Iowa College (now a state university), the Methodist college that his father had attended in Iowa before he had become a minister. Following graduation, he spent a year failing as a high-school principal in the German-speaking town of Menno, South Dakota. He then matriculated at Johns Hopkins University as a graduate student in 1913, graduated in 1916, and was a teacher there until 1919, with a brief military interlude during World War I. From 1920 to 1935, he was based in Jerusalem, where he became the Director of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) and editor of the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (BASOR), ASOR's journal. He visited the United States periodically during this time including ongoing teaching stints at Hopkins. He returned to the States for good in 1935 and taught at Hopkins until 1958. During these years, the Baltimore, later Albright, School took shape with students such as George Ernest Wright, John Bright, Frank Moore Cross, David Noel Freedman, and George Mendenhall. Albright died in 1971, but his legacy lives on through his writings and his students.

Albright traced the origin of his journey into biblical scholarship to a childhood incident at age 10, when he was first exposed to the world of archaeology in the library of his Methodist missionary parents in Chile. His reading of Robert W. Rogers's *A History of Babylonia and Assyria* was so important to the development of his career that his biographers asked: "What forces had shaped his mind up to the age of ten, that he should so covet, and then devour and absorb, a book on ancient history?"⁵ The goal in this analysis is to answer that question. In so doing, it is necessary to investigate the guiding experiences of Albright's early life, to explore the meaning of Methodism to the young child, and to determine what captured the boy's imagination as he read Rogers's book. Certainly one can attribute the incident at age 10 to chance, coincidence, or even providence, a more traditional Methodist term.⁶ However, it is possible to identify more specific actions and events that contributed to the reading of the book that launched him on the career that would define his life. In other words, instead of using the story Albright told about his childhood to begin the attempt to understand him, one should see it as a conclusion to his early childhood or as a focal point to the life he would subsequently lead. By so doing, it is possible to place the

⁵Running and Freedman, 1.

⁶To illustrate the use of providence in Methodism, consider this centennial explanation for Methodist success in America: "Thus, in the providence of God, Methodism took organic shape in a land peculiarly favorable to its growth" (*Methodist Centennial Yearbook*, 1884, 310). By contrast, a leading American religious historian wrote: "No group prospered more in the West or seemed more providentially designed to capitalize on the conditions of the advancing American frontier than the Methodists (Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972], 436).

larger story of Albright's life within context and thus more fully answer the question posed by his biographers.

II. *The Childhood Incident*

The story of the pivotal events in Albright's childhood first appeared in print as part of an autobiographical essay published in 1948. As the adult Albright recalled, he was a child abroad in a hostile environment both as a "gringo" (American) and a "canuto" (Protestant) and, as a result, he "never felt secure." He wrote of "the unknown terrors in the street," where "[i]nsults were frequently interspersed with stones" and of his minimal contact with other children in "play." Instead, the nearsighted child with a metal brace on his left hand withdrew to his father's library and the "solitary games of his own contrivance." As he later put it, he did not "have a taste for picnics and outings enjoyed by other children."⁷ In this description of Albright's early life, one may draw two conclusions: there were physical dangers in his life as the child of Methodist missionaries in Catholic Chile; the library was a place of refuge and solace.⁸

As Albright recalled in his autobiographical essay, he became at age 8 intensely interested in archaeology and biblical antiquities. No explanation is provided of why such an interest clicked in his mind. Given the occupation of his parents, as well as the content of their personal library, the interest in the Bible is understandable; exactly how archaeology manifested itself into his consciousness is not. Albright described how two years later, in 1901, he ran errands for his parents until he had saved \$5, which he was free to spend as he saw fit. He chose to purchase Rogers's book. As Albright remembered this moment, "[t]hereafter his happiest hours were spent in reading and rereading this work, which was fortunately written in beautiful English by a well-trained and accurate scholar." The reading of this book in his father's library as a ten-year-old child was the event that launched his journey to becoming the adult scholar of ancient civilizations.⁹

There is no reason to doubt the historicity of the event. The "official" position within the Albright school is that Rogers's book of archaeology marked the starting point of Albright's life as a scholar and that as a scholar he should be classified primarily as an Orientalist, and not as a biblical scholar. After all, the book was about Assyria and Babylonia, not Israel and the Bible.

⁷*Baltimore Sun*, September 16, 1956, Section A.

⁸William Foxwell Albright, "William Foxwell Albright," in *American Spiritual Biographies*, ed. Louis Finkelstein (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), 158-159; George Ernest Wright, "The Phenomenon of American Archaeology in the Near East," in *Near Eastern Archaeology in the Twentieth Century: Essays in Honor of Nelson Glueck*, ed. James A. Sanders (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970), 23. According to a footnote, Wright, 39, n. 42, derived his information on Albright from the latter's 1948 autobiographical essay and from private conversations with him.

⁹Albright, "William Foxwell Albright," 159.

Rogers's book with its strictly secular approach in methodology and subject matter lends credence to this characterization of Albright as an "Orientalist." His oft-repeated remark—that "if his eyesight had been better, he would have continued along the lines indicated by his studies and his dissertation on *The Assyrian Deluge Epic*"—has often been cited as support for this position. Yet David Noel Freedman noted that he was "dubious"¹⁰ of such an assertion, stating that

At a very early stage in his career it seemed clear that Albright's primary interest was neither in being an Assyriologist nor in being a comprehensive encyclopedic historian. While several of his early major articles reflected his special training and his wide-ranging interests, the twin foci would always remain the Bible on the one hand, and comparative religion—or to be more precise—the religious ideas of the ancient Near East on the other. In all his subsequent major undertakings, he attempted to combine or blend these interests. A brief glance at his books elucidates and confirms this impression: *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible*, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, and *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, are all efforts to place biblical tradition and biblical religion in the context of ancient Near Eastern religion. We recognize here as well the final choices as to the area, subject, and focus. Throughout his career and even in retirement Albright's primary and abiding interest was the Bible, first of all the Hebrew Bible—the Old Testament—and along with it the New Testament.¹¹

Freedman referred to Albright at "a very early stage in his career" and not to a very early stage in his *life*. Had Freedman made the latter connection, he would have recognized that those twin foci of Oriental studies and biblical archaeology were present when the child was playing historical games that were influenced by his reading of *A History of Babylonia and Assyria* and the *Methodist Review*, from which he first learned of Rogers's book.

III. *Methodist Review*

Albright appears to have been introduced to the field of biblical archaeology through the *Methodist Review*, a magazine the family received while in Chile and after returning to America. The *Methodist Review* was a semiprerequisite for being a minister in good standing with the Church. The Upper Iowa Conference, the local Methodist organizational unit Wilbur Albright belonged

¹⁰In an interview, 13 May 1972, Freedman, Cross, and Wright all expressed doubts about the "eyesight" excuse so frequently employed by Albright throughout his life (Leona G. Running Archive, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University).

¹¹Freedman, 34-35; see also William Foxwell Albright, "Return to Biblical Theology," *ChrCent* 75 (1958): 1328-1329; idem, *History, Archaeology and Christian Humanism* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), 287-300.

to before being reassigned to missionary work, strongly recommended its purchase to its members. Albright stated that he read this journal with avid interest between 1897 and 1909, when he began college, a reading that included earlier issues as well.¹²

Through *Methodist Review*, Albright became connected to biblical archaeology. Without this journal he would not have become aware of the field until later in life and back in Iowa. This does not mean that he would not still have become an influential scholar, only that the journey might have started later. It is through this journal that one can document the origins of his interest in both Assyriology and biblical archaeology. Now not only did he know the stories of Goliath and Sennacherib, he knew about the people who were excavating the ancient cultures from centuries of burial and who were revealing their truths to the light of day. “Light” was a critical term, as archaeology seemingly corroborated biblical history at a time when that history was under assault.

The *Methodist Review*, which itself underwent changes during the 1890s, reflected this conflict. The editor, J. W. Mendenhall, had died in 1892, after leading an effort against agnosticism, OT criticism, rationalism, and upheavals in the path of Christian culture and progress. When the president of Methodist Drew Theological Seminary turned down the position, it was offered to Rev. William Kelley in 1893.¹³

The following January, Kelley launched a recurring column, “Archaeology and Biblical Research.” He presumably wrote these columns or they were written with his guidance and approval—they are unsigned. The excitement generated by discoveries such as the Amarna Letters with their biblical implications may have contributed to this decision.¹⁴ The purpose of the new column resonated with the values of biblical archaeology later to be expressed

¹²“Minutes of the Upper Iowa Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church” (1889), 119, 140; “Minutes” (1890), 200, 213; Long, 124, citing a 1947 letter by Albright. See also a letter dated 18 October 1924, from Albright to Rogers (uncatalogued Albright material, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia) in which Albright states not only that he had read Rogers’s book, but had read articles written by Rogers before and after the purchase of the book. The “before” readings suggest that Albright did read the back issues of *Methodist Review* published before 1897, since the earlier articles by Rogers are from 1894 and 1895. The post-1901 article in *Methodist Review* is from 1909. Rogers also wrote for the *Sunday School Times* from 1901 to 1906.

¹³James Mudge, “Seventy-five Years of the ‘Methodist Review,’” *Methodist Review* 76 (Fifth Series 10) (1894): 530-532, 533.

¹⁴The Amarna Letters were the subject of the second column in March 1894 (“The Tel-El-Amarna Tablets,” *Methodist Review* 10 (Fifth Series 76) [1894]: 303-306). The article, “The Antiquity of Writing,” stressed the pre-Exodus role of writing that undermined the higher-critical notion that Moses could not write: “It is reasonably certain that the excavations going on in Palestine and the surrounding countries have many surprises in store for the Bible student” (*Methodist Review* 76 [Fifth Series 10] [1894]: 480).

by Albright. In the inaugural column, the editor explained the origins for the change: “Our chief reasons for introducing a department of biblical research and archaeology into the *Review* are an intense love of the Bible and a strong belief in its divine power.”¹⁵ Indeed, the scope of biblical archaeology in 1894 was vividly described: “We shall hail with joy any light which Egypt, Babylonia, and Assyria, or any land may throw upon Old Testament chronology and history. We shall welcome all the *light* [emphasis supplied] which the study of comparative religions may furnish us regarding the origin of religion and the growth of revelation.”¹⁶ Importantly, it anticipated the words Albright himself used in 1966:

Biblical archaeology is a much wider term than Palestinian archaeology, though Palestine itself is of course central, and is rightly regarded as peculiarly the land of the Bible. But Biblical archaeology covers all the lands mentioned in the Bible, and thus is coextensive with the cradle of civilization. This region extends from western Mediterranean to India, and from southern Russia to Ethiopia and the Indian Ocean. Excavations in every part of this extensive area throw some *light* [emphasis supplied], directly or indirectly on the Bible.¹⁷

These words served as a blueprint for his academic life. The sciences of archaeology and comparative religions were the light to revealed truth that should be welcomed.

There was, however, a problem: higher criticism. The remainder of the inaugural column was devoted to “The Burning Question” of higher criticism. Higher criticism refers to the attempt to discover the source documents that allegedly were compiled to create the Pentateuch. Julius Wellhausen was its high priest, a term of approbation chosen deliberately. The subject of higher criticism would emerge as a recurring theme in the publication of this normally four-page column in *Methodist Review*. Examples of articles expressing this focus include three from the years of 1895, 1896, and 1898.

a. January 1895: “Hittites.” The British higher-critical biblical scholar, T. K. Cheyne, was cited as being “very loath to accept the biblical account of the Hittites”¹⁸ because their peaceful appearance when Abraham purchased a burial cave from them for Sarah (Gen 23) is at odds with their more violent appearance on then-known monuments. Therefore, the biblical account could not be historical. Actually, it was only the monuments that were currently being discovered by archaeology that began to force scholars to accept the

¹⁵“Archaeology and Biblical Research,” *Methodist Review* 76 (Fifth Series 10) (1894): 135.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 135-136.

¹⁷William F. Albright, *New Horizons in Biblical Research* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 1.

¹⁸ “The Hittites,” *The Methodist Review* 77 (Fifth Series 11) (1895): 139.

historical existence of the Hittites—after all, the Greco-Roman histories did not mention them as a great nation of antiquity, so how could the biblical account be taken seriously in this regard?¹⁹

Albright remembered this denial of the Hittites long after the controversy had died down. In a 1923 publication, he noted how “many sober scholars laughed at the visionary Hittite Empire . . . just as others now doubt the existence of another great empire—that of the Amorites.” In 1936, he recalled how earlier scholars had routinely dismissed biblical references to the “kings of the Hittites” as false. Thus archaeology had proved and was continually proving the skeptics wrong about entire peoples and, therefore, also wrong about the biblical exegesis involving those peoples.²⁰

b. January 1896: “Archaeology and Old Testament Criticism.” In this publication, Cheyne received the title “high priest of higher criticism in Great Britain,” with the priestly designation meant as a term of derision within the Protestant context. But there was hope. One could be rescued from the deep abyss by archaeology, as Archibald Sayce had been: “Professor Sayce, having been led to the edge of a dangerous precipice, and having realized the tendencies and results of the criticism advocated by his Oxford colleague and his friends, deemed it wise and necessary to change front.”²¹ He had come back from the brink thanks to archaeology!

c. March 1898: “Archaeology and Criticism.” By the time the March 1898 edition of the *Methodist Review* was published, Albright was no longer only fighting imaginary battles in his father’s library. He was now reading the *Methodist Review* in terms of a real battle of importance being fought in the present with heroes, villains, and a battlefield. The enemy was represented by the wild speculations generated by Wellhausen. “Wellhausenism followed to its legitimate results would wipe out the supernatural about the religion of Israel, and would reduce the Old Testament to the level of the sacred books of the other nations.”²² And in case there was any doubt, the charge was repeated on the next page.

The hero against Wellhausen’s wild speculations was the British scholar, S. R. Driver. The *Methodist Review* praised him for his just-published *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, which Albright would later praise. Driver was portrayed as repudiating the extremism of the Wellhausen school: “It is, therefore, refreshing to learn from the pen of Professor Driver

¹⁹“The Hittites,” 136-138, 139.

²⁰William Foxwell Albright, “The Epic of the King of Battle: Sargon of Akkad in Cappadocia,” *JSOR* 7 (1923): 1-2; idem, “Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands,” in *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, ed. Robert Young (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1936), 19. The full five-page section of “Archaeology and the Bible” was devoted to the Hittites in 1912, as Albright was graduating from college, a marker of the change that had occurred (*Methodist Review* 94 [Fifth Series 28] [1912]: 307-311).

²¹“Archaeology and Old Testament Criticism,” 138.

²² “Archaeology and Criticism,” *Methodist Review* 80 (Fifth Series 14) (1898): 312.

that archaeology and the general critical position are after all not so widely separated.²³ Thus the weapon of choice in this struggle was archaeology.

Archaeology has constantly pushed to the front, and as it has revealed its varied treasures it has shown the weakness of Wellhausenism. In a general way we may say that not a single one of the recent discoveries has in any way contradicted the Old Testament, but on the other hand, many a passage which at one time was regarded as doubtful or obscure has been explained and confirmed in a most wonderful manner.²⁴

Albright made the same claim in his lecture, “The Bible in the *Light* [emphasis supplied] of Archaeology,” which was subsequently published in his first book *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible*.²⁵

The battlefield that would come to be Albright’s own was centered on the narrative of Gen 14. The January 1898 edition of *Methodist Review* noted that the monuments discovered by archaeology confirm

in a remarkable way several important things reported in the Bible as historical, but relegated by the critics to the region of myths, such as the account of the military campaign reported in Genesis xiv. The monuments have shown that this chapter may have been actual history, and not a fanciful story invented centuries later by some one who had witnessed the expeditions of the later Assyrian kings.²⁶

Genesis 14 thus provided Albright with heroes, villains, weapons of war, and a battlefield. He probably wrote more about Gen 14 than any other single chapter in the Bible. That chapter provided the archaeological link to the story of Abraham, thus securing the existence of the patriarchal age through science. Proving the historicity of Gen 14 through archaeology was important to Albright and a task to which he dedicated himself throughout his career.

Thus the 1894-1898 articles depicted a universe where archaeologists and Assyriologists triumphed over the destructive forces led by the high priests of higher criticism. This attitude was summarized in a book review, published in the *Methodist Review* in 1902:

²³“Archaeology and Criticism,” 312; William Foxwell Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible* (New York: Revell, 1932), 20, 176; idem, “The Old Testament and the Archaeology of Palestine,” in *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, ed. H. H. Rowley (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), 2; idem, “Prolegomenon,” in *The Book of Judges with Introduction and Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Book of Kings*, C. F. Burney (New York: KTAV, 1970), 4. See also “‘Christian’ Rationalism,” *Methodist Review* 78 (Fifth Series 12) (1896): 446.

²⁴“Archaeology and Criticism,” 313.

²⁵Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible*, 127.

²⁶“Archaeology and Criticism,” 314-315.

The *Encyclopedia Biblica* is revolutionary in theology and positively menacing in its attacks upon the very citadel of faith. In many of its articles it uses learning recklessly or viciously, as if with a desire to undermine and overthrow the Christian religion. This mania for destruction will pass by, its methods will be discarded, its subjective criticism and conjectural history will be discredited, its skepticism will go into the limbo of abandoned fads. . . . [N]o theory [is] too wild to be fastened on the Bible, no view too absurd to be connected with its chronicles.

The language could not have been more blunt. It was war. Sasson's comments about the "atmosphere" of the times and Albright's immigrant fervor understates the cultural tension. William Rainey Harper, the founder of the University of Chicago, led a "Bible Renaissance" in the 1880s and 1890s through his mail-order publications. Wilbur Albright learned Hebrew from one such publication and the booklet was passed on to his son, William. Nonetheless, it is the *Methodist Review* that provides a more specific and documented explanation for Albright learning of the ongoing battle between science and religion, expressed in terms of higher criticism and archaeology. The clash between these two phenomena was a critical aspect of the religious world in which young Albright was raised, and highlighted the need for warriors of light to hold science and religion together.

For young Albright to follow in his father's footsteps as a missionary would have been to fight an old war while ignoring the new one. Higher criticism assaulted the very basis of the Methodist religion by denying the historical validity of the text on which Christianity was based. Why be either Methodist or Baptist if Jesus quoted from a book that was simply human in origin and full of errors and contradictions? Why be a Protestant or a Catholic if David was not a historical figure? Why be a Christian if God was not involved in human history as attested in Scripture? While it is unlikely that the child asked these questions in precisely these terms, the precocious youth certainly recognized that the stakes were high in the showdown between destructive higher criticism and reverent Methodism. To succeed he needed to master the weapons suitable for such a war, weapons that were not those of the great Brush College warriors who had made Methodism the largest religion in America.²⁷

Albright was only following the advice given by Rogers anyway. In 1909, while Albright was still reading *Methodist Review*, Rogers wrote about the ongoing war waged against Wellhausen:

²⁷G. E. Wright, "Biblical Archaeology Today," in *New Directions in Biblical Archaeology*, eds. David Noel Freedman and Jonas Greenfield (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1969), 160; P. Feinman, "Itinerant Minister: Warrior of Light in a Wilderness of Chaos," *Methodist History* 45 (2006): 43-53. For an account of his experiences by one of the most famous circuit riders, see James B. Finley, *Autobiography of Rev. James B. Finley or Pioneer Life in the West*, ed. W. P. Strickland (Cincinnati: Methodist Book Concern, 1858). One can't help but notice that Albright's father, Wilbur Finley Albright, born 1859, and William's younger brother Finley both may have been named after this wilderness warrior hero.

I am jealous of the reputation of our Methodist journals. . . . I take no exception to the writer's expression of the hope that Wellhausenism is waning. . . . [But] Wellhausenism seems to me to be a pretty vigorous theory still. If we wish to be rid of it, I fancy that we shall have to fight it with *weapons forged directly out of its own armory* [emphasis supplied].²⁸

It is in this context that the purchase of the book by Rogers needs to be understood.

IV. *Robert W. Rogers's A History of Babylonia and Assyria*

In 1900, a series of ads appeared in *Methodist Review* for a new set of books by Robert W. Rogers. The price for the two-volume series was \$5.00. The ad stated:

This new history of Babylonia and Assyria contains in Book I, Prolegomena, the most elaborate account ever written of all the explorations and excavations in Assyria and Babylonia as well as the history of the decipherment of the inscriptions. It is untechnical and popular in style, and is abundantly illustrated with copies of inscriptions, showing the processes of decipherment. Book II gives the history of Babylonia from 4500 B.C. [long before 4004 B.C.E.] to the period of Assyrian domination, and Book III the history of Assyria to the fall of Nineveh. Book IV contains the history of the great Chaldean empire to the fall of Babylon.

All histories of Babylon and Assyria published prior to 1880 are hopelessly antiquated by the archaeological discoveries of the great expeditions to the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates. Students of ancient oriental history in general, and of the history of Israel in particular, have long desired a new history of the Babylonians and Assyrians which should be consistently based on original sources, and yet so written as to be intelligible and interesting to men who are not specially trained in the subject. It is confidently believed that this great gap in modern historical literature is filled by this new history.

A testimonial by Sayce in the ad saluted the book as a "veritable romance" of the history of the decipherment of inscriptions. One should not ignore the romance factor in the appeal of archaeology not only to men, but to children.²⁹

If this ad was not enough to grab Albright's attention, then two issues in 1901 were likely to have provided the motivation for him to save money to

²⁸R. W. Rogers, "Wellhausenism on the Wane," *Methodist Review* 91 (Fifth Series 25) (1909): 294.

²⁹This ad was taken from *Methodist Review* 83 (Fifth Series 17) (1901): no p. no.

buy the newly published book. The opening line of the January 1901 “Notes and Discussions” reads: “A book of extraordinary interest, just issued by our Book Concern, in two volumes, octavo, is *A History of Babylonia and Assyria*, by Professor R. W. Rogers, of [Methodist] Drew Theological Seminary. A full notice will appear in our pages in due time.”³⁰

So not only did *Methodist Review* report the publication of the book, it blessed the event as “our” book since it was published by the Methodists. Since the publisher of the book and advertisement was Eaton and Mains, and not the Methodist Book Concern, the connection to Methodism may be overlooked or not realized. The emphasis on the role of this book in the Albright mythology generally obscures the Methodist universe that created, published, and blessed it, and then informed Albright of it.

The subsequent book review characterized Rogers’s book as fourth in a series on the history of Assyria and Babylonia in which each scholar expanded the synthesis as more information became available on the subject. The bringing together of the ancient chronological data was especially praised as an “unprecedented achievement”—and Rogers writes well, too! according to the review, words similar to Albright’s characterization of it as “written in beautiful English by a well-trained and accurate scholar.”³¹ On one level, the book simply furnished him with more scripts for his dramas of stone wars on his mother’s patio or in his father’s library. On another level, the formal discipline of biblical archaeology may be construed as having emerged out of the battle lines textually revealed to him as a child in *Methodist Review* and Rogers’s book.

V. Conclusion

Albright and the Albright school have identified the purchase of Rogers’s *A History of Babylonia and Assyria* as a seminal event in the life of a young child, depicting it as the first step toward the life of the adult scholar. The analysis of his life does, indeed, confirm the importance of this event in his life. The analysis also reveals the need to understand the event within the context of young Albright’s life as the son of American Methodist missionaries in the late nineteenth century. His decision to acquire this book did not occur in a vacuum.

The child who played imaginary games that transcended centuries became the adult who saw the unity in time and space from the Stone Age to Christianity. It is easy, given his scholarship in pottery and philology, to overlook the sheer grandness of the scope of his mind and the role he assigned to himself in

³⁰“Notes and Discussions,” *Methodist Review* 83 (Fifth Series 17) (1901): 113. The Methodist Book Concern was the subject of an article in the January 1900 *Methodist Review*, celebrating eleven decades as the publishing arm of the Methodist denomination in America: “In our twentieth century Church the Book Concern should have a mission little less sacred in our thought than was that of the ark of God in the camp of ancient Israel” (George P. Mains, “Reviews and Views of the Methodist Book Concern,” *Methodist Review* 82 [Fifth Series 16] [1900]: 49).

³¹“Book Notices—*A History of Babylonia and Assyria*,” *Methodist Review* 83 (Fifth Series 17) (1901): 505-506, 507

the grand scheme of things. In a letter to his mother, dated 18 May 1919, he wrote that he was following the path he had chosen at age 11, thanks to God.³² It is as if he considered divine providence to have been showing him the way when at age 10 he purchased Rogers's book. On 30 August 1920, he wrote his mother that his actions served God in bringing his kingdom closer.³³ It would be another decade before the scholar Albright was prepared to begin publishing his research, but divine providence had already shown him the path to walk, while he was still a young boy in his missionary parents' home.

³²Leona G. Running Archive.

³³Ibid.

ACTS 19:1-7 RECONSIDERED IN LIGHT OF PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM¹

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Few passages in the NT have received as much scholarly attention as Acts 19:1-7. The debate generated by these few verses is so vigorous that about a half-century ago Ernst Käsemann could already say in his best mordant style: "This conspectus has brought before us every even barely conceivable variety of naïveté, defeatism and fertile imagination which historical scholarship can display, from the extremely ingenuous on the one hand to the extremely arbitrary on the other."² Käsemann's own solution to the problem, however, only added to the existing confusion, for it relied too heavily on redactional arguments, under the assumption that the whole story was fabricated by Luke in the pursuit of some theological interest. In contrast, recent scholarship has been much more cautious about redactional fabrications. Also, irrespective of whether the story of John the Baptist was subsumed by the early church, the NT Baptist traditions are no longer so quickly reduced to mere propagandistic efforts to promote the story of Jesus, thus totally devoid of any historical value.³ In this essay, there is no

¹I am grateful to Robert M. Johnston for his kindness in reading an earlier version of this essay and for some helpful suggestions, though responsibility for the conclusions reached rests with the author.

²Ernst Käsemann, "The Disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus," in *Essays on New Testament Themes*, trans. W. J. Montague (London: SCM, 1964), 140.

³The quest for the historical John the Baptist was an integral part of the twentieth-century quest for the historical Jesus. For an overview with full bibliographic information, see Clare K. Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions and Q*, WUNT 190 (Tübingen: Mohr, 2007). The classical view is that, as in the case of Jesus, the Baptist traditions found in the canonical Gospels and the book of Acts do not reflect the historical John, but only what the early church came to believe about him. It has even been suggested that before reaching the Christian community, those traditions had already been molded within the Baptist community itself, thus making the historical John "something of a chimera" (John Reumann, "The Quest for the Historical Baptist," in *Understanding the Sacred Text: Essays in Honor of Morton S. Enslin on the Hebrew Bible and Christian Beginnings*, ed. John Reumann [Valley Forge: Judson, 1972], 187). There is no question that the Gospel writers present John in a narrowly defined way, as if he had no importance other than to prepare the way for Jesus. This, however, does not necessarily imply that all NT material on John has been severely compromised. On the contrary, recent studies of the Baptist tradition-history, such as the ones by Walter Wink (*John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition*, SNTSMS 7 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968]), Ernst Bammel ("The Baptist in Early Christian Tradition," *NTS* 18 [1971-1972]: 95-128), Josef Ernst (*Johannes der Täufer: Interpretation, Geschichte, Wirkungsgeschichte*, BZNW 53 [Berlin: De

prejudgment regarding the question of what and how much in Acts 19:1-7, as well as in other NT references to John, can preferably be understood as redactional or the end product of a tradition-historical process. This means that the passage is taken as it now stands in view of its own dynamics and interrelation with the immediate context (synchronic approach). The research gravitates toward two major points: the religious identity of the main characters in the narrative and the nature of the baptismal rite administered to them by Paul. It is not my intention here to offer an extensive bibliographic review of the discussion, nor an entirely new solution to the problems involved, but to provide a somewhat detailed assessment of the evidence and perhaps to advance the discussion on specific issues. In due course, it is argued that an important clue to understanding one of the major issues may be found not in the book of Acts proper, but in Paul's theology of baptism as reflected in his writings.

*Baptists or Christians: The Identity
of the Ephesian Disciples*

The first problem as we approach Acts 19:1-7 is the religious affiliation of the twelve men⁴ Paul met in Ephesus during his three-year stay there (see 20:31) at the time of his third missionary journey. Because the text suggests that they had been baptized by John the Baptist (19:3-4), several scholars have concluded that they were followers of John, that is, members of what has been called the Baptist sect. Other alleged major biblical evidence for the existence of such a sect in the second half of the first century are the Lucan infancy narratives (Luke 1–2) and, especially, John's Prologue (1:1-18). It is to this last passage that the Baptist-sect hypothesis actually owes its origin in modern NT scholarship.

The Baptist-Sect Hypothesis

The idea of reading John's Prologue against the background of a sectarian group that exalted John at the expense of Jesus seems to have been first

Gruyter, 1989]), Robert L. Webb (*John the Baptizer and Prophet: A Socio-Historical Study*, JSNTSup 62 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991]), Edmondo R. Lupieri ("John the Baptist in New Testament Traditions and History," in *ANRW*, II/26:1, ed. Wolfgang Haase [Berlin: De Gruyter, 1992], 430-461), and Joan E. Taylor (*The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997]) have come to the conclusion that the Gospels are indeed historically valuable in this respect, as is the independent narrative found in Josephus (*Ant.* 18.116-119, with the exclusion of the Slavonic version).

⁴The Greek actually reads ἄνδρες ὡσεὶ δώδεκα ("about twelve men"). This makes it doubtful whether any symbolic significance is attached to the number twelve, as claimed by William Neil (*The Acts of the Apostles*, NCB [London: Oliphants, 1973], 203) and Luke Timothy Johnson (*The Acts of the Apostles*, SP 5 [Collegeville: Liturgical, 1992], 338). Neil even suggests, 203, in reference to Acts 20:21, that the "twelve" comprised a "college" set up by Paul to oversee the church in Ephesus.

suggested as early as 1788 by J. D. Michaelis,⁵ but it was only a century later that this view became highly popular when it was taken up and defended at some length by Wilhelm Baldensperger in his remarkable volume on John 1:1-18.⁶ Though Baldensperger was not followed in all the details he suggested but by a minority, many scholars still think that at least a secondary purpose of John's Gospel was to contradict or to correct the views of some followers of John the Baptist.⁷ The statement, "he was not the light, but he came to testify to the light" in 1:8, the identification of Jesus as "the true light" in v. 9, the subordinative emphasis in v. 15, and several other passages in the main part of the Gospel (1:19-20, 26-27, 30-31; 3:26-30; 5:33-36; 10:41) are usually taken as polemical remarks directed against the claims of the Baptist sect.

Although this idea has been surprisingly influential, it faces two serious objections, one hermeneutical and one historical. On the hermeneutical level, Walter Wink has already questioned the legitimacy of reconstructing "the views of John's disciples by reversing every denial and restriction placed on John in the Fourth Gospel."⁸ Rudolf Bultmann, for example, assuming that John's Prologue was originally a Gnostic hymn from the Baptist circles used by the fourth evangelist to sing the praises of his Christ,⁹ suggested that John was esteemed and worshiped as the Messiah, the preexistent Logos through whom all things were made, and even as the Logos made flesh.¹⁰ But, if there ever existed a Baptist sect with such advanced theological claims, this can only be deduced from the Gospel by means of an arbitrary reading of the evidence.

⁵J. D. Michaelis, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 4 vols., trans. Herbert Marsh (London: Rivington, 1802), 3:285-287.

⁶Wilhelm Baldensperger, *Der Prolog des vierten Evangeliums: Sein polemisch-apologetischer Zweck* (Freiburg: Mohr, 1898).

⁷See, e.g., Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, ed. Francis J. Moloney, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 155; Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel according to Saint John*, BNTC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2005), 101.

⁸Wink, 102.

⁹Rudolf Bultmann, "The History of Religions Background of the Prologue to the Gospel of John," in *The Interpretation of John*, 2d ed., ed. John Ashton, SNTI (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), 27-46.

¹⁰Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 17-18, 48-52. Likewise, Walter Bauer takes almost every statement about the Baptist in John's Gospel as polemical in character, as if they pointed reversely to the tenets of the alleged Baptist sect (*Das Johannesevangelium*, 3d ed., HNT 6 [Tübingen: Mohr, 1933], 16-17). Clayton R. Bowen goes as far as to see the same polemic in 1 John as well, where the sentence "not with the water only" (5:6) would refer to John's baptism (cf. John 1:31, 33), and "the antichrist" (2:18, 22: 4:3) to John himself ("John the Baptist in the New Testament," in *Studies in the New Testament: Collected Papers of Clayton R. Bowen*, ed. Robert J. Hutcheon [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936], 75; reprint from the *AJT* 16 [1912]: 90-106). On the pitfalls of using texts potentially polemical for historical and theological reconstructions, see John M. G. Barclay, "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case," *JSNT* 31 (1987): 79-83.

There are certainly not enough exegetical reasons to take John 1:1-3 and 14 as a Christianized version of statements used within the Baptist circles.

Concerning the negative statements on John, Robert L. Webb has suggested an interesting alternative interpretation. Since the main target of the fourth evangelist was the Jews of his own time, he thinks that the issue of John the Baptist may have been only “one of the many points of contention” within the framework of the Jewish-Christian debate. The Jews at the end of the first century considered John a “good man,” as Jewish historian Flavius Josephus reports.¹¹ Both groups, therefore, might have claimed the Baptist in support of their own ideas: the Jews contending that “John’s ministry was prior to that of Jesus and that Jesus was John’s disciple,” to which the Christians responded that “Jesus was prior because he was the Word and . . . John witnessed to Jesus’ superiority.”¹² In addition, the negative statements on John must be balanced with the positive ones, and there are several instances in John’s Gospel in which the Baptist is spoken of in a highly favorable manner (cf. 1:6-7, 31, 33-34; 3:29; 10:41).¹³

The alleged evidence from the Lucan infancy narratives (Luke 1–2) faces the same methodological difficulty, with the difference that the argument runs primarily the other way around. The hypothetical reconstructions are not based on negative statements about John but on positive ones, with the aggravating circumstance of being also dependent on a conjectural early source from the Baptist circles, probably written in Hebrew or Aramaic, for the material in 1:5-25, 57-66. This source, it is argued, “not only displayed a detailed interest in the birth and infancy of John, but . . . also thought of him much more highly than any Christian would.”¹⁴ There is no question that John

¹¹Josephus *Ant.* 18.117.

¹²Webb, 77. Referring to Webb’s view, Taylor declares: “The solution seems far better than one that sets up a hypothetical Baptist movement continuing into the early second century—somehow separate from church or synagogue—that the Fourth Gospel is trying to address” (197).

¹³Wink, 102. In light of the verses above, it is rather strange that E. F. Scott would make a statement such as this: “The evangelist shows a constant anxiety to assure us . . . that John was inferior to Jesus. Indeed, it is not too much to say that John is introduced into the narrative for no other purpose than to bring out this fact of his inferiority” (*The Fourth Gospel: Its Purpose and Theology*, 2d ed. [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908], 78). Still more problematic is the attempt to bring this controversy back to the time of the Baptist himself and to say, e.g., that after their separation John and Jesus became rivals of each other (see Maurice Goguel, *Au seuil de l’évangile: Jean Baptiste*, BH [Paris: Payot, 1928], 272-274). In John’s Gospel, the relations between John and Jesus are depicted as uniformly friendly and cordial throughout, which means that there is no basis at all, not even in chap. 3, for such a conclusion as that of Goguel that John “did not see in Jesus but an unfaithful disciple, that is, a renegade” (274). For the salvation-history role of John the Baptist in the Fourth Gospel, see Wilson Paroschi, *Incarnation and Covenant in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel (John 1:1-18)*, EUS 23 [Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2006], 63-75).

¹⁴Charles H. H. Scobie, *John the Baptist* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964), 189. See

plays a distinguished role in the narrative (cf. vv. 15-17),¹⁵ but there is nothing there that goes beyond common Christian belief about John as found in other parts of the Gospel tradition (e.g., 7:28; Matt 11:11).¹⁶ And when it comes to source analysis, on which the discrepancies among all theories could hardly be greater,¹⁷ it is one thing to recognize that part of this material may have come to Luke from an earlier Baptist source, for example from John's disciples who eventually became Christians,¹⁸ and quite another to think of a continuing Baptist sect that thought of its master in messianic terms. This hypothesis, as Joseph A. Fitzmyer puts it, is mere speculation.¹⁹

On the historical level, the objection to the existence of a sectarian Baptist group in the first century refers to the scarcity as well as ambiguity of the evidence. Besides the biblical passages already mentioned, which provide little if any basis for the hypothesis, the patristic literature has also been evoked to argue that this group did exist. An old argument, which surprisingly still finds some supporters today, is that the sectarian Baptists are mentioned in the first half of the second century by Justin Martyr, who began his Christian life in Ephesus, the same place where the incident of Acts 19 is reported to have taken place, and a little later by Hegeppus, who would have referred to them as Hemerobaptists in his inventory of Jewish sects.²⁰ In the fourth century, the argument continues, the Hemerobaptists are mentioned by Epiphanius of

also Paul Winter, "The Cultural Background for the Narratives in Luke I-II," *JQR* 45 (1954): 159-167, 230-242, 287; idem, "The Proto-Source of Luke 1," *NovT* 1 (1956): 184-199.

¹⁵It has been argued that even the messianic ascriptions of the Benedictus (vv. 68-79) also derive from a Baptist source and were originally applied to John (e.g., Philipp Vielhauer, "Das Benediktus des Zacharias [Lk 1:68-79]," *ZThK* 49 [1952]: 255-272).

¹⁶For more details, see Stephen Ferris, *The Hymns of Luke's Infancy Narratives: Their Origin, Meaning and Significance*, JSNTSup 9 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), 86-98; Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 2d ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 273-279.

¹⁷Heinz Schürmann, a major supporter of source theories in Luke's infancy narratives, admits that "despite all astute researches, the tradition-history of Luke 1-2 still lies in the darkness of contradictory hypotheses" (*Das Lukasevangelium*, vol. 1, 3d ed., HThK 3 [Freiburg: Herder, 1984], 143-144).

¹⁸"Or, to state it perhaps more accurately," says Wink, "the church possessed these traditions from the very beginning by virtue of the fact that it was itself an outgrowth of the Baptist movement" (71).

¹⁹Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 2 vols., AB 28 and 28a (New York: Doubleday, 1981-1985), 1:378. For a full analysis of the hypothesis, see Wink, 58-82.

²⁰E.g., Bowen, 74; Theodor Innitzer, *Johannes der Täufer: nach der heiligen Schrift und der Tradition* (Vienna: Mayer, 1908), 391-392; Goguel, 105-107; Joseph Thomas, *Le mouvement baptiste en Palestine et Syrie (150 av. J.-C.-300 ap. J.-C.)* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1935), 114-139. For a recent endorsement of this argument, see Rothschild, 3, n. 8, 33-34.

Salamis and in the Apostolic Constitutions, a collection of ecclesiastical laws of Syrian provenance. At last, the definitive connection between this sect and the Baptist movement is allegedly made by the Pseudo-Clementine literature in the third century: the Clementine Homilies (2.23) speak of John as a Hemerobaptist and the Clementine Recognitions (1.60) have this passage:

One of the disciples of John asserted that John was the Christ, and not Jesus, inasmuch as Jesus himself declared that John was greater than all men and all prophets. "If then," said he, "he be greater than all, he must be held to be greater than Moses, and than Jesus himself. But if he be the greatest of all, then he must be the Christ."²¹

However, though the evidence for the Hemerobaptists is admittedly precarious, it seems to suffice for making any identification between them and the supposed followers of John the Baptist rather difficult, if not impossible. In Hegeppus's inventory, which is preserved by Eusebius of Caesarea, the Hemerobaptists appear side by side with the Essenes, Galileans, Masbotheans, Samaritans, Sadducees, and Pharisees.²² According to Epiphanius, their beliefs were akin to those of the Scribes and Pharisees, except that they denied the resurrection, and daily baths were an essential part of their religion, hence the name *ἡμεροβαπτισταί* (i.e., *καθ' ἡμέραν βαπτίζομενοι*).²³ And the Apostolic Constitutions add that the Hemerobaptists "do not eat until they have bathed, and do not make use of their beds and tables and dishes until they have cleansed them."²⁴ With regard to the "Baptists" mentioned by Justin Martyr along with six other Jewish groups,²⁵ most Jewish and Christian scholars believe them to be the same Hemerobaptists, who are also possibly identical with the *l'ovelei shaharit*, or "morning bathers," mentioned in Rabbinic literature.²⁶ These "morning bathers" are sometimes identified with the Essenes,²⁷ and Josephus speaks of at least two different Essene "orders."²⁸

²¹See F. Stanley Jones, *An Ancient Jewish Christian Source on the History of Christianity: Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions 1.27-71*, SBLTT 37 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995), 138-150, 164.

²²Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.22.

²³Epiphanius, *Pan.* 1.1.17.

²⁴*Apostolic Constitutions* 6.6.

²⁵Justin, *Dial.* 80. The other groups mentioned by Justin are Sadducees, Genistae, Meristae, Galileans, Hellenists, and Pharisees.

²⁶E.g., T. *Yadayim* 2.20; B.T. *Berakoth* 22a; J.T. *Berakoth* 3:6c. See Marcel Simon, *Jewish Sects at the Time of Jesus*, trans. James H. Farley (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 88-92; Ernst, 366-368; Hermann Lichtenberger, "Syncretistic Features in Jewish and Jewish-Christian Baptism Movements," in *Jews and Christians: The Partings of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 87-88; Igor R. Tantlevskij, "Hemerobaptists," *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1:352-353.

²⁷See Tantlevskij, 352.

²⁸Josephus *J. W.* 2.160-161.

The affinities between the Hemerobaptists and the Essenes cannot be underestimated. According to Josephus, the Essenes practiced ritual purifying baths every day, apparently in the morning,²⁹ and purification and sanctification by water is mentioned in their Manual of Discipline (1QS 3:4-9).³⁰ Josephus also reports that they did not believe in resurrection but in immortality of the soul,³¹ and despite the fact that the evidence for this is admittedly somewhat confusing, it is possible to say that “Josephus’ account . . . corresponds more closely to the typical expectations of the Scrolls.”³² As far as John is concerned, though there is no question that his teachings could have been changed over time, his baptism was a “baptism of repentance” (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 13:24; 19:4) performed for the “forgiveness of sins” (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3) in view of the “wrath to come” (Matt 3:5-10; Luke 3:7).³³ This implies a distinctive, unrepeatable, symbolic, and prophetic act of initiation that was radically different from the Hemerobaptists’ daily ablutions or, for that matter, from any other first-century Jewish ritual washing,³⁴

²⁹Ibid., 2.129, 138.

³⁰According to another passage of the same document (1QS 5:13-14), “They shall not enter the water to partake of the pure meal of the men of holiness, for they shall not be cleansed unless they turn from their wickedness: for all who transgress his word are unclean” (trans. by Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* [New York: Penguin, 1997], 104).

³¹J. W. 2.154-158.

³²John J. Collins, “The Expectation of the End in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 88.

³³David Flusser argues that the Essenes also combined ritual baptism with moral cleansing, thus providing the pattern after which John’s baptism was modeled (*Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988], 50-54). According to the Scrolls, however, Essene baptism was different from John’s, as well as from Christian baptism (cf. Acts 2:38; Heb 10:22), in the sense that instead of leading to forgiveness the actual immersion comes after moral cleansing, which is caused by repentance. That is, moral purity is a precondition for ritual purity (see 1QS 3:5-9; 5:13-14; 5:17-18; cf. Philo *Cher.* 95). Flusser acknowledges this, but he contends that Josephus supports his view of a dependence of John’s baptism on the Essenes’ purification baths. The argument, however, is rather precarious. It is true that Josephus describes the baptism of John as something that effects only the purification of the body, while a previous moral cleansing should be achieved by “righteous conduct” (*Ant.* 18.116-119). But besides colliding with the NT accounts of John, Josephus’s description can be perfectly understood as if he was acquainted with the special significance of John’s baptism but “desired to rank it within the common Jewish understanding of purity” (Hermann Lichtenberger, “Baths and Baptism,” *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2 vols. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], 1:86).

³⁴Essene texts do refer to ritual washings as a way of entering the covenanted life of the community (CD 10:12-13; 1QS 3:3-5; 5:13-14), but even those seem to be more related to purification than to initiation. Joseph A. Fitzmyer states rather positively that

including proselyte baptism,³⁵ though it may be located within the context of the ideas and expectations of contemporary Judaism.³⁶ In addition, it is highly possible that John shared Jesus' belief in the resurrection of the body (cf. Luke 7:18-23).

In relation to the Pseudo-Clementines, the passage in the Homilies that refers to John as a Hemerobaptist is historically anachronistic and part of a religious and philosophical romance of legendary nature influenced by Gnosticism. And on the basis of the Recognitions, which share with the Homilies the same literary and theological outlook, the most one can say is that around the third century there might have existed a Gnostic group that looked at John the Baptist as the divine Christ. What is not correct is to use this evidence to suggest that already in the first century there were followers of John posing a threat to the church.³⁷ Walter Bauer's and Bultmann's claim

such washings "were not unique, initiatory, or not-to-be-repeated" (*The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins*, SDSSRL [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 20).

³⁵Attempts have been made to understand John's baptism, as well as Christian baptism, in connection with the baptism of proselytes among the Jews (e.g., H. H. Rowley, "Jewish Proselyte Baptism and the Baptism of John," *HUCA* 15 [1940]: 313-334; Karen Pusey, "Jewish Proselyte Baptism," *ExpTim* 95 [1983-1984]: 141-145; Joachim Jeremias, *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries*, trans. David Cairns [London: SCM, 1960], 24-42). Proselyte baptism, however, was not associated with confession and remission of sins, had no eschatological meaning, was not a passive rite in the sense that the act proper was administered by someone else, and, of course, did not apply to Jews, as John's did. Derived from the purificatory lustrations of the Mosaic Law (e.g., Lev 14:8-9; 15:2-30; 16:4, 24, 26-28; 22:3-7; Num 19:2-8; Deut 23:11), the baptism within Judaism of converted Gentiles signified a cleansing from pagan, idolatrous impurity and the rite was fulfilled by means of a self-immersion, though in the presence of two men learned in the Law (B.T. *Yebam.* 47a; cf. M. *Pesah.* 8:8; M. *Ed.* 5:2). Recent scholarship is even arguing more fervently that it was only after the Bar Kochba's revolt (135 A.D.) that proselyte baptism came to be unequivocally required by the rabbis (see esp. Irina Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting*, BAFCS 5 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 19-49). Scot McKnight comes to suggest that it was actually John's baptism, as well as Christian baptism, that gave impetus within Judaism to initiatory baptism of converted Gentiles (*A Light Among the Gentiles: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991], 85). For the traditional view, according to which proselyte baptism was known and practiced in the second-temple period, see Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interaction from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 288-341. For the distinctiveness of John's baptism within first-century Judaism, see Lars Hartman, "Baptism," *ABD* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:583-584.

³⁶Webb, 164, notes that "Elements of his [John's] baptismal practice and aspects of its function appear distinctive in comparison with immersions as practiced commonly within the Palestinian Judaism of his day—distinctive, though not so unique that it is incomprehensible in a Jewish context."

³⁷See Stephen S. Smalley, *John: Evangelist and Interpreter*, 2d ed., NTP (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998), 163-164. As C. H. Dodd says, "to base a theory upon the

that the Mandaean literature also affords attestation for a Baptist sect rival to Christianity³⁸ is even more problematic. Not only do the references to John the Baptist belong to the latter strata of this literature, but he “is never pictured as a messiah or savior or founder of the sect, and does not even institute the rite of baptism.”³⁹ According to Kurt Rudolph, the attempt to see in Mandaeanism historical traditions that actually go back to followers of John cannot be proved. “It is more likely,” he argues, “that the Mandaeans took over legends of this kind from heretical Christian, possibly Gnostic, circles and shaped them according to their ideas.”⁴⁰

μαθηταί and πιστεύσαντες

The significance of the foregoing discussion is that, to all intents and purposes, there remains only Acts 19:1-7 as a possible evidence for the Baptist-sect hypothesis, and this is usually taken for granted without any further consideration.⁴¹ On close inspection, however, the passage appears to point to another direction, and this is what has puzzled several scholars. The alleged Baptists mentioned by Luke are actually described as “disciples” (μαθηταί, v. 1) and “believers” (πιστεύσαντες, v. 2), which in Acts cannot mean but that they were, at least in some sense, Christians. When not otherwise specified, as in this passage, μαθητής in Acts always refers to a disciple of Jesus (6:1, 2, 7; 9:1, 10, 19, 26 [2x], 36 [μαθήτρια], 38; 11:26, 29; 13:52; 14:20,

evidence of the late and heretical Clementine romance is to build a house upon sand” (*Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963], 298, n. 1).

³⁸Bauer, 16-17; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, esp. 18, n. 1. See also Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. 2, “History and Literature of Early Christianity” (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 73.

³⁹Wink, 100, n. 2. Edmondo Lupieri adds: “The idea of Messiah, as it is understood in Judaic and Christian traditions, is absent in Mandaeanism. . . . The hypothesis of a messianic role or quality for John, therefore, cannot even be suggested” (*The Mandaeans: The Last Gnostics*, trans. Charles Hindley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 162, n. 58).

⁴⁰Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*, trans. and ed. Robert M. Wilson (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 363. Birger A. Pearson even suggests that this Mandaean appropriation of Christian traditions would not have taken place before the third century (*Ancient Gnosticism: Traditions and Literature* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007], 328). As for the origins of Mandaean religion, there are sufficient elements in vocabulary and tradition to demonstrate that, despite its harsh anti-Jewish polemic, the community originated from heterodox Judaism (see Rudolph, 363; Dan Cohn-Sherbok, “The Mandaeans and Heterodox Judaism,” *HUCA* 54 [1984]: 147-151); Pearson thinks of the Masbotheans as a reasonable guess, since the Mandaean word for baptism is *masbuta* (329).

⁴¹E.g., Marie-Emile Boismard, “The First Epistle of John and the Writings of Qumran,” in *John and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 165.

22, 28; 15:10; 16:1; 18:23, 27; 19:9, 30; 20:1, 30; 21:4 [2x]),⁴² and πιστεύω, whether used transitively or intransitively, always points to Jesus as the object of belief (2:44; 4:4, 32; 5:14; 8:13; 9:42; 10:43; 11:17, 21; 13:12, 39, 48; 14:1, 23; 15:5; 16:31, 34; 17:12; 18:8 [2x], 27; 19:18; 21:20, 25; 22:19).⁴³ Exceptions are those few instances in which other specific situations are involved (8:12; 9:26; 13:41; 15:7, 11; 24:14; 26:27 [2x]; 27:25). It is also important to note that Paul's question to those "disciples" (19:1) was not related to the person or the object of their belief, but only whether they had received the Holy Spirit when they first believed (v. 2).⁴⁴ Such a question would hardly make any sense if the apostle were not addressing believers in Jesus.

K. Haacker confronts this difficulty by suggesting that Luke narrates the episode from the standpoint of Paul as he first perceived the situation. Since Luke does not recognize the possibility of being Christian without possessing the Spirit, the believers Paul encountered in Ephesus were not actually true disciples; they only appeared to be so before the apostle became more acquainted with them. Once he had done so, he found out that those men had not even heard about the Holy Spirit, which means they could not be Christians. They were disciples of John the Baptist who needed to be baptized in Jesus' name and receive the gift of the Spirit. Thus what appears to be rebaptism was because the first baptism was not Christian.⁴⁵ According to Stanley E. Porter, however, two fundamental points militate against this interpretation. The assumption that Luke does not conceive anyone to be a Christian who does not possess the Spirit is an argument from silence and begs the question of whether this passage does not in fact indicate just such

⁴²James D. G. Dunn argues that the absence of the article before "disciples" (τινας μαθητάς) means that they were not Christians, for in Acts whenever the plural μαθηταί is used as a technical term for Christian believers it always comes with the article (*Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970], 83-84). In his examination of Dunn's view, however, Robert P. Menzies correctly points out that the similar phrasing in the singular (τις μαθητής) in Acts 9:10 and 16:1 indicates that the usage in 19:2 is not as unique as Dunn contends (*The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts*, JSNTSup 54 [Sheffield: JSOT, 1991], 273-274).

⁴³See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 346, 642; J. L. Teicher, "The Teaching of the Pre-Pauline Church in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *JJS* 4 (1953): esp. 139-145.

⁴⁴It is strange, therefore, that Lars Hartman would come to the conclusion that "they were not really 'disciples,' although they are called so. Their faith, if any, was not in Jesus" (*Into the Name of the Lord Jesus: Baptism in the Early Church*, SNTW [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997], 138).

⁴⁵K. Haacker, "Einige Fälle von 'Erlebter Rede' im Neuen Testament," *NovT* 12 (1970): 75-76. See also I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 305-308.

a situation. The second point is Haacker's assumption that Luke has told the story from the perspective of Paul. It is by no means clear that Luke uses such a technique in this passage or in any other of the book of Acts, especially with regard to Paul. On the contrary, it is more likely that the narrative reflects his own perspective, as he looked back at the episode at the time of his writing.⁴⁶

It has also been argued that μαθηταί and πιστεύσαντες only reflect Luke's editorial hand in depicting those men as almost Christians for apologetic reasons. This view, which is especially associated with Käsemann,⁴⁷ is based on two untenable assumptions, one historical and one redactional. The historical assumption is that the adherents of the Baptist movement, which continued to exist long after John's death and was opposed to Christianity, could not be incorporated into the church without threatening the Church's function and unity, as they would be bound to owe more allegiance to John than to Jesus. In relation to redaction, it is assumed that the whole story was fabricated by Luke because of a specific theological agenda: to reduce the risk posed by John's followers' conversion, he portrayed them as semi-Christians who needed only a minimum of persuasion to become full members of the church, thus radically eliminating any suggestion of real rivalry.⁴⁸

There is no reason to deny that Luke made use of traditions and shaped his story of the apostolic church, but this does not require a negative assessment of the historical character of the essential elements in the narrative.⁴⁹ Also, the complexity in determining both the content and the extent of his sources, whether oral or written, should definitely prevent one from building too much on redactional arguments. In other words, redactional fabrications are essentially incapable of proof; they are more the result of individual presuppositions than the conclusion of a sustained argument. One example is Käsemann's argument that the sentence "into [εἰς] the baptism of John" (19:3) is a Lukan euphemism for baptism in the name of John.⁵⁰ The substitution of the instrumental ἐν for εἰς, however, is a common feature of

⁴⁶Stanley E. Porter, *Paul in Acts*, LBS (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2001), 83.

⁴⁷Käsemann, "The Disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus," 142-144.

⁴⁸A variation of Käsemann's view is offered by John H. Hughes, who argues that the way Luke portrays Apollos and the twelve men of Ephesus as quasi-Christians is due to the fact that the church's "most fruitful source of new members was among the followers of John, whose expectation of the Holy Spirit and the advent of the Lord would have made them particularly receptive to the Christian message" ("John the Baptist: The Forerunner of God Himself," *NovT* 14 [1972]: 214-215).

⁴⁹Menzies, 270.

⁵⁰Käsemann, "The Disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus," 137. See also Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juell, ed. Eldon J. Epp with Christopher R. Matthews, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 159; Hartman, *Into the Name of the Lord Jesus*, 139.

the NT Greek, particularly Luke (see Luke 7:50; 8:48; Acts 7:53).⁵¹ Since it is also frequently found in the LXX and only rarely in the papyri, A. T. Robertson thinks this construction was probably influenced by Semitic idiom.⁵² Being so, it must have an impact on our understanding of the tradition-history of the expression in Acts, which means that it greatly reduces the possibility of a redactional strategy.⁵³

The point is that Acts 19:1-7 does not provide any evidence that the Baptist movement continued to exist in the late first century, and much less that this movement represented a threat to the church. The “disciples” that Paul met in Ephesus are presented by Luke as Christians, not Baptists, and should be treated as such. This is the most natural reading of the passage, and words should always be taken in their plain, basic sense, unless this becomes absolutely impossible, which is not the case here, despite the information in v. 3 that those disciples had received John’s baptism.⁵⁴ Most scholars would now agree that they were Christians. The only disagreement, as Ernst Haenchen remarks, is over what was lacking in their Christianity.⁵⁵ In fact, the Baptist-sect hypothesis rests entirely on circumstantial evidence, whether biblical or extrabiblical. On the basis of the Pseudo-Clementines, if there is any credibility in that account, it may be possible to say that

⁵¹See F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and ed. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), §206; Wilfrid Haubeck and Heinrich von Siebenthal, *Neuer sprachlicher Schlüssel zum griechischen Neuen Testament*, 2 vols. (Giessen: TVG, 1994-1997), 1:789.

⁵²A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 482. See also C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 70; Maximilian Zerwick, *Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples*, trans. Joseph Smith, SPIB 114 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963), §101.

⁵³Not even in the Mandaean literature is there evidence of a baptism in the name of John. On the contrary, according to Lupieri, though John plays a very important role in Mandaeanism, the Mandaeans define their baptism as “baptism by Bihram the Great,” not by John. John is called “Baptist” only once among the many passages that mention him, for he is not the one who introduced baptism. This was revealed to Adam by Manda d-Hiia, and so Adam is the actual initiator of the Mandaean ritual baptism on earth. John only learned it when he was a child (*The Mandaeans: The Last Gnostics*, 163).

⁵⁴B. T. D. Smith comments: “It must be confessed that if Luke meant us to understand that St Paul was mistaken, and that the men were merely disciples of John, then he has not only failed to acquaint us with the fact, but has led us into the same error by his own description of them” (“Apollon and the Twelve Disciples at Ephesus,” *JTS* 16 [1915]: 244).

⁵⁵Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary*, trans. Bernard Noble and Gerald Shinn (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 554.

a heretical group around the third century acclaimed John as Christ.⁵⁶ To assume a continuity between John and these heretics, however, would be similar to assuming that the third-century Gnostic Sethians were, in fact as they claimed, the guardians of the divine knowledge transmitted by Adam to Seth, his third son (Gen 4:5).⁵⁷

A continuing Baptist sect would require Johannine baptism to be self-administered on a regular basis, such as the Essene purification baths, or capable of being carried out by John's disciples, or both if a one-time initiatory baptism was combined with repeatable baths related to cultic purity. Though it is never safe to build on the silence of the text, there is not a single hint in the NT to support any of these. As already argued, John's baptism was a unique immersion received passively (see Matt 3:14, 16; Mark 1:8, 9; Luke 3:21; John 1:25, 28, 31; 3:23; 10:40) for the achievement of moral cleansing, not of cultic purity after which, according to cultic needs, other immersions followed.⁵⁸ The controversy referred to in John 3:25 that arose between John's disciples and a certain Jew does not indicate that John's baptism was somehow connected to ceremonial "purification" (καθαρισμός; cf. 2:6). On the contrary, it may demonstrate exactly the distinctiveness of John's baptism in relation to more traditional Jewish practices. Since various Jewish groups bathed every day in cold water for cultic reasons, John's moral baptism was totally open to misunderstanding by Jewish observers.⁵⁹

Also, contrary to Christian baptism, which could be administered by the disciples of Jesus (John 4:1-2), there is no information of any of John's

⁵⁶It may be worth mentioning that the same passage of the *Recognitions* (1.60) that talks about John being hailed as Christ by some also refers to Barabbas as an apostle who replaced Judas the traitor.

⁵⁷On the legendary origins of the Sethians and their sacred texts, see James E. Goehring's introduction to "The Three Steles of Seth," in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, 3d ed., ed. James M. Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 396-397. For the speculative view that the Sethians were related to the Baptist movement and that the original Prologue to the Fourth Gospel was actually a hymn sung to John the Baptist within such Gnostic circles, as already defended by Bultmann, see Stephen J. Patterson, "The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel and the World of Speculative Jewish Theology," in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition*, ed. Robert T. Fortna and Tom Thatcher (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 323-332.

⁵⁸There is no evidence at all for Fitzmyer's suggestion that John "apparently would administer his baptism for the forgiveness of sins to any Jew who would come to him, and as often as one would come" (*The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins*, 20). At least Jesus does not seem to have been rebaptized when he came to John a second time (see John 1:29-36). Taylor, 30, states rather emphatically: "No one has managed to prove that John was concerned that his disciples participate in repeated daily ablutions" (30).

⁵⁹See Lincoln, 159-160; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 210. For the differences between John's baptism and existing Jewish rites of purification, see Colin Brown, "What Was John the Baptist Doing?" *BBR* 7 (1997): 40-43.

disciples performing or being commissioned to perform baptisms, with the obvious exception of those who left him to follow Jesus (cf. Matt 28:19). The title “the Baptist” (ὁ βαπτιστής) itself, as Adolf Schlatter points out, suggests that John’s baptism was something inextricably his own, both in character and in administration.⁶⁰ Finally, the insistence of the Gospel writers on the preparatory and provisional character of John’s ministry (Matt 11:3, 13; Mark 1:7; Luke 16:16; John 1:6-9, 15, 24-27, 29-31; 3:25-30) may actually provide an indirect evidence for the premature end of the Baptist movement, which seems to have been quite popular while it lasted (e.g., Matt 3:5-8; 11:7-9; 21:24-26; Mark 1:4-5; 6:14-28; Luke 7:24-29; John 1:19; 3:23, 26; 5:33).⁶¹ The fact is that after John’s burial by his disciples and the report they brought to Jesus (Matt 14:12), the NT says nothing more about them. It could be that not all of them became Christians, but that some remained loyal to their master, formed a group rival to Christianity, and lasted for more than two centuries is, at best, a wonderful conjecture.⁶²

*Baptism or Rebaptism: The Episode and
Its Theological Implications*

Another major question related to Acts 19:1-7 is whether those twelve believers had formerly had any relationship with John, that is, whether they had been baptized by John and been his disciples. On this, the first point that needs to be emphasized is that not all who were baptized by John became his disciples in a stricter sense. Though discipleship in first-century Judaism was usually understood as the act of standing in relation to another as pupil and being instructed by that person, it could at times also refer to a wider group of followers or listeners (see Luke 6:13, 17; 19:37; John 9:28).⁶³ In this sense, anyone who would listen to John and follow his teachings would be a disciple

⁶⁰Adolf Schlatter, *Johannes der Täufer*, ed. Wilhelm Michaelis (Basel: Reinhardt, 1956), 61. The title ὁ βαπτιστής is regularly used by Matthew (3:1; 11:1-12; 14:2, 8; 16:14; 17:13) and to a lesser extent by Luke (7:20, 33; 9:19). Mark uses ὁ βαπτίζων (“the one who baptizes”) once (1:4) and ὁ βαπτιστής twice, both of them when quoting persons outside the group of the disciples (6:25; 8:28). That this is the designation by which John was known even among the Jews seems confirmed by Josephus, who refers to him as “John, called the Baptist” (Ἰωάννης τοῦ ἐπικαλουμένου βαπτιστοῦ) (*Ant.* 18.116).

⁶¹Josephus confirms the popularity John enjoyed among the Jews. He not only says that the crowds were “very greatly moved by hearing his [John’s] words,” but also clearly echoes Matthew (14:5) by saying that Herod “feared lest the great influence John had over the people” (*Ant.* 18.118).

⁶²See John A. T. Robinson, “Elijah, John and Jesus: An Essay in Detection,” *NTS* 4 (1957-1958): 279, n. 2. Robinson adds that “none of the Fathers mention the disciples of John in their lists of heretics, just as in the New Testament the Baptists are never among the enemies of Jesus” (*ibid.*).

⁶³See P. Nepper-Christensen, “μαθητής,” *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990-1993), 2:372-373.

of his, even if that person was not always closely associated with him. Joan E. Taylor correctly highlights that the implication of John's teaching in Luke 3:10-14 is that he expected that most of those who were taught and baptized by him "would return to their usual jobs in towns and villages."⁶⁴ It seems clear, however, that John had an inner circle of disciples (see Matt 9:14; 11:2; 14:12; Mark 2:18; Luke 11:1) with whom he had a sort of relationship not shared by the others (see Matt 3:5-6; Mark 1:5; Luke 3:7-14; 7:28-30). These disciples were the ones who addressed him as "rabbi" (John 3:26),⁶⁵ subjected themselves to his new ascetic ethical demands (Mark 2:18; John 3:25), were taught by him to pray (Luke 11:1), were sent to probe Jesus (Matt 11:2-3), and took the responsibility of burying their master (14:12).⁶⁶ With regard to the Ephesian believers, even if it is assumed that they had, in fact, been baptized by John, it is impossible to know whether or not they had once belonged to John's inner circle of disciples. Syntactically speaking, however, not even their baptism by John is actually beyond dispute.

τὸ Ἰωάννου βάπτισμα

According to Greek syntax, there are at least two possible ways of reading the genitive Ἰωάννου in the expression "John's baptism" (τὸ Ἰωάννου βάπτισμα) of Acts 19:3. One way is to understand it as a simple adjectival genitive, making τὸ Ἰωάννου βάπτισμα to mean only "the Johannine baptism" or "a baptism like John's," not necessarily a baptism performed by John. In other words, the baptism those twelve believers received would have been similar to John's, thus leaving open the chance that they had been Christians all along and that their Christianity had not been mediated by John the Baptist. This is Jerome Murphy-O'Connor's view, though he does not resort to any syntactical argument per se.⁶⁷ It just has to be noted that the early Christian baptism, albeit rather difficult to reconstruct on the basis of the existing evidence, apparently stood closer to John's baptism than to anything else in first-century Judaism. It seems to have been inspired by and modeled after John's baptism, and in a sense to have been a mere continuation of it (see John 3:22-23; 4:1-2).⁶⁸ In this case, τὸ Ἰωάννου βάπτισμα would have to be

⁶⁴Taylor, 102.

⁶⁵Although this is the only place in the Gospels where John is called "rabbi" (cf. Luke 3:12), it seems to indicate how his disciples addressed him (cf. John 1:38).

⁶⁶See Martin Hengel, *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers*, trans. James Greig (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 35-37. The information in the Clementine Homilies that, just as Jesus "had twelve apostles according to the number of the solar months, so also there gathered about John thirty eminent persons according to the reckoning of the lunar month" (2.23), is certainly unworthy of credit.

⁶⁷See Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "John the Baptist and Jesus: History and Hypothesis," *NTS* 36 (1990): 367-368. Taylor accepts this view (73).

⁶⁸See Hartman, *Into the Name of the Lord Jesus*, '29-35; Lichtenberger, "Syncretistic Features in Jewish and Jewish-Christian Baptist Movements," 87. That baptism did not fall into disuse after the imprisonment of John, but continued to be a feature

taken as a post-Pentecost term used in the apostolic church for the Christian baptism itself prior to Pentecost.⁶⁹ The other way of reading Ἰωάννου is as a subjective genitive, in which it would actually function as the subject of the verbal idea implied in the noun of action βάπτισμα (“baptism” → “to baptize”), meaning “the baptism performed by John.” The idea would then be that the Ephesian believers had been baptized directly by John, which means that they had indeed been in one way or another related to his movement before becoming Christians.⁷⁰

Despite its attractiveness for matching the description of those believers in Acts as already Christians, and irrespective of being syntactically possible, the attempt to read Ἰωάννου as an adjectival genitive actually affords little if any exegetical warrant. From the contextual standpoint, it seems clear that Paul understood those believers’ mentions of John’s baptism as a baptism administered by John, rather than simply as a baptism like John’s, as argued by Murphy-O’Connor. Paul’s comment that “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus” (Acts 19:4), can hardly be taken as a reference only to the origin of that baptism. It is rather an explicit allusion to the baptism of those believers by John himself. This conclusion is supported by some semantic consideration as well. In addition to Acts 19:3, there are seven other occurrences of the expression “John’s baptism” (τὸ Ἰωάννου βάπτισμα) in

of the Jesus movement during the lifetime of Jesus, has been convincingly argued by R. T. France, “Jesus the Baptist?” in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 105-107. Regarding the difficult connection between John 3:25 and 26, some scholars even suggest replacing Ἰουδαίου in v. 25 with Ἰησοῦ, thus apparently making more sense of John’s disciples’ jealousy in v. 26 (e.g., Alfred Loisy, *Le quatrième Évangile*, 2d ed. [Paris: Nourry, 1921], 171). Besides having no manuscript support, however, such a reading would shift the focus of the controversy in v. 25 from the relative value of John’s baptism and more traditional Jewish purification rites to the relative value of Christian baptism and the one performed by John, thus placing one baptism against the other and creating a tension that is alien to the passage and to the NT as a whole. See further, Hartwig Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium*, HNT 6 (Tübingen: Mohr, 2005), 228-229.

⁶⁹In the case of the twelve of Acts 19, Murphy-O’Connor, 367, argues that they had been baptized by Jesus himself (cf. John 3:22) when he was preaching John’s baptism of repentance in Judaea and was still associated with John; it was only after moving to Galilee that Jesus would have redefined his mission.

⁷⁰On the subjective genitive, see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 113-116. Syntactically speaking, there is yet another possible interpretation for the genitive Ἰωάννου, and that is to take it as the object of the verbal idea implied in βάπτισμα, therefore differently from the subjective genitive, in which it functions as the implied subject of βάπτισμα. If taken objectively, “John’s baptism” would mean the moment or the situation in which John himself was baptized, a meaning definitely not supported by the context.

the NT, most of them by Luke himself (Matt 21:25; Mark 11:30; Luke 7:29; 20:4; Acts 1:22; 10:37; 18:25),⁷¹ and, with the possible exception of Acts 18:25, which is discussed next, there is not a single instance in which the reference is to the early Christian, Johannine-like baptism. On the contrary, it always refers to the baptism with which John himself baptized those who came to him and accepted his message of repentance. It can be assumed, therefore, that those disciples Paul met in Ephesus, like some of Jesus' first disciples, had also had in the past some ties with the Baptist movement. We don't know exactly when they became Christians, but this must necessarily have taken place before Pentecost, probably even before the Good Friday/Easter events, which would explain their ignorance of the Holy Spirit. However simplistic in its appearance, this interpretation still figures as the most adequate one, granting the general historicity of the passage.⁷²

With regard to Acts 18:25, which also refers to "John's baptism," but in connection with Apollos, a learned Jewish-Christian missionary from Alexandria,⁷³ it is practically impossible on the basis of the passage itself to know whether the genitive Ἰωάννου should be read adjectivally or subjectively. Because of this, the decision should be made on the basis of the proximity (context) to the account of the twelve Ephesian believers, as well as the semantic evidence from the rest of the NT. This means that, assuming the discontinuation of the Baptist movement soon after John's death, Apollos must also have been baptized by John prior to becoming a Christian, and that his becoming a Christian must also have taken place before Pentecost.

⁷¹Rothschild also includes Acts 13:24 (68), but Ἰωάννου . . . βάπτισμα there is part of a genitive absolute construction, and does not parallel the other passages listed above.

⁷²There is no question that their conversion—if it can be called *conversion* at all—was not related to Paul's first missionary activities in Ephesus near the end of his second missionary journey (Acts 18:19-21). It was not related either to the scattering of believers following the persecution that broke out in Judea after Stephen's martyrdom (8:1; 11:19-21), for it is unthinkable that post-Pentecost believers from Jerusalem would not have even heard of the Holy Spirit. An early conversion, prior even to the Good Friday/Easter events, therefore, seems to be required. Menzies, 270, suggests that there might have existed in Galilee former disciples of John the Baptist who believed in Jesus without receiving Christian baptism or instruction concerning the gift of the Spirit. Whether in Galilee or in Judaea, as argued by Murphy-O'Connor, 367,—who does not think, however, of the Ephesian believers as having been baptized by John, but by Jesus at the beginning of his ministry—the twelve believers of Acts 19 must have lost contact with the Jesus movement when they moved away from Palestine still during the lifetime of Jesus. For a list of scholars who accept this interpretation, see Ernst, 149-150.

⁷³F. F. Bruce suggests that Apollos was a traveling merchant (*The Book of Acts*, rev. ed., NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 358), and we know from Josephus of least another Jewish traveling merchant who also engaged in missionary activities; his name was Ananias (*Ant.* 20.34-42).

The fact is that Apollos was a Christian is hardly open to question, though it has already been suggested that he was simply a Jewish missionary,⁷⁴ an Essene,⁷⁵ a surviving disciple of John the Baptist who still proclaimed the imminence of the Messiah (not Jesus),⁷⁶ or even a sectarian Alexandrian Christian.⁷⁷ The way he is referred to in the narrative, however, should leave no doubt about his religious affiliation and even orthodoxy. Luke introduces him not only as someone who “had been instructed in the Way of the Lord” (v. 25a), and in Acts, “the way” (ἡ ὁδός) is a description of Christianity (9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22; cf. 16:17), but also as someone who “taught accurately the things concerning Jesus” (vs. 25c). The most natural way of understanding these words, as C. K. Barrett points out, is that Apollos had somehow been instructed in the Christian faith and was a Christian.⁷⁸ The argument that such statements, as also in the case of the twelve men of Ephesus, only reflect Luke’s redactional efforts to bring the disciples of John closer to Christianity for evangelistic purposes is speculative and artificial, besides being completely unnecessary. It is possible to make sense of the text without resorting to such an expedient.

Apollos is presented as a Christian, and there is no compelling reason to treat him differently.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, his understanding of Christianity was imperfect, for the only baptism he knew was the one administered by John the Baptist, and this explains why he needed further instruction (vv. 25-26). In the context of Acts 18:24–19:7, whether this is regarded as a single paragraph or two distinct paragraphs, the fact that he knew “only” (μόνον) John’s baptism consists in an explicit indication that, similarly to the Ephesian believers,

⁷⁴Eduard Schweizer, “Die Bekehrung des Apollos, Ag. 18, 24-26,” *EvT* 15 (1955): 247-254.

⁷⁵Hans Kosmala, *Hebräer, Essener, Christen: Studien zur Vorgeschichte der frühchristlichen Verkündigung* (Leiden: Brill, 1959), 107, 338.

⁷⁶Johannes Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, rev. William F. Albright and C. S. Mann (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), 183.

⁷⁷Käsemann, “The Disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus,” 144-148.

⁷⁸C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 2 vols., ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 2:887.

⁷⁹Martin Hengel’s difficulty in deciding whether Apollos made his first contact with the Christian message while still in Alexandria or already in Ephesus, through Priscilla and Aquila (*Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity*, trad. John Bowden [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979], 107), is hard to justify exegetically, even if there is no reliable information on how Christianity first reached Egypt. The note in Codex D, according to which Apollos had been “instructed in his own country [ἐν τῇ πατρίδι] in the word of the Lord” (v. 25), seems to be nothing but an effort to spell out that which is already clearly implied in the context (see v. 26). At any rate, as Gerd Lüdemann argues, it can be safely assumed that there was a Christian community in Alexandria in the forties (*Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary*, trans. John Bowden [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989], 209).

Apollos had also not experienced the Pentecost phenomenon.⁸⁰ Thus the expression ζέων τῷ πνεύματι (18:25) should not be taken as a religious statement, meaning that he was filled with the Spirit, but as a psychological statement: “burning in spirit” or “with burning enthusiasm,” since the verb ζέω means literally “to boil.”⁸¹

But, as many others in the narrative, this is also a controversial issue even among those who believe Apollos was a Christian. Ben Witherington, for example, prefers to read ζέων τῷ πνεύματι in connection with the Holy Spirit on several accounts. He argues that (1) the phrase ζέων τῷ πνεύματι is similar to the one used in Rom 12:11 (τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες), where the reference is clearly to the Holy Spirit; (2) the fact that this phrase is surrounded by two others which describe Apollos’s Christian experience favors the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is meant; (3) Acts 6:10 (τῷ πνεύματι ᾧ ἐλάλει) and 1 Cor 14:2 (πνεύματι δὲ λαλεῖ), which definitely allude to the Holy Spirit, also parallel this phrase and, therefore, should also be taken into consideration; and (4) the failure to mention Apollos’s Christian baptism indicates that he had already been baptized as a Christian, and since for Luke the Holy Spirit, not water-baptism, was the crucial factor for identifying a person as a Christian, Apollos must have been baptized with the Spirit as well.⁸²

These arguments, however, do not seem to carry much weight. Taking the reverse order, the last argument is correct but only with regard to Apollos’s Christian identity. Yet if he was a pre-Pentecost or early disciple who had become Christian after having been baptized by John the Baptist, then his lack of the Spirit-baptism would be fully understandable in view of his need of further instruction. In the third argument, none of the passages mentioned actually provides a syntactic parallel to Acts 18:25, where τῷ πνεύματι, coming as it does right after a verb expressing

⁸⁰This seems to explain the “contradiction” that, according to Haenchen, exists between v. 25a, c (“instructed,” “accurately”) and v. 26d (“more accurately”). These statements would not “really cancel each other out,” as claimed by Haenchen (555), if understood in relation to two related but separate issues: Apollos was able to demonstrate “accurately” from Scripture that Jesus was the Messiah (v. 25), while, because of his missing the Pentecost, he needed further instruction on Christian faith and history (v. 26).

⁸¹Barclay M. Newman and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Acts of the Apostles*, HT 12 (London: UBS, 1972, 358). See also William J. Larkin Jr., *Acts*, IVPNTCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), 270; Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 638-639; Howard Clark Kee, *To Every Nation under Heaven: Acts of the Apostles*, NTC (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1997), 225.

⁸²Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 565. Other scholars who also see Apollos as a pneumatic or charismatic Christian include Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 88-89; Michael Wolter, “Apollos und die ephesinischen Johannesjünger (Act 18.24–19.7),” *ZNW* 78 (1987): 49-73; Barrett, 2:885-888.

emotions (ζέω),⁸³ falls within the category of the locative dative,⁸⁴ whereas in Acts 6:10 and 1 Cor 14:2 [τῷ] πνεύματι is clearly an instrumental dative.⁸⁵ The second argument suffers from not carrying an appropriate cause-and-effect relationship. The two surrounding sentences seem to indicate that ζέω τῷ πνεύματι should be read within a Christian context,⁸⁶ but this does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is meant in this case. Regarding the first argument, it is obvious that the phrase τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες of Rom 12:11 is both analogous to ζέω τῷ πνεύματι and expresses a Christian attitude, but it is hard to see why the Holy Spirit is the only referent; its meaning is not even restricted to Christians. Several of Paul's exhortations in this context (vv. 9-21) would be applicable to non-Christians as well, whether Jews or pagans.⁸⁷ Moreover, it is hermeneutically suspicious, to say the least, to make a semantic use of Paul to explain Luke, still because when referring to the religious experience of being filled with the Spirit, Luke invariably uses the verb πίμπλημι or its related noun πλήρης (Luke 1:15, 41, 67; 4:1; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 7:55; 9:17; 11:24; 13:9).⁸⁸ This means that, if he meant to say that Apollos was fully imbued with the Spirit, Luke would have to have ignored his own formula.⁸⁹ Though not impossible, this makes it highly problematic to take ζέω τῷ πνεύματι as a religious statement in connection with the Holy Spirit.

It seems appropriate, therefore, to assume that Apollos was an Alexandrian Christian who had received only John's baptism and who had in the past belonged to his movement. In this case, similarly to the twelve Ephesian believers, he would also have become a Christian at some point in Jesus' lifetime. Then, as a diaspora Jew, he would have lost contact with the Jesus movement in Palestine and missed out on the Good Friday/Easter events, particularly the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:38) until

⁸³On ζέω, see also BDAG, 426.

⁸⁴See Robertson, 523-524.

⁸⁵For a discussion of πνεύματι in the NT, see Wallace, 165-166.

⁸⁶In fact, Witherington subordinates his whole discussion of ζέω τῷ πνεύματι to the question whether Apollos was a Christian, which he answers affirmatively. He concludes his arguments stressing that "nowhere else in Acts do we find a Jew who is said to have been instructed in the things of the Lord and teaching accurately the things about Jesus who is *not* also a Christian" (565).

⁸⁷See Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 344.

⁸⁸This may suffice as a response to Barrett's argument, 2:888, according to which ζέω τῷ πνεύματι must refer to the Holy Spirit because of Luke's high interest in phenomena.

⁸⁹Johnson, 332, is correct in saying, "it is striking that Luke here avoids his stereotypical prophetic characterization: Apollos is not said to be 'full of the Holy Spirit.'"

he met Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus.⁹⁰ This would explain the “vacuum” in which, according to Käsemann, Apollos and the Ephesian disciples seemed to be living, but there is no compelling reason to call them sectarians.⁹¹

Paul’s Perspective on Baptism

What is intriguing here is that while the Ephesian disciples were (re)baptized by Paul so that they could receive the Holy Spirit, Apollos was not; at least there is no record of his being baptized again. It has been argued that it “may be safely inferred from the narrative” that Apollos did receive Christian Spirit-baptism at that point.⁹² But, there is nothing in the passage to support such an inference.⁹³ On the contrary, the juxtaposition of the two accounts seems to suggest exactly the opposite. The relative position of these stories in the narrative, as Barrett indicates, makes it impossible to read them independently. By placing them together Luke may have intended each story to be read in light of the other.⁹⁴ When this is done, Barrett continues, a parallel and a

⁹⁰See, e.g., Herbert Preisker, “Apollos und die Johannesjünger in Act 18:24–19:6,” *ZNW* 30 (1931): 301-304; John H. E. Hull, *The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles* (London: Lutterworth, 1967), 112; F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (London: Nelson, 1969), 309; Kurt Aland, *Neutestamentliche Entwürfe* (Munich: Kaiser, 1979), 189; D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12–14* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 148-149; Murphy-O’Connor, 367-368.

⁹¹Cf. Käsemann, “The Disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus,” 138. There remains, however, one difficulty: it is just incredible that former disciples of John would not have even heard about the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2), for not only is the Spirit plainly attested in the OT, but also according to the Gospels it was part of John’s own prophetic proclamation (Matt 3:11, 16; Mark 1:8, 10; Luke 3:16, 22; John 1:32, 33; Acts 1:5; cf. Luke 1:15). But, a good case could be made for the alternative reading *λαμβάνουσίν τινας*, which replaces *ἐστίν* in some important Western manuscripts (P^{38,41}D^{it}sy^{hmg}cop^{sa}). The text, then, would read: “We have never heard that *anybody* has received the Holy Spirit.” Taylor, 72, offers the argument: “The usual text given provides us with something more than a difficult reading that might give us cause to consider it authentic; the premise is not only difficult but absurd” (72).

⁹²Smith, 245.

⁹³Another suggestion is that the plurals *ἀκούσαντες* and *ἐβαπτίσθησαν* of Acts 19:5 refer back to *λαός* in v. 4, meaning that those who were baptized were the crowds who listened to John and that the baptism they received was, by anticipation, baptism “in the name of Christ” (see Markus Barth, *Die Taufe — Ein Sakrament? Ein Exegetischer Beitrag zum Gespräch über die Kirchliche Taufe* [Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1951], 166-168). Being so, as in the case of Apollos, no baptism would be involved in the episode of the twelve disciples. Such a reading, however, besides the anachronism it posits, is syntactically rather awkward, to say the least, for the plurals in v. 5 must refer to the same *αὐτοῖς* on whom Paul laid his hands and the same *αὐτούς* on whom the Spirit came in v. 6, and that they were the same people who numbered about twelve in v. 7 (see Barrett, 2:897).

⁹⁴Not only the conjunction *δέ*, but in fact the whole introductory sentence of

contrast immediately stand out: all the people involved in this narrative had been former disciples of John the Baptist, but only the Ephesian believers were (re)baptized.

It would be tempting to say that the order of the episodes in the narrative is meant to present Paul's attitude in rebaptizing the Ephesian believers as a correction of Priscilla and Aquila's, who did not rebaptize Apollos. The lack of any specific statement in this direction, however, weakens this possibility. Whatever reason Luke may have had for combining these stories,⁹⁵ Barrett may be correct in suggesting that the contrast only reflects a theological difference between Priscilla and Aquila on one side, and Paul on the other, on how these early Christians⁹⁶ should be treated. What is not correct is Barrett's appeal, by way of an illustration, to the well-known debate in the third century over schismatic or heretical baptism, that is, the debate between Carthage and Rome about whether the baptism of converted schismatics counted or whether baptism within the church had to be administered to them.⁹⁷ Apollos's and the Ephesian believers' position was by no means comparable to that of the Novatianists, even if these had been baptized in the name of the Trinity. Apollos and the Ephesian believers were Christians as much as Peter, James, and John were during the earthly ministry of Jesus, and the fact that they had received only John's baptism and belonged for a while to the Baptist movement should not be held against them; otherwise the baptism of Jesus himself and that of some of his first disciples who had also received only the baptism of John would be liable to objection as well.⁹⁸

The point, as already argued, is that the earliest Christian baptism, the baptism performed by the Twelve during Jesus' lifetime, was not only derived from but also quite similar in meaning to Johannine baptism (cf. John 3:22-23;

19:1 (ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ τὸν Ἀπολλῶ εἶναι ἐν Κορίνθῳ) are clearly meant to make one account the continuation of the other (see Haenchen, 552).

⁹⁵Barrett, 2:885, may be right by saying that "it is not to be thought that Luke put them together in order to inform later historians of the diverse attitudes to disciples of John in the first century," but since Apollos was, as were the Ephesian believers, already a Christian, it is hard to agree with Barrett that this combined narrative was intended to show how successful Paul was to the point of winning over or absorbing sectarians (ibid.; cf. Haenchen, 556-557).

⁹⁶Aland, 11, calls them "old Christians," in comparison with the "new Christians," i.e., those who were baptized in the name of Jesus and received the gift of the Spirit at and after Pentecost.

⁹⁷C. K. Barrett, "Apollos and the Twelve Disciples of Ephesus," in *The New Testament Age: Essays in Honor of Bo Reicke*, 2 vols., ed. William C. Weinrich (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984), 1:37-38.

⁹⁸Early attempts to downplay the baptism of Jesus by John were generated by the suggestion that Jesus received the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (e.g., *Gos. Naz.* 2; cf. Matt 3:14-15), and not because John's baptism was inappropriate or imperfect.

4:1-2).⁹⁹ Even after the Pentecost, Christian baptism could still be defined as a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38; 22:16; cf. Eph 5:25-27; Titus 3:5-7).¹⁰⁰ The two new elements that were then introduced—the administration “in the name of Jesus Christ” and “the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38; 8:14-17; 10:47-48; 19:5-6)—did not change its moral (conversion) character or its eschatological orientation (John 3:5; Acts 2:38-40; Rom 6:4-5; Tit 3:5-7). They only added a sense of belonging or personal commitment that was absent from John’s baptism. By being performed in the name of Jesus, post-Pentecost Christian baptism dedicated the baptized person to Jesus Christ. It represented, in the words of Eduard Lohse, “a change of lordship” that would from that point forward determine the person’s whole life. He or she no longer belonged to those powers that had previously provided the norms for life, for Christ was now the Lord (see 1 Cor 1:12-13). And the gift of the Holy Spirit, apart from its prophetic empowerment (see Acts 1:8; 13:1), was known in the person’s life as a guiding influence, meaning that God was really experienced as present and active (see Gal 4:6; 5:22-25; cf. 1 Cor 12:3).¹⁰¹

Post-Pentecost baptism, therefore, while keeping the fundamental moral and eschatological character of early Christian baptism, introduced an important ecclesiological emphasis not formerly present. Baptism in the name of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit became the basic presupposition of discipleship to Jesus and, as such, of the establishment of the eschatological community of salvation.¹⁰² From the perspective of the similarities between

⁹⁹This is also evidenced by the use of the terms βάπτισμα/βαπτίζω (“baptism/to baptize”) within the Christian tradition, whose adoption is unquestionably owed to the influence of John the Baptist (see James D. G. Dunn, “Baptized’ as Metaphor,” in *Baptism, the New Testament and the Church: Historical and Contemporary Studies in Honour of R. E. O. White*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross, JSNTSup 171 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 302-305).

¹⁰⁰On the continuity between post-Pentecost Christian baptism and the baptism of John, see Joel B. Green, “From ‘John’s Baptism’ to ‘Baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus’: The Significance of Baptism in Luke-Acts,” in *Baptism, the New Testament and the Church: Historical and Contemporary Studies in Honour of R. E. O. White*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross, JSNTSup 171 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 157-172.

¹⁰¹Eduard Lohse, *The First Christians: Their Beginnings, Writings, and Beliefs*, trans. M. Eugene Boring (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 68. Schuyler Brown argues that Christian baptism also changed the limitations of John’s baptism with relation to time and space. Whereas John’s baptism was performed before the coming of Jesus and within the limits of Israel only (Acts 13:24; 19:4), Christian baptism should be taken to all nations (Luke 24:47) (“‘Water-Baptism’ and ‘Spirit-Baptism’ in Luke-Acts,” *AThR* 59 [1977]: 142). For an alternative view on the meaning of baptism “in the name of Jesus,” see Hartman, “*Into the Name of the Lord Jesus*,” 44-50.

¹⁰²See Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer, *Paul between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years*, trans. John Bowden (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 345, n. 199.

these two baptisms, the baptism of the Ephesian believers by Paul should truly be regarded as a rebaptism, but if the stress falls on the differences, then post-Pentecost baptism was something new and unique, of which John's baptism was but a preparation (cf. Acts 19:4). This may help to explain why Paul did rebaptize them and Priscilla and Aquila did not rebaptize Apollos.¹⁰³ As a post-Pentecost disciple who had been baptized in the name of Jesus (22:16),¹⁰⁴ Paul may have focused on the differences between both baptisms, while Priscilla and Aquila, though there is no information at all on their Christian life prior to their expulsion from Rome after Claudius's edict of c. 49 A.D. (Acts 18:1-3),¹⁰⁵ may have looked at Apollos's baptism from the standpoint of those formative years of Jesus' ministry.

Historically speaking, the validity of John's ministry could not be denied. To do so would be equivalent to denying the salvation-history, Johannine, and pre-Pentecost roots of Christianity, a step that not even Paul, as a post-Pentecost apostle, was willing to take (see Acts 13:24-25);¹⁰⁶ but he did deny the efficacy of John's baptism in a post-Pentecost era. For Paul, John's

¹⁰³Note that after Paul's comment in 19:4 that "when they heard this they were *baptized*" (v. 5), and not that "when they heard this they *believed*" (see Smith, 244).

¹⁰⁴This seems to be the meaning of his invocation of the name of Jesus referred to in the passage (see Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 418, n. 23). At any rate, Paul's baptism in the name of Jesus seems to be presupposed on the basis of his entire missionary practice and especially the first-person plural "we have been baptized into Jesus Christ" of Rom 6:3 (Hengel and Schwemer, 43).

¹⁰⁵Nothing is said either by Luke in Acts or Paul in his Epistles about the conversion of Priscilla and Aquila. Since they are not included among those whom the apostle baptized in Corinth (1 Cor 1:14-16; cf. 16:15), where he first met them, they were probably already Christians (Acts 18:1-4), meaning they were already Christians when they left Rome. Suetonius's possible reference to Christ as the spark of the disturbances within the Jewish community in Rome that led to their expulsion by Claudius (*Life of Claudius* 25.4), would confirm this hypothesis. It has been suggested that Priscilla and Aquila were among the founders of the church in Rome (F. F. Bruce, *The Pauline Circle*, BCL [Carlisle: Paternoster, 1985], 46), and it is possible that the suggestion is correct. Luke reports that among the converts at Pentecost there were "visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes" (2:10-11). It is not impossible that Priscilla and Aquila were among them, though Jerome Murphy-O'Connor prefers to credit their conversion to the activity of early Christian missionaries in Rome ("Prisca and Aquila: Travelling Tentmakers and Church Builders," *BRev* 8, no. 6 [1992]: 45-47).

¹⁰⁶James D. G. Dunn raises the question whether 1 Cor 12:13 ("in one Spirit we were all baptized") does not indicate Paul's awareness of the tradition, according to which John the Baptist declared that the Coming One would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). His position is that "the most obvious interpretation" of his passage "is that Paul himself was aware of this tradition and deliberately alludes to it at this point" (*The Theology of Paul the Apostle* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 451). For several other echoes of John's preaching in Paul's missionary activities in Acts and the Epistles, see J. Ramsey Michaels, "Paul and John the Baptist: An Odd Couple?" *TynBul* 42 (1991): 245-260.

baptism was both prophetic and temporary by nature (19:4), so it needed to be renewed or replaced by the proper Christian baptism. Priscilla and Aquila may have thought differently, either because they did not know how the apostle would handle similar situations, since the episode of Apollos actually took place in the absence of Paul and before the incident of Acts 19, or perhaps because of their acquaintance with the practice of the church in Jerusalem, which does not appear to have administered Christian baptism to those who had been baptized by John. According to Luke, in Jerusalem alone there were about 120 of early disciples, including some former disciples of John the Baptist, who apparently were not required to be baptized again, now “in the name of Jesus” (see Acts 1:15).¹⁰⁷

Whether Paul and Priscilla and Aquila ever paused to discuss this issue is unknown, but it is important to note that what really caused Paul to rebaptize the Ephesian believers was not so much their ignorance of the Holy Spirit, but their lack of what he considered to be the proper Christian baptism. Their astonishing statement (19:2) that they had not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit,¹⁰⁸ or perhaps that the Holy Spirit had already been given,¹⁰⁹ only provided the occasion for Paul’s assessment of the baptism they had received (vv. 3-4), and it was his discourse on the preparatory character of John’s baptism that seems to have persuaded them to accept another baptism (v. 5). The coming of the Spirit upon them was associated with Paul’s laying on of hands, not primarily with baptism (v. 6).¹¹⁰

It would be wrong to conclude from this that Paul detaches the gift of the Spirit from the rite of baptism. He does not. For Paul, baptism and the reception of the Spirit are not only fundamentally connected, but also simultaneous. In 1 Cor 6:11, for example, justification and sanctification are given by the Spirit at baptism, and in 12:13 the Spirit is the divine agent who unites the believers with Christ through baptism (cf. 6:17). In Gal 3:26-27, baptism is also associated with union with Christ, and Rom 8:9-11 makes it clear that union with Christ is possible only through the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 3:17-19).¹¹¹ The reception of the Spirit by those twelve believers through

¹⁰⁷On the case of the 120 who were not required to be rebaptized at or after Pentecost, see France, 107.

¹⁰⁸Wallace’s attempt to translate οὐδ’ εἰ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἔστιν ἠκούσαμεν (Acts 19:2) as “we have not heard whether a spirit can be holy” (312) is not convincing. The position of the verb εἰμί implies that ἅγιον must be taken attributively (see Haubeck and von Siebenthal, 1:789).

¹⁰⁹See above, n. 90.

¹¹⁰Contrary to what Porter affirms (85-86), this is not the only instance in Acts in which Paul lays hands on someone (cf. 28:8), but it is indeed the only time in which the laying-on of hands comes immediately after baptism.

¹¹¹G. R. Beasley-Murray says: “Clearly Paul associated baptism and unity with Christ and all that follows from it on the basis that for him baptism in water and baptism in the Spirit are ideally one” (“Baptism,” *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993], 63).

Paul's laying-on of hands can probably be described as a sort of miniature Pentecost that sanctioned the incorporation of those early, marginal disciples into the fellowship of the church (cf. 10:44-48), while at the same time it vindicated Paul's apostolic authority.¹¹² It is noteworthy that the Spirit those disciples are reported to have received was not the soteriological gift related to conversion and baptism, but the gift of charismatic phenomena, such as speaking with tongues and prophesying (see 19:6).

Whatever the precise facts, the episode of rebaptism in Ephesus can most likely be ascribed to Paul's highly developed theological perspective on baptism as the rite of Christian initiation. Baptism lies at the very heart of Paul's understanding of conversion.¹¹³ This is true of other NT writers as well, but there is an important difference: since for Paul conversion is an experience that comprises justification by faith, participation in Christ, and the gift of the Spirit, he conceives baptism from basically the same perspective (Rom 6:1-11; 1 Cor 6:11; 12:13; Gal 3:26-28).¹¹⁴ This means that Paul's theology of conversion as a whole can figuratively be expressed in relation to baptism: "justification is the effect of baptism; the means of union with Christ is baptism; and the Spirit is mediated through or bestowed in baptism."¹¹⁵

¹¹²See Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 644. Several scholars see a parallel with the Samaritan converts in Acts 8:14-17, where Peter and John laid hands on them so that they could receive the Holy Spirit. The fact that Paul was now the medium for this bestowal would also be intended to legitimate his authority in conveying the Spirit (cf. Marshall, 307-308; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 364-365; Johnson, 338; Barrett, 2:898).

¹¹³See Kevin Roy, *Baptism, Reconciliation, and Unity* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997), 38; G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1962), 174; idem, *Baptism Today and Tomorrow* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 37-38; Eduard Lohse, "Taufe und Rechtfertigung bei Paulus," in *Die Einheit des Neuen Testaments: Exegetische Studien zur Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), 228-244; Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 396-414; Udo Schnelle, *Gerechtigkeit und Christusgegenwart: Vor-paulinische und paulinische Tauftheologie*, GThA 24 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 106-145; Ralf P. Martin, "Patterns of Worship in New Testament Churches," *JSNNT* 37 (1989): 59-85; Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 860-864; Anthony R. Cross, "'One Baptism' (Ephesians 4:5): A Challenge to the Church," in *Baptism, the New Testament, and the Church: Historical and Contemporary Studies in Honour of R. E. O. White*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross, *JSNNTSup* 171 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 173-177. The idea that Paul deemphasizes baptism (Rothschild, 227, n. 84) seems more a rash conclusion based solely on the number of references to baptism in the apostle's writings than the result of a careful theological analysis of such references.

¹¹⁴On this, see Dunn, *The Theology of Paul*, 317-459.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, 443. Baptism and conversion, however, should not be confused. Dunn correctly warns against extending the meaning of baptism too much so as to include everything that is actually involved in the experience of conversion (*The Theology of Paul*, 445). That is to say, baptism is not in itself a synonym for conversion. It is rather an outward sign of the spiritual process of becoming a believer (see Richard N.

A metonymy, thus, is at play here. Because Paul does not think of conversion without baptism, he could transfer to the latter his understanding of the former, bringing together the spiritual reality and its symbolic objectification. But, perhaps we can move a step further. This metonymical transfer may owe its origin to Paul's ability to envision the baptismal rite, properly speaking immersion, as a fitting metaphor for the death and resurrection of Jesus (Rom 6:1-11; cf. Gal 2:19-20; Col 2:11-12). By using preferably the formula "into [ἐἰς] Christ" rather than "into the name of Jesus Christ" (Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27; cf. Acts 19:5; 1 Cor 1:13),¹¹⁶ the apostle was, then, able to connect soteriological concepts about Christ with baptism. So by being immersed, the believer not only identifies himself or herself with Jesus in his death (Rom 6:3-4), but also experiences the death that frees from sin (v. 7). By emerging from the water, he or she participates in the resurrection of Jesus for a new life (vv. 4-5). In other words, for Paul it is baptism that actualizes Christ's death and resurrection in the believer's life.¹¹⁷

This metaphor is so appealing that some authors even take it as the inherent meaning of Christian baptism, which is not correct. Referring to the baptism performed by the disciples of Jesus, Arthur G. Patzia, for instance, argues that at that stage "the baptism of the Jesus movement was not a baptism associated with his death and resurrection and thus cannot be regarded as Christian baptism in the way the rite was understood and practiced later."¹¹⁸ Though the association of death and baptism had already been expressed by Jesus (Mark 10:38; Luke 12:50), the description of baptism itself in connection with his death and resurrection is a theological argument used by Paul to convey the meaning of conversion,¹¹⁹ not of baptism proper. That is to say, no matter how attractive and significant this concept can be,

Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 [Dallas: Word, 1990], 155-156).

¹¹⁶The two formulas may be equivalent. Dunn suggests that the former is only an abbreviation of the latter, though it may include the meaning of it (*The Theology of Paul*, 448; see further, James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, BNC [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993], 203).

¹¹⁷Hartman, "Baptism," 1:587. "Baptism made this death relevant in the present, applying it to the person baptized, and was the external . . . sign of the forgiveness of the sins" (idem, *Into the Name of the Lord Jesus*, 74).

¹¹⁸Arthur G. Patzia, *The Emergence of the Church: Context, Growth, Leadership and Worship* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 234.

¹¹⁹For the idea that Paul's view of baptism as an expression of the death and resurrection of Jesus derived from the Greek-Roman mystery religions, in which initiates supposedly died and rose in identification with their god, see e.g., Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols., trans. Kendrick Grobel (London: SCM, 1952-1955), 1:140-144; see esp. Günter Wagner, *Pauline Baptism and the Pagan Mysteries: The Problem of the Pauline Doctrine of Baptism in Romans 6:1-11, in the Light of Its Religio-Historical "Parallels,"* trans. J. P. Smith (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1967), 259-294; and A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology against Its Graeco-Roman Background*, WUNT 44 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 37-69.

it is only a theological metaphor—like several other baptismal metaphors brought forth by Paul (see Gal 3:27; Eph 5:26; Titus 3:5-7)—that appears in the context of a discussion of justification and sin.¹²⁰ The essential meaning of baptism is conversion, not dying and rising again.

Conclusion

The whole matter regarding the Ephesian believers, therefore, was not the relationship between John and Jesus or between supposed followers of John the Baptist and followers of Jesus. Neither was it the relationship between baptism and the Spirit in Christian theology or the early church practice, but baptism itself as the event which signals the beginning of the Christian life in its full sense and which authenticates one's commitment to Jesus. The twelve disciples of Acts 19 were Christians, not Baptists, though they had once been baptized by John and belonged to his movement. Having, then, lost contact with the Jesus movement in Palestine and missed out on Pentecost, they needed now to be reincorporated into fellowship of the church. Paul, himself a post-Pentecost apostle, found it appropriate to rebaptize them, probably on account of his understanding of baptism as something which symbolizes the whole experience of conversion, all the more so because he connects baptism with the death and resurrection of Jesus. Priscilla and Aquila did not necessarily deny this, but irrespective of how much significance they attached to this rite, they would not see anything wrong with those early believers who had received a Johannine-like baptism or even, as in the case of Apollos, John's baptism itself. As far as Paul is concerned, however, problems with John's baptism or the early Christian baptism seem to have been restricted to this situation in Ephesus: the book of Acts does not report any other incident like this involving the apostle, and in his Epistles he never deals with this issue.¹²¹

¹²⁰Beasley-Murray states: "It should be observed that in this passage [Rom 6:1-11] Paul was not primarily giving a theological explanation of the nature of baptism, but expounding its meaning for life" ("Baptism," 62). Cf. Hartman: "In the texts he [Paul] left behind we never encounter a passage over which could be put the title 'On Baptism'" (*Into the Name of the Lord Jesus*, 52). On Paul's baptismal metaphors, see Dunn, "'Baptized' as Metaphor," 294-310 (on Rom 6:1-11, see 299-300, 306-308).

¹²¹David Wenham attempts to see in 1 Cor 1:13-17 Paul's response to some of his critics who preferred Apollos and emphasized baptism. While interesting, it is not unjustifiable. There is not enough evidence in this passage to conclude that while in Corinth Paul was involved in discussions concerning the relative value of Apollos's (i.e., John's) and Christian baptisms, or the relationship of John and Jesus. Wenham admits that his hypothesis lies "at the level of probabilities" (*Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 345). Perhaps not even that. Paul's rhetorical questions of whether Christ was divided or whether the Corinthians had been baptized in his own name (vv. 13-14) is a clear example of a *reductio ad absurdum*, which obviously presupposes baptism in the name of Jesus. If this was true in relation to Paul, by implication it was also true in relation to Apollos and Peter (Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 60-61).

CREEDS AND STATEMENTS OF BELIEF IN EARLY ADVENTIST THOUGHT

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Introduction

The founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church exhibited a strongly hostile attitude toward creeds, affirming the Bible alone as their creed. However, an examination of their literature shows a gradual development of statements of belief. This leads to two questions: What is the difference between creeds and statements of belief? Why did the early Adventists feel comfortable with statements of belief, while vigorously denouncing creeds?

The scope of this research has been limited to the period of Seventh-day Adventist thought between the years of 1840 and 1931. During this time, two major Seventh-day Adventist statements of belief were drafted—one in 1872 and the other in 1931. My research has been largely drawn from primary sources found in church publications such as the *Review and Herald*, *Signs of the Times*, and the writings of Ellen G. White.

Roman Catholic and Protestant Creeds

Creeds, E. Glenn Hinson argues, have played important and varying roles in Christian history. They were employed in the presentation of articles of faith; in the instruction of baptismal candidates; in the hymns, prayers, and sermons of common worship; in healing and exorcism; in resistance to persecutors; and for differentiating between heresy and orthodoxy. Used in these ways, creeds may be seen as the church's attempt to articulate an intelligible expression of its understanding of the Christian faith.¹

The authority ascribed to various confessional statements has varied with time and circumstance and is largely dependent upon the theological persuasion of the Christian group that adheres to them. For example, Roman Catholicism has historically regarded creeds as oracles from God and thus authoritative for all time and under all circumstances. For Catholics, creeds are part of the received tradition that can be traced to the apostles.²

Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, accepted only the Apostles' Creed and the creeds of the first four centuries, since, as their argument goes, these were the only creeds that agreed with the Scriptures, which is the only rule of faith and practice. The Reformers were of the opinion that biblical truth had not been taught consistently by

¹E. Glenn Hinson, "Confession of Creeds in Early Christian Tradition," *Review and Expositor* 76 (Winter 1979): 5-17.

²Pierre-Thomas Camelot, "Creeds," in *Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner et al. (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968), 2:37-40.

the Roman Catholic Church during the medieval period.³ They also felt that the ancient confessions did not always speak directly to the prevailing needs of their time. To explain where they stood with regard to the practices of the medieval Catholic Church, several Protestant groups constructed their own confessional statements.⁴

The Christian Connexion: Church and Creeds

At the turn of the nineteenth century, three groups of churches arose in North America, each calling itself “Christian.” The first group withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church in North Carolina and Virginia. The second arose in Vermont from among the Baptists. The third came from a Calvinistic Presbyterian background. In time, these three groups, having arisen independently of one another, came together without negotiation or formal action. Their binding points of commonality were the acceptance of the Bible as the only creed, “Christian” as their only name, and Christian character as the sole test of fellowship.

About this time, Thomas Campbell and his son Alexander, members of the Scotch-Irish Presbyterian Church, came to America. Thomas Campbell, however, was denied licensure in the Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh on the grounds that his theological views were not in full harmony with the Presbyterian Confession of Faith. The Campbells subsequently began yet another independent church, which they called the “Christian Association.” In 1824, Alexander Campbell met Barton Stone, who was then the leader of the Christian Church. The two men immediately recognized that their teachings and sympathies had much in common. Early in the 1830s they decided to unite the two groups, which came to be known as the Christian Church of the Disciples of Christ.

However, a number of the so-called “Christian” churches in the western United States and the majority of those in the eastern part of the country refused to recognize Campbell and Stone’s union. These churches came to be known as the Christian Connexion, the church to which several leaders of the Millerite movement belonged, including Joshua V. Himes, Joseph Bates, and James White.⁵ Bates and White went on to become cofounders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Christian Connexion stipulated that the Bible alone should be its guide and standard. Unlike most other Christian churches, the Connexionists believed that freedom of theological opinion was better than conformity to a standard and that Christian character was to be the only test of fellowship. Bates, who confessed, as did Stone before him, that he could not believe in the Trinity, was, nevertheless, taken into membership and later accepted into the ministry. This was possible, Bates indicated, because the Christian

³John Leith, *Creeds of the Churches* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 1-11, 196-228.

⁴Ibid.

⁵George R. Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 31.

Connexion Church renounced all creeds.⁶ Thus the Christian Connexion and the Disciples of Christ took a stand against ecclesiastical formalism and creeds.⁷

Millerism and Creeds

William Miller was convinced through his study of the Bible in 1818 that Christ would come by 1843. However, he waited for someone else to discover this truth and proclaim it to the world. Thus Miller's movement did not build momentum until 1839 when Himes teamed up with him as an organizer and promoter. The result of this union was that Miller's message of the Second Coming spread like wildfire. Bates, a retired sea captain, joined the ranks in 1839, and James White became a supporter in 1842. Hundreds of ordained and lay pastors joined the movement by 1843 and the word was spread not only in North America, but also in Western Europe.

The time for the great event of Christ's return was, finally, set for October 22, 1844. But this time came and went, nearly bringing the whole movement to an end. The disappointment was heightened by the fact that many had nowhere to go since they had been ostracized and excommunicated by their churches. There were others, however, who felt that the blessed hope must be kept alive and that this could not be done by returning to the established churches. The result was that several new churches emerged after the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844. The two most significant ones that developed from the original Millerite Advent movement, however, were the Advent Christian Church and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

As a direct result of the mistreatment they had received from the established churches, the Millerites tended to be against rigid creeds, which had been, in many cases, the grounds for disfellowshipping them. Often they had been given "no opportunity for defense, no chance to give a Bible answer for their new-found faith."⁸ LeRoy Froom notes that

This dictatorial handling created strong feelings of revulsion against church organization as such, and all organizational controls and evictions. Such arbitrary procedures all came to be looked upon as "ecclesiastical despotism." Organization was accordingly considered a part of "Babylon," from which they had been compelled to flee. They were thus instinctively set against

⁶Joseph Bates, *The Autobiography of Elder Joseph Bates* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1868), 204-205.

⁷LeRoy E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1950), 4:31-32. See Winfred E. Garrison, *An American Religious Movement: A Brief History of the Disciples of Christ* (St. Louis: Bethany, 1960), 41-59.

⁸LeRoy E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1971), 134.

organizing another church, or formulating any restrictive creed—
or even a specified Statement of Faith.⁹

Moreover, Miller did not intend that his good news would result in another church, but that it would bring revival to all the churches through the “blessed hope” contained in the hearts of the members. Besides, there was certainly no time for forming a new church if Christ was to come soon.

Thus the idea of formulating a creed to define what they believed was not an issue for the Millerites. Rather, the intent was to withdraw from the “sectarian organizations” (i.e., the creedal churches), but this withdrawal was not to result in the formation of a new organization.¹⁰ Commenting on this, Himes stated that “We neither expect nor desire any other organization until we reach the New Jerusalem, and organize under the King of Kings.”¹¹ Again, in 1844, Himes said of the Millerites that “All peculiarities of creed or policy have been lost sight of in the absorbing inquiry concerning the coming of the heavenly Bridegroom.”¹²

Miller also spoke against denominational “peculiarities,” stating: “We must then, either let our brethren have the freedom of thought, opinion and speech or we must resort to creeds and formulas, bishops and popes. . . . I see no other alternative.”¹³ In another place, he wrote: “I have been pained to see a spirit of sectarianism and bigotry.”¹⁴ It seems that in this statement Miller points to the history of the misuse of creeds in Christianity, and applies this misuse to the Millerite experience. Miller thus came to identify creeds with oppressive church organizations that restricted the religious freedom of Christians.

In spite of this fear of creeds and ecclesial organization, less than a year after the Great Disappointment Himes, with Miller’s approval, tried to create a union among the disenchanted believers at the Albany Conference.¹⁵ Bates, however, criticized Miller and the First-day Adventists for this inconsistency. He wrote: “Look at your publications, and your Albany and subsequent conferences. . . . All such as did not subscribe to this creed and countenance this organization, and of course yield up their former views have been treated

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Joshua V. Himes, “Second Advent Conference,” *The Advent Herald* 7/3 (21 February 1844), 21.

¹¹Joshua V. Himes, “The Rise and Progress of Adventism,” *The Advent Shield and Review* 1/1 (May 1844): 91.

¹²Ibid., 90.

¹³William Miller, cited in F. D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1944), 294-295.

¹⁴William Miller, cited in Isaac C. Wellcome, *History of the Second Advent Message and Mission, Doctrines and People* (Yarmouth, ME: by the author, 1874), 411.

¹⁵William Miller, “The Albany Conference,” *The Advent Herald* 9/17 (4 June 1845), 1-3.

as disorganizers and fanatics.”¹⁶ Thus the Millerites—like their predecessors, the Disciples of Christ and the Christian Connexion— were opposed to church creeds.

The Founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Creeds

The founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who emerged after the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844, shared the Christian Connexion’s and the Disciples of Christ’s belief about creeds. Creeds were the basis upon which they had been expelled from their former churches and were also the reason why Seventh-day Adventists had been rejected by other Advent groups. Their peculiar beliefs regarding the seventh-day Sabbath, the sanctuary, state of the dead, and, later, the visions of Ellen G. White set them apart from other movements and established churches.¹⁷ With the experience of rejection still fresh in their minds, they wrote forcefully against creed-making. For example, in 1847, Bates asserted that creeds hampered the progressive nature of revelation; truth is always unfolding in fresh and relevant ways to every generation. Creeds would fix the understanding of truth, making it rigid and unchanging.¹⁸ As Froom summarized, the early Adventists “clearly recognized that Bible truth must continue to unfold through continuing study and divine leading. . . . They feared any hampering, stultifying creed or rigid formulary. They determined not to drive in any creedal boundary stakes, as most others had done, saying, ‘Thus far and no farther.’ The tragedy of the creed bound churches all about them was an example of that fallacy and futility.”¹⁹

Bates was not alone in his renunciation of creeds. In May of 1847, a tract titled *A Word to the Little Flock* was published, including articles by James and Ellen G. White and Joseph Bates and firmly stating their opposition to creeds: “The Bible is a perfect, and complete revelation. It is our only rule of faith and practice.”²⁰

James White spoke against creed-making on other occasions as well, blaming the confusion and infidelity among Christian bodies on the formulation of creeds. He asked: “Why is this world filled with infidelity? . . . Human wisdom, unaided by the spirit of truth, has sought the way to heaven. It has sought out a strange confusion of creeds. Men have forsaken the fountain of living water [the Bible] and with their broken cisterns that can

¹⁶Joseph Bates, *Second Advent Way Marks and High Heaps: or A Connected View of the Fulfillment of Prophecy, by God’s Peculiar People, from the Year 1840-1847* (New Bedford, MA: Press of Benjamin Lindsey, 1847), 53-54.

¹⁷A. W. Spalding, *Captains of the Host: A History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1949), 141-143.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 135.

²⁰James White, *A Word to the Little Flock* (1847), 13.

hold no water [their Babylon of creeds] they have blocked up the very gate of heaven against a world of sinners.”²¹

The same issue of the *Review and Herald* in which the above statement appeared contained another article in which James White again strongly stated his opposition to creeds: “We want no human creed: the Bible is sufficient. . . . It is the will of the Lord that his people should be called away from the confusion and the bondage of man-made creeds, to enjoy the oneness and freedom of the gospel.”²² The very next week, he wrote:

It is the opinion of the mass of professors of religion that human creeds are indispensable to the maintenance of the gospel order. . . . Creed making has produced the Babel confusion now existing among them. . . . And while we reject all human creeds, or platforms, which have failed to effect the order set forth in the gospel, we take the Bible, the perfect rule of faith and practice, given by inspiration of God. . . . “As the heavens are higher than the earth,” so is our creed, which is the word of God, higher in perfection than all human creeds.²³

James White believed passionately that the confusion that existed in the churches at that time was due to their creeds. This is easy to understand in light of the fact that these churches had rejected the early Seventh-day Adventist Church and its progressive beliefs. James White also believed that the use of creeds was an unbiblical attempt to secure doctrinal unity. He noted to this effect that

The gifts have been superseded in the popular churches by human creeds. The object of the gifts, as stated by Paul, was “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith.” These were Heaven’s appointed means to secure the unity of the church. But the popular churches have introduced another means of preserving unity, namely, human creeds. These creeds secure a sort of unity to each denomination; but they have all proved insufficient.²⁴

It is interesting to note that for four months in 1854 (August through December), under the masthead of the *Review and Herald*, there appeared a list of five “Leading Doctrines”: “The Bible, and the Bible alone, the rule of faith and duty; The Law of God, as taught in the Old and New Testaments,

²¹James White, “Gospel Union,” *Review and Herald* 4/22 (6 December 1853), 172.

²²Ibid.

²³James White, “Gospel Order,” *Review and Herald* 4/23 (13 December 1853), 180.

²⁴James White, “Perpetuity of Spiritual Gifts,” *Review and Herald* 19/10 (4 February 1862), 77.

unchangeable; The Personal Advent of Christ and the Resurrection of the dead just before the millennium; The Earth restored to its Eden perfection and glory, the final inheritance of the Saints; Immortality alone through Christ, to be given to the Saints at the Resurrection.”²⁵ These articles, though they might be viewed as a form of fundamental beliefs or creed, had the sole purpose of pointing out that the Bible was the source of truth and understanding.

The early Seventh-day Adventist leaders rejected creeds not only because they could be misused, but also because they were fallible human documents that could lead to infidelity or apostasy. This understanding was summarized by J. N. Loughborough at the 1861 organization of the Michigan Conference. He stated: “We call the churches Babylon, not because they covenant together to obey God. . . . The first step in apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe. The second is to make that creed a test of fellowship. The third is to try members by that creed. The fourth to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed. And, fifth, to commence persecution against such.”²⁶ It seems clear that Loughborough linked creeds with church organization. In the minds of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, creeds, church organization, and ecclesiastical hierarchy were linked with the system of Babylon and thus needed to be protested, not adopted.

The Seventh-day Adventist founders also rejected the adoption of creeds because they were of the opinion that creeds and spiritual gifts stood in opposition to each other. After referring to the gifts in Eph 4:11-13, James White stated:

I take the ground that creeds stand in direct opposition to the gifts. Let us suppose a case: We get up a creed, stating just what we shall believe on this point and the other, and just what we shall do in reference to this thing and that, and say that we will believe the gifts too. But suppose the Lord, through the gifts, should give us some new light that did not harmonize with our creed; then, if we remain true to the gifts, it knocks our creed all over at once. Making a creed is setting the stakes, and barring up the way to all future advancement.²⁷

The issue to be faced, James White contended, was how the church would respond to new light from God, granted through the gifts, if the new light was at variance with the accepted creed. He feared that new light might be rejected in favor of the creed and was of the opinion that “making a creed” would halt the acceptance of future new revelation.

In 1874, Uriah Smith wrote an article in which he listed some “Romish errors” that had been followed by Protestants. He argued that not only would

²⁵*Review and Herald*, 6 (1854): 1-19, see the following dates of publication: August 29; September 5, 12, 19, 26; October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31; November 7, 14, 21; December 5, 12, 19, 26.

²⁶James White, “Doings of the Battle Creek Conference, Acts 5:16, 1861,” *Review and Herald* 18/19 (8 October 1861), 148-149.

²⁷*Ibid.*

creeds bar all further progress into truth (as James White had previously argued), but also that the Bible itself would be used to support the wrong, predetermined system of belief.²⁸ He thus viewed the creeds as a rigid and unalterable system of doctrine.

Other reasons that Seventh-day Adventists opposed creeds can be found in the arguments used to defeat a proposal for the preparation of a church manual in 1883. It was stated that creeds would cause members to “lose their simplicity and become formal and spiritually lifeless.”²⁹ As to its impact on preachers, the preparers of the manual stated: “If we had one [a church manual], we fear many, especially those commencing to preach, would study it to obtain guidance in spiritual matters, rather than to seek it from the Bible and from the leadings of the Spirit of God.”³⁰ Thus another reason that Seventh-day Adventists rejected a formal creed was from fear that creeds would stifle the church spiritually and block the work of the Spirit through the gifts. Meanwhile, they continued to uplift the Bible as the only source of faith and practice.

Ellen G. White's Counsel

Ellen G. White, one of the principal founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the wife of James White, was, not surprisingly, also against creeds. Referring to the discovery of the “truths” by the founders, she emphatically stressed that

The Bible and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this Holy Word will be in harmony. Our own views and ideas must not control our efforts. Man is fallible, but God's Word is infallible. Instead of wrangling with one another, let men exalt the Lord. Let us meet all opposition as did our Master, saying, “It is written.” Let us lift up the banner on which is inscribed, The Bible our rule of faith and discipline.³¹

She also saw the danger of exalting a creed above the status of the Bible, thus making the creed the standard of authority. She advised: “Do not carry your creed to the Bible and read the Word in the light of your former opinions. Do not try to make everything agree with your creed.”³² Thus she clearly saw that there was a risk of attempting to make Scripture meet “established

²⁸Uriah Smith, “The Reformation Not Yet Complete,” *Review and Herald* 43/8 (3 February 1874), 60-61.

²⁹“General Conference Proceedings,” *Review and Herald* 60/46 (20 November 1883), 733.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1980), 1:416.

³²Ellen G. White, “MS 12, 1901,” in *Manuscript Releases*, 21 vols. (Silver Spring, MD: E. G. White Estate, 1981-1993), 3:432.

opinions,” instead of judging opinions by the Scriptures.³³ She seemed to also believe that subscription to a creed may tempt some to neglect the more vital issue of personal spirituality, noting that “To subscribe the name to a church creed is not of the least value to anyone if the heart is not truly changed.”³⁴ Nor was true unity in the church to be found in using creeds. She noted that “The prayer of Christ to His Father, contained in the seventeenth chapter of John, is to be our church creed. It shows us that our differences and disunion are dishonoring to God.”³⁵

Justification of Statements of Belief

It might seem paradoxical that the Seventh-day Adventist founders, in spite of their opposition to creeds, did indeed have a statement of beliefs. L. A. Smith, son of Uriah Smith, wrote in 1887 that “adopting a statement of faith amounts to taking a doctrinal position, and taking such a position is scriptural.” He was quick to point out, however, that only beliefs in harmony with Scripture should be confessed. Defending the necessity of the statement of beliefs, he wrote: “If there is anything which Scripture plainly teaches, it is the importance of possessing a clear and definite faith, or summary of religious beliefs; in short a ‘creed’ in harmony with the truths God’s word has revealed.”³⁶

Another justification for statements of belief was given by J. H. Waggoner in his book on church organization, written in 1886. He stated that

Repentance and faith are almost universally recognized as requisites to Christian character. But beyond this brief statement—too brief to indicate the position of the church or of the candidate—each denomination of professed Christians has some definite declaration of its faith; some peculiar expression of faith and practice, which it requires that all its members shall endorse and receive. Were not this the case they would not possibly satisfy even their own minds that there is any reason for their denominational existence. Which is to say that different denominations attach different ideas to the word repentance and faith and these definitions with their results become the peculiar basis of their organization.³⁷

³³Ellen G. White, “Search the Scriptures,” *Review and Herald* 69/30 (26 July 1892), 465.

³⁴Ellen G. White, “The Truth as It is in Jesus,” *Review and Herald* 76/7 (14 February 1899), 1.

³⁵Ellen G. White, “MS 12, 1899,” in *Manuscript Releases*, 5:49.

³⁶L. A. Smith, “The Value of a Creed,” *Review and Herald*, 64/19 (10 May 1887), 298.

³⁷Joseph H. Waggoner, *The Church: Its Organization, Ordinances, and Discipline* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1886), 105.

Waggoner seemed to emphasize that certain Christian phrases such as “repentance and faith” are ambiguous since other Christian bodies use them in differing ways. Therefore, affirming the Bible as the only creed is not enough. The Bible must be opened, and what it teaches must be confessed. L. A. Smith drove this point home when he wrote again in 1888 that “every person has his creed and might have it in spite of himself. His creed is simply his belief.” Since this was the case, he insisted that individuals must adopt creeds that have the support of the Scriptures.³⁸ For these reasons, the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church had no problem adopting some statements of belief.

Development of Statements of Belief

In the course of its development toward a full-fledged statement of belief, the church passed through a number of phases. In this section, we will briefly trace the development of these formulations from 1850 to 1931.

1. *Original Faith* (1850, James White). In an article intended to “expose the absurdities in the position of those who reject the present truth and still profess to stand on the original faith,” James White stated that the “2300 days [prophecy of the book of Daniel] has been and still is the main pillar of the Advent faith.” The reason for this brief statement of faith was to differentiate the Adventists who ascribed to the doctrines of the seventh-day Sabbath and the sanctuary from other Advent believers.³⁹

2. *Seventh Day Baptist Questions* (1853). In August of 1853, James White, in answering some questions from a Seventh Day Baptist, made what could be regarded as an early statement of faith. After commenting on the background of the body of believers that made up the “Little Flock” and pointing out that there were “different views on some subjects,” he said:

As a people we are brought together from the divisions of the Advent body, and from the various denominations, holding different views on some subjects; yet, thank Heaven, the Sabbath is a mighty platform on which we can all stand united. And while standing here, with the aid of no other creed than the word of God, and bound together by the bonds of love—love for the truth, love for each other, and love for a perishing world—“which is stronger than death,” all party feelings are lost. We are united in these great subjects: Christ’s immediate, personal Second Advent, and the observance of all the Commandments of God, and the faith of his Son Jesus Christ, as necessary to a readiness for his Advent.⁴⁰

³⁸L. A. Smith, “Creeds,” *Review and Herald*, 65/44 (6 November 1888), 699.

³⁹James White, “Our Present Position,” *Review and Herald*, 1/2 (December 1850), 13-15.

⁴⁰James White, “Resolution of the Seventh-day [sic] Baptist Central Association,” *Review and Herald*, 4/7 (11 August 1853), 52, last full paragraph.

3. *Covenant Resolution* (1861). The year of 1861 was to be a landmark for the loosely organized “Sabbatarian Adventists.” Even though James White had been calling for organization (“Gospel Order”) for years, the deep prejudices of the believers against any form of organization had made themselves felt. On October 5 and 6, a meeting to organize the Michigan Conference convened. A covenant resolution presented by James White was adopted, which stated: “Resolved, that this conference recommend the following church covenant: We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves together as a church, taking the name Seventh-day Adventists, convenanting to keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus Christ.”⁴¹

While the resolution was adopted, the vote was not unanimous. This troubled James White and he urged another discussion of the issues. Since no one vocalized their concerns, he raised some possible objections, such as “We are patterning after the churches around us” or “We are following after Babylon.” Then various individuals present, including Loughborough, who had voted in favor of the covenant, argued for the propriety of the covenant. Finally, James White commented:

I take the ground that creeds stand in direct opposition to the gifts. . . . Making a creed is setting the stakes and barring up the way to all future advancement. God put the gifts into the church for a good and great object; but men who have got up their churches, have shut up the way or have marked out a course for the Almighty. They say virtually that the Lord must not do anything further than what has been marked out in the creed. A creed and the gifts thus stand in a direct opposition to each other. Now what is our position as a people? The Bible is our creed. We reject everything in the form of a human creed. We take the Bible and the gifts of the Spirit; embracing the faith that thus the Lord will teach us from time to time. . . . We are not taking one step, in what we are doing, toward becoming Babylon.⁴²

After the discussion, a vote was again taken and the resolution passed unanimously.

4. *Insanity at Monterey, Michigan* (1869). Another brief statement of beliefs appeared in a pamphlet dated 1869. It was written by the church board at Monterey, Michigan,⁴³ to explain that the insanity of two ladies there could not be blamed on efforts to proselytize them to the Seventh-day Adventist faith, nor on the writings of Ellen G. White. Apparently such an allegation had been published in some local papers.⁴⁴ The statement lists the Second Advent, the Sabbath, the judgment, the state of the dead, and the gifts of

⁴¹James White, “Doings of the Battle Creek Conference,” 148.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³See Document File 287-a, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

⁴⁴*Cases of Insanity at Monterey, Michigan* (pamphlet, April 1869).

the Spirit as essential beliefs that distinguish Seventh-day Adventists from “the Christian world at large.” Ellen G. White was specifically mentioned and described as “a worthy Christian woman of blameless life,” who was also the recipient of the gift of God.

What makes this statement somewhat important is that there is some evidence that the Monterey Church was the place where the first annual session of the Michigan Conference was held from October 4-6, 1862. Furthermore, Ellen G. and James White visited the church several times in 1868 for revival meetings.⁴⁵

5. *The 1872 Declaration.* The year of 1872 is a focal point for any discussion of the development of the statements of belief. This was the year that the Adventist publishing house published *A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists*. The (unnamed) author was Uriah Smith, editor of the *Review and Herald*. This was the most comprehensive statement of belief that Adventists would draft from 1844 to 1931. In fact, all the fundamental belief statements appearing in church publications during this period were based on this document. The introduction is of particular interest:

In presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them, as a system of great unanimity among them, as a system of faith. But it is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them. We often find it necessary to meet inquiries on this subject, and sometimes to correct false statements circulated against us, and to remove erroneous impressions which have obtained with those who have not had an opportunity to become acquainted with our faith and practice. Our only object is to meet this necessity. . . . As Seventh-day Adventists we desire simply that our position shall be understood; and we are the more solicitous for this because there are many who call themselves Adventist who hold views with which we can have no sympathy, some of which, we think, are subversive of the plainest and most important principles set forth in the word of God.⁴⁶

These principles were reprinted first in pamphlet form and later in the *Signs of the Times* in 1874,⁴⁷ usually prefaced with the same or a similar introduction. The statement contained twenty-five articles of belief, covering a wide array of subjects including God, Christ, the Scriptures, baptism, the

⁴⁵James White, “Report From Brother White,” *Review and Herald*, 32 (May 12, 1868), 344; Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 2:22-23.

⁴⁶[Uriah Smith], *A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1872), 3.

⁴⁷“Fundamental Principles,” *Signs of the Times*, 1/1 (4 June 1874), 3.

judgment, the Sabbath, the state of the dead, the second coming, and the new earth.

The degree of unanimity may not have been as marked as the statement suggests, but whatever disagreements there were between the believers were over the content of the declaration rather than the fact that a statement of belief had been formulated and published. Ellen G. White did not protest the publication of the statement; rather she pleaded for unity. In 1875, she wrote:

God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. He will discipline and fit up His people. They will not be at variance, one believing one thing, and moving independently of the body. Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to unity of faith. . . . He has given His people a straight chain of Bible truth, clear and connected. This truth is of heavenly origin and has been searched for as for hidden treasure. It has been dug out through careful searching of the Scriptures and through much prayer.⁴⁸

6. *The 1889 Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. The 1889 *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* contained a slightly revised form of the “Fundamental Principles” of 1872. This was presented in a section containing general information about the church and its activities. The statement was not published in every yearly update of the *Yearbook*, however. After 1889, the statement was not published again until 1905. It appeared again in the years from 1907 to 1914. Then it disappeared again until 1931, when the statement was rewritten. These gaps between the publication of the statements of belief are significant. They are a silent witness to the absence of the unity for which Ellen G. White continued to plead. A thorough comparison of the 1931 edition and earlier editions of statements of belief shows that there were disagreements over the divine nature of Christ, as well as over the nature of the atonement.⁴⁹ The important point for this discussion, however, is that the statements were not omitted because of opposition to statements of belief as such, but for other reasons including, most importantly, doctrinal disagreements.

7. *Creeds and Error* (1890). The 1890s saw a renewed interest in creeds, which, it has been suggested, was the result of the controversy over the revision of the Presbyterian creed. Two articles of interest were printed one week apart in the *Review and Herald*. The first article by J. M. Manning, “The Use of Creeds,” favored creeds as a safeguard against error.⁵⁰ The second article by W. A. Blakely, “Why Not Have a Creed?” attacks creeds as tending “to

⁴⁸Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 3:446-447.

⁴⁹Merlin D. Burt, “History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on the Trinity,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 17 (2006): 135-137.

⁵⁰J. M. Manning, “The Use of Creeds,” *Review and Herald*, 67/1 (7 January 1890), 5.

embitter the controversy, to multiply sects, to suggest and foster intolerance, and to transform persons who are naturally amiable into acrimonious and ambivalent persecutors.”⁵¹

8. *Fundamental Principles* (1931). The statement of belief of 1931 is the next comprehensive statement of beliefs written after the 1872 Declaration.⁵² Three reasons can be given for the formulation of this document:⁵³ Lack of a Seventh-day Adventist statement of faith after the 1914 *Yearbook* gave an unfortunate impression to other denominations that Adventists had no defined or specified beliefs. The presence of fundamental beliefs was to reveal to the world “both what we believe and why.” Second, Adventist leadership in Africa made a formal request for a statement of beliefs that could guide “government officials and others to a better understanding of our work.”⁵⁴ Third, the document was produced to correct misrepresentations and distortions of the Adventist faith by apostates.

Most of the differences between the twenty-five fundamental beliefs of 1872 and the twenty-two principles of 1931 were minor and due to differences in the organization of the two documents. However, the 1931 statement reflected the church’s movement forward regarding its official acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity and also a view of Jesus’ ministry that balanced his work in the heavenly sanctuary with a stronger emphasis on his birth, life, and death.⁵⁵ Just as the 1872 statement became the basis of all belief statements prior to 1931, the “Fundamental Principles” of 1931 served as the basis of all Seventh-day Adventist confessional statements until the Dallas statement of 1980.

Contradiction or Harmony

The founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, while exhibiting a hostile attitude toward creeds, eventually became comfortable with the formulation of statements of belief. How can we harmonize an opposition to creeds, on one hand, and an acceptance of statements of belief, on the other?

⁵¹W. A. Blakely, “Why Not Have a Creed?” *Review and Herald*, 67/2 (14 January 1890), 20.

⁵²The 1931 statement is found under “Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists,” *Yearbook of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1931), 377-380. Two less important statements should be noted. The Battle Creek, Michigan, Seventh-day Adventist Church published a statement of beliefs in 1894 that represented a modification of the 1872 statement (Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 338-342). A brief forerunner of the 1931 statement appeared in 1913; see F. M. Wilcox, ed., “The Message for Today,” *Review and Herald* (9 October 1913), 21.

⁵³See Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 410-419.

⁵⁴Action taken on 29 December 1930. See *General Conference Committee Minutes*, Seventy-second Meeting (29 December 1930), 195.

⁵⁵See Karen K. Abrahamson, “Adventist Statements of Belief: A Comparison of Five Statements of Belief Covering the Period of 1872-1980,” Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University.

First, it is necessary to understand that what the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church understood by the word “creed” is not necessarily the way everyone would define a creed. Funk and Wagnalls defines “creed” as a “Formal summary of fundamental points of religious belief; an authoritative statement of doctrine on points held to be vital, usually representing the views of a religious body; a confession of faith.”⁵⁶

This definition makes creeds sound quite similar to statements of belief. Not so in the mind of the Seventh-day Adventist founders. To them, a church creed was more than a statement of belief; it was an elaborate, all-inclusive, binding, officially adopted summary to which all members must subscribe. By contrast, they understood statements of belief to be simply a description of who they were, what made them unique, and what Bible truth they had discovered up until their present time. Statements of belief were used to refute false teachings, to expose errors in the nominal churches, and to clear themselves of false charges.

Second, the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church viewed creeds as unchangeable, but saw fundamental beliefs as open to revision as new light was received. They wanted the freedom to revise their confessional statement so as to reflect more accurately progressive biblical revelation. When the denomination became convinced its belief was in error (such as the semi-Arian understanding of the Godhead), it thought it appropriate to amend the belief.

Third, the weightiest concern of these church founders was that the adoption of creeds would discourage people from studying the Bible, citing instead the creed as their final authority. They believed that as the believers advanced in their spiritual lives they should not cease to search diligently for the truth. Ellen G. White wrote in this regard that “However much one may advance in spiritual life, he will never come to a point where he will not need diligently to search the Scriptures. . . . All points of doctrine, even though they have been accepted as truth, should be brought to the law and to the testimony; if they cannot stand this test, ‘there is no light in them.’”⁵⁷

Fourth, the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church understood creeds to be rigid and authoritative documents that required the full assent of the believer, without recourse to further study and reflection. This caused much pain for them since they had been disfellowshipped from their previous churches on the basis of creeds. On the other hand, they emphasized that statements of belief should not be used as a binding authority on the conscience of the believer.

Did the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church believe in discipline over doctrinal disagreements? In his article, “Gospel Order,” Ellen White differentiated between “teaching” and “enforcing” the pure doctrine. While the need for discipline was seen, it was recognized that discipline could never be a matter of forcing unity. “The church may pass resolution upon resolution to put down all disagreement of opinions, but we cannot force the mind

⁵⁶*Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1966), s.v. “creeds.”

⁵⁷Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, 5:595.

and will, and thus root out disagreement. These resolutions may conceal the discord; but they cannot quench it, and establish perfect agreement. Nothing can perfect unity in the church but the spirit of Christ-like forbearance.”⁵⁸

For all these reasons, the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church had no difficulty in accepting statements of belief, while strongly opposing creeds. They wanted to emphasize that statements of beliefs carry no degree of finality or infallibility and that they are subject to change as new light emerges.

⁵⁸Ellen G. White, “MS 24, 1892,” in *Manuscript Releases*, 11:266.

THE REIGN OF TERROR

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Traditionally, historians have endorsed the idea that the Reign of Terror that occurred as a part of the French Revolution lasted for a period of three and a half years. Ellen White, for instance, noted in regard to the length of the French Revolution that “It was in 1793 that the decrees which abolished the Christian religion and set aside the Bible, passed the French Assembly. Three years and a half later a resolution rescinding these decrees, thus granting toleration to Scripture, was adopted by the same body.”¹ However, do the facts sustain a period of three and a half years of terror by the governing body of France? Or did the declaration against Christianity and the Bible last only a few weeks or months at the most?

Critical students such as Harold Snide call this time period into question, proposing instead that the Reign of Terror “ended after a few months.”² Snide contends that

we can discover no adequately significant event coming even approximately three and a half years after the atheistic supremacy, to mark the close of the period. Three and a half years from November 1793, would bring us to the spring of 1797. *It has been asserted that the Convention then repudiated its atheistic pronouncement. History shows no such action.* In the first place, the Directory was in power, not the Convention, in 1797. Furthermore, the atheistic intolerance had spent its force and had been repudiated by decree and by the new constitution of 1795, so this work did not remain to be done in 1797.³

Snide supports his argument with the following outline of events:

- On November 26, 1793, the Council of the Commune outlawed all religions, including Christianity, except for the worship of Reason.
- Nine days later, the Convention forbade violence relating to religious liberty.
- On May 9, 1794, the Convention, under the influence of Robespierre, decreed the worship of the Supreme Being.
- On September 20, 1794, government support of religion was abolished, bringing considerable religious liberty, although “non-juring

¹Ellen White, *The Great Controversy* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1990), 287.

²Harold Snide, “Great Controversy Errors Exposed: 3.5 Years of French Revolution and Other Statements Incorrect” (<www.nonsda.org/egw/gc3.html>), emphasis original.

³*Ibid.*

priests still suffered some persecution, but this was far more from political than from religious animosity.” An attempt was also made to restore “the tenth-day festivals [of Reason] in the hope of competing with Christianity and its weekly Lord’s Day; but this effort was a ludicrous and dismal failure.”

- On February 21, 1795, Boissy d’Anglas made a motion for the complete separation of Church and State, which allowed for “any kind of religious worship throughout France, but with some restrictions as to place, advertising, endowments, etc. Persecution still took place. “The refractory clergy were still considered criminal, but this was a political matter, and could hardly be considered the death of God’s Two Witnesses [i.e., the Old and New Testaments]. In the provinces there was much delay and opposition by local officials in permitting the liberty granted by the Convention.”
- On August 17, 1795, a new constitution, written by “comparatively moderate men,” was adopted that among other things mandated the separation of Church and State and guaranteed freedom of worship.⁴

He then concludes: “*Thus we see that in less than six months the atheistic enactment of November 26, 1793, was abrogated; and in less than two years there was actually greater religious freedom guaranteed on a fundamental legal basis, than existed prior to the outbreak of atheism. The ‘Two Witnesses’ just simply did not stay ‘dead’ three and a half years.*”⁵

When approaching the subject of the Reign of Terror we must bear in mind, however, that we are dealing with a time of revolution—a time of terror, while, at the same time, *liberty, equality, and fraternity* were the leading watchwords of the day. The historical facts point to a harsh reality: although these words were at that time France’s propaganda device, there was in reality excessive terror and much bloodshed—a sinister caricature of France’s well-sounding motto. The purpose of this article is, therefore, to examine the historical events that make up the period of time referred to as the Reign of Terror in order to determine whether the period lasted for three and half years as traditionally proposed by older historians, or only a few months as contended by some contemporary scholars.

The event that marked the beginning of the Reign of Terror was seemingly innocuous. A Revolutionary Calendar with a new name for each month was adopted with September 22, 1792 to September 21, 1793 as year one. However, the new calendar annulled saints’ days and Sundays and this gave great impetus to the dechristianizing movement. All Christian worship was abolished and civic festivals were dictated with dances in the cathedrals

⁴Ibid., emphasis original.

⁵Ibid.

every *décadi* or tenth day. And so there was in fact no freedom of Christian worship, as we will soon discover more clearly.

On October 15, 1793 (15th Brumaire of the year II), Marie-Joseph Chénier proposed to found a new religion instead of the Christian faith. “Wrench,” he said,

the sons of the Republic from the yoke of theocracy which now weighs upon them. . . . [T]hen, freed from prejudice and worthy to represent the French nation, you will be able, on the ruins of fallen superstitions, to found the one universal religion, which has neither secrets nor mysteries, whose one dogma is equality, whose orators are the laws, whose pontiffs are the magistrates, which asks no incense from the great human family to burn save before the altar of our *country, our mother, and our deity*.⁶

We are informed that this speech was made in the name of the Committee, applauded by the Convention, and officially printed.⁷

Thus solicited and applauded by the Convention, soon a conscious war with Christianity and the Bible raged. Everywhere in the country, priests, bishops, and ministers renounced their beliefs and resigned, often accompanied by public declarations of their religious fraud and folly. Shameless and ridiculous processions took place. Donkeys were dressed in bishops’ robes and miters and led through the streets. In Lyon, an ass “with a bible and a missal tied to its tail, was followed by cartloads of church vessels.”⁸

The movement of dechristianization quickly became general. Religion was renounced. Christian churches were closed and then reopened as Temples of Reason. No other religion was propagated than that of Liberty and Equality, while the resistant clergy were denounced and arrested.

A. Aulard noted that

The Commune of Paris . . . on the 3rd Frimaire of the Year II (24th November, 1793), on the request of Chaumette, . . . decreed “that all the churches and chapels of every religion and sect which exist in Paris shall be closed forthwith,” and also that anyone who asked for their reopening should be arrested as a suspicious person.⁹

Although the situation throughout the country varied from district to district, especially in the rural areas, there was, in general, no real freedom of

⁶A. Aulard, *Christianity and the French Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1927), 104, emphasis supplied.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1989), 779. Cf. Shailer Mathews, *The French Revolution: A Sketch* (New York: Chautauqua, 1900), 248, n.

⁹Aulard, 109.

worship and, as troubles and disturbances continued, the movement for the destruction of Christianity continued strong.

*Atheistic Enactment Abrogated with
Worship of Supreme Being*

On May 9 (or rather May 7 of the 18th Floréal of Year II), 1794, under the leading influence of Robespierre, the worship of the Supreme Being was decreed. However, what did this mean? Were atheistic measures actually put to an end within six months of the initial decree? Was freedom of religion restored? Did France return to the worship of the true God of heaven, and was Christianity once again established?

Aulard explains that “There was one to which I have only alluded—namely, the establishment of the Worship of the Supreme Being, under which the attacks on Christianity went on and which was in truth only the continuation of the Worship of Reason under another form—the form initiated by Robespierre.”¹⁰

Thus it is clear that the establishment of the worship of the Supreme Being was, in actuality, an attack against Christianity—the attacks went on. The worship of Reason was continued under another form—Deism. It was also in a sense atheistic since the true God of the Bible was worshiped no more than with the worship of Reason.

Aulard, in his Preface, states:

A dechristianization of France started in 1793, and in the Year II, first with the Cult of Reason, then with that of the Supreme Being. . . . The peril thus run by Christianity at the time of the Worship of Reason and the Worship of the Supreme Being is the most outstanding episode in the religious history of the French Revolution. . . . [I]t was the whole of Christianity which was involved, and at a solemn hour, when a New France was being called in existence.¹¹

There was no positive change for Christianity under the worship of the Supreme Being. The dechristianization went on as before, leaving Christianity and the Bible to remain in peril.

The English newspaper, *The Times*, on August 2, 1794, nearly three months after the introduction of the cult of the Supreme Being on May 7, listed a number of stipulations imposed by the French government on its people. Under the heading *French Consistency* these stipulations included:

¹⁰Ibid., 124.

¹¹Ibid., 13-14.

Decreed	That religious worship shall be exercised as usual.
Ordered	That all Priests and Bishops performing Mass, be put to death immediately.
Decreed	That there is no God, nor any power superior to man; and that a throne be erected to Reason.
Ordered	That it be made known to the Public, that the Convention do believe in a Supreme Being, who is above all things.
Decreed	That death is an eternal sleep, and the idea of an hereafter ridiculous.
Decreed	That the French Nation is <i>free</i> , and every individual shall fully enjoy LIBERTY.
Decreed	That all persons shall enjoy full Liberty of Speech.
Ordered	That whoever finds fault with the proceedings of the Convention, be sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal—that is—put to death.
Ordered	That whoever talks of restoring Royalty as a branch of the Constitution, be put to death.
Ordered	That Great Britain be invaded, and the national flag hoisted on the Tower of London; and that the English be invited to follow the example of France, and destroy Royalty.
Decreed	That France is a brave, a generous, and a <i>humane</i> people; and that their wish is to make all mankind happy.

The Times adds the following significant words to the stipulations:

Such are the out-lines of that constitution which France at present is cured with; and which is not only recommended as a proper one for this kingdom, but actually endeavoured to be established here by a set of Jacobins who are a disgrace to their country, and a dishonour to human nature. The violence of their proceedings seem, indeed, to be a token of their despair; and, from the resolute activity of government, there appears every reason to hope, that the sword of the law will speedily bring such rebellious miscreants to justice.¹²

There is no doubt these ordered and decreed sentences do *not* reflect freedom of Christian worship. “That there is no God, nor any power superior to man” is a clear anti-Bible and anti-Christian decree. Further, the Supreme Being is not the true biblical God of heaven, but more a philosophical being, indicating nature and the people.

¹²*The Times*, Saturday, 2 August 1794, 2, column 4.

Robespierre's introduction of his Supreme Being was, in fact, a disgusting mockery to the righteous and only true God of the Bible. Note how Edmond de Pressensé describes this act:

The future high priest of the Supreme Being was ascending thus by bloody steps to the altar of his god. To arrive there he marched over the dead bodies of his friends, of those at whose table he had sat, and whose marriage contracts he had signed. Master in the Jacobin Club, and in the Committees, this most pure, this incorruptible saint of demagogism, was always ready with some furtive plan of conspiracy, in the elastic meshes of which he entangled all his adversaries, or, more truly, all his rivals.¹³

The *Christian History Institute* concurs: "On this day, May 7, 1794, the Committee of Public Safety, which controlled France, decreed worship of a Supreme Being. This was not the God of the *Bible*, who enters into personal relationship with men, but a Deist god."¹⁴ John McManners points out that "In effect, it was all the same; his new religion was but an episode of the de-Christianization—as Mercier's errand boy observed, "There's no longer a God, only Robespierre's *Être Suprême*."¹⁵ Walter Scott also declares that Robespierre's religion involved no worship of the true God, stating that "His acknowledgment of a Divinity . . . involved no worship of the Great Being."¹⁶ Aulard describes the pretended freedom to believe in the principles of the new philosophical anti-Christian religion this way: "You may believe in them or not as you like. If you do not believe you will be banished, not for irreligion, but for lack of social sentiment."¹⁷ Simon Schama calls the Festival of the Supreme Being that was to replace Christian worship a "most ambitious political production" and explains:

Robespierre had announced the creed a month earlier, on May 7 (18 Floréal), in a painfully crafted speech on "the relations between moral and religious ideas with republican principles." "The true priest of the Supreme Being," Robespierre declared to the baffled and the bemused, "is Nature itself; its temple is the universe; its religion virtue; its festivals the joy of a great

¹³M. Edmond de Pressensé, *Religion and the Reign of Terror* (New York: Carlton & Lanahan, 1868), 239.

¹⁴"Glimpses of Christian History, May 7, 1794, French Revolution Decreed Cult of Supreme Being," *Christianity Today International*, Christian History Institute, Box 540, Worcester, PA 19490 (<www.christianhistorytimeline.com/DAILYF/2002/05/daily-05-07-2002.shtml>).

¹⁵John McManners, *Lectures on European History, 1789-1914* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), 65.

¹⁶Walter Scott, *The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte* (Philadelphia: Jas. B. Smith, 1859), 1:177.

¹⁷Aulard, 124.

people assembled under its eyes to tie the sweet knot of universal fraternity and to present before it [Nature] the homage of pure and feeling [sensible] hearts.”¹⁸

Thus Robespierre, by introducing the cult of the Supreme Being—a worship reflecting much of Rousseau’s ideas—actually desired to make this “the State religion and to be himself the pontiff of it.”¹⁹

An opera singer named Mademoiselle Maillard “was proclaimed goddess of the feast of freedom and reason.”²⁰ She declared, as the representative figure of Reason: “Let the world consider it! This, O National Convention, wonder of the universe, is our New Divinity; Goddess of Reason, worthy, and alone worthy of revering. Her henceforth we adore.”²¹

On the feast of the Supreme Being, it turned out that Robespierre himself was worshiped and received similar honor, much to the disgrace of his opponents:

In his craven soul, he has worshipped not the Supreme Being, but only himself, Robespierre.²²

Incorruptible Robespierre, not unlike the Ancients, as Legislator of a free people, will now also be Priest and Prophet . . . the “Existence of the Supreme Being.”²³

Look at it one moment, O Reader, not two. The shabbiest page of Human Annals: or is there, that thou wottest of, one shabbier? Mumbo-Jumbo of the African woods to me seems venerable beside the new Deity of Robespierre; for this is a conscious Mumbo-Jumbo, and knows that he is machinery.²⁴

His pompous self-glorification on the festival of the Supreme Being . . . gave fresh irritation to all classes of his opponents, who thenceforth spared no pain to accomplish his ruin.²⁵

¹⁸Schama, 831.

¹⁹Aulard, 125.

²⁰Samuel Macaulay Jackson, ed., *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1909), 4:387.

²¹Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, n.d.), 2:323.

²²Lydia Hoyt Farmer, *A Short History of the French Revolution* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1889), 533.

²³Carlyle, 355.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 356.

²⁵W. Henley Jervis, *The Gallican Church and the Revolution* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, 1882), 257.

For one moment this most prudent of men forgot his caution; his face, usually grave, was brightened by a smile of triumph. For a moment the Vicar of God fancied he was himself God!²⁶

The man stood forth in his glory, he appeared as a leader of the Government and as a religious leader, at once a pontiff and a dictator . . . and we have seen that the work of destroying Christianity went on apace.²⁷

Aulard further states that letters have been found among Robespierre's papers "in which he was regarded, not as a mere pontiff, but as a divinity."²⁸ In a leading newspaper of 1794, Robespierre is addressed as being a Deity and to express his horrible pontificate, he, with his party, was characterized as "wholesale dealers in human flesh."²⁹ Thus it is clear that with this new form of worship the only true God of heaven was not glorified. There was *no relief* for Christianity whatsoever. The destructive work against Christianity *went on apace*. The worship of the Supreme Being was revolutionary and anti-Christian, as Shailer Mathews also clearly confirms: "As Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety gained influence, the cult of Reason was repressed, and France recalled to the better but no less revolutionary and anti-Christian worship of the Supreme Being."³⁰ Aulard explains that everyone was commanded to think and act as Robespierre, and those who did not were branded as "enemies of the Republic" and as "men who are corrupt."³¹ What is more, he concludes: "So under this pontificate there would be no more religious liberty."³²

Great crowds, dressed in their Sunday best, attended the Festival of the Supreme Being, but did this day have any favorable effect? Did it bring some relief and freedom to the oppressed people? François Furet informs us that

Accounts agree on this point, which is hard to comprehend, since the Terror was going full swing and the dread machine had been still for only a day . . . the illusion did not last very long—the bloody law of Prairial [May 1794] followed in a couple of days. Nor did the festival have a favourable effect on the Conventionnels, who had seen in it only its political, and even personal aspect. The Supreme Being did not have the same hold over them as the Committee of Public Safety. War and

²⁶Louis Madelin, *The French Revolution* (London: William Heinemann, 1922), 407.

²⁷Aulard, 130.

²⁸Ibid., 129.

²⁹*The Sun*, Saturday, 23 August 1794, 2, column 1.

³⁰Mathews, 248.

³¹Aulard, 126.

³²Ibid.

fear remained the political and psychological mainsprings of the revolutionary dictatorship.³³

Consider how the grim situation deteriorated two days after the procession of the Supreme Being when the law of Prairial was presented by Couthon. John Dalberg-Acton describes the act as follows:

It is the most tyrannical of all the acts of the Revolution, and is not surpassed by anything in the records of absolute monarchy. For the decree of Prairial suppressed the formalities of law in political trials . . . no time was to be lost with witnesses, written depositions, or arguments. . . . Robespierre had only to send a deputy's name to the public accuser, and he would be in his grave next day. . . . The victims increased rapidly in number . . . the guillotine was removed to a distant part of the city, where a deep trench was dug to carry away such quantities of blood.³⁴

Schama, commenting on the decree of 22 Prairial, says:

Henceforth anyone, denounced for "slandering patriotism," "seeking to inspire discouragement," "spreading false news" or even "depraving morals, corrupting the public conscience and impairing the purity and energy of the revolutionary government" could be brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal . . . no witnesses would be allowed to be called nor could the accused have a defense counsel. Were not the jurymen, after all, good citizens, capable of coming to a fair and unbiased verdict on their own judgment?³⁵

The execution rate went up extremely high. It reveals that the worship of the Supreme Being had not exerted any softening influence upon the Reign of Terror. The alarming effect on the public is not surprising: "Public opinion was shaken, and the practices of the repression abetted the fear."³⁶

When Robespierre and his accomplices were themselves sent to the guillotine, did this end the Revolution and bring any immediate relief to Christianity? George H. Allen justly remarks:

Robespierre's downfall has sometimes been regarded as the conclusion of the Revolution. Difficult as it is to assign any definite limit to this great movement of the Revolution, the 9th Thermidor of the Year II (July 27, 1794) is manifestly premature. For revolutionary activity continued with scarcely

³³François Furet, *The French Revolution, 1770-1814* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 148-149.

³⁴John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, *Lectures on the French Revolution* (London: Macmillan, 1920), 287-288.

³⁵Schama, 837.

³⁶Georges Lefebvre, *The French Revolution from 1793-1799* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), 125.

abated intensity. . . . [T]he Terror was still maintained as an instrument of government although in waning measure; and the revolutionary leaders were still intent on plans for the remodeling and reforming of the framework of society.³⁷

De Pressensé writes: “The situation of France immediately after the fall of Robespierre was very peculiar. The party which had triumphed held in the main the principles of him who had fallen.”³⁸

Since the triumphant party was mainly led by similar principles, no real change was to be expected. No wonder then that we read: “Too often, however, the reaction which set in on the fall of Robespierre was but a continuation of the Reign of Terror.”³⁹ It is clear, then, that the situation remained much the same and that the objectionable laws were not repealed.

As to matters of religion, the fall of Robespierre in Thermidor induced no very rapid change. Persecution was no longer so atrocious, but still all the laws of proscription remained unrepealed, even liberty of worship had been theoretically re-established—a liberty which was suspended on the slightest suspicion. Public opinion had not yet returned to Christianity. The reaction of Thermidor was imbued *fully* with the *infidel* philosophy of the day.⁴⁰

W. Henley Jervis informs us that

The change was not immediate, for the men who succeeded Robespierre in power—such as Tallien, Barras, Fouché, Thibaudeau, Barère—were *not less* fiercely hostile to Christianity and the Church than any of their fallen colleagues and by no means disposed to repeal the bloodthirsty legislation of the Terror.⁴¹

Thus it is made clear that after the fall of Robespierre there was just as much hostility to Christianity and the Bible as before. Thus it is no wonder that although a decree of freedom of worship existed it was grossly violated. It only meant freedom of worship of the state religion on the tenth day and meanwhile secularization went on.

The decree of the 16th Frimaire of the year II, which had proclaimed liberty of worship, had not been repealed, though it was violated almost in every direction. . . . But the work of secularization went on. Thus on the 3rd Frimaire of the Year III

³⁷George H. Allen, *The French Revolution* (Philadelphia: George Barrie’s Sons, 1925), 4:240-241.

³⁸De Pressensé, 249.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 251.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, emphasis supplied.

⁴¹W. Henley Jervis, 259, emphasis supplied.

at Albi, Mallarmé and Brouillerot, representatives “en mission”, prohibited all exercise of public worship within the district, and all meetings except to celebrate the “décadi” [the tenth day].⁴²

The Reign of Terror was a period of great chaos, agony, doubt, insecurity, and uncertainty. The ruling powers were divided, inconsistent, and contradictory. “The Convention was characterized by inconsistencies that loom large in the history of legislatures. It followed policies so contradictory that at first glance it seems impossible to find a common feature among them.”⁴³

Freedom of Worship with the Speech of Boissy d’Anglas

On February 21, 1795 (the decree of the third Ventôse of the Year III), Boissy d’Anglas made a speech about the separation of Church and State. It is true that in several districts this decree led to the reopening of churches, but many were soon closed again, while the priests “were obliged to conceal themselves through fear of the penal legislation of the Terror, which was not yet repealed.”⁴⁴ Thus since these iniquitous laws were still in force the churches were, in fact, still in peril. “In many districts the magistrates exerted themselves by unfair and arbitrary proceedings of all kinds to obstruct the execution of the law of the 3rd Ventôse.”⁴⁵ In other places, where priests exhorted people to come and hear mass on Sundays and Festivals, they were “forthwith denounced for having insulted the Republican Calendar, which was still legally in force. Sometimes meetings for worship on Sundays were expressly prohibited . . . and Dumont insisted that the Terrorist legislation should be enforced to its full extent.”⁴⁶

When we look carefully at the facts, it will soon be clear that there is only a difference of strategy with exactly the same intention as before Robespierre’s execution. “Boissy d’Anglas was by education a Protestant, but had abandoned all belief in Christianity, and was a philosophical freethinker of the most advanced type.”⁴⁷

Aulard records Boissy’s report to the citizens of France:

“Citizens,” he said, “public worship has been banished from the Government and it will not return.” Then he declared the Catholic religion to be intolerant, domineering, sanguinary, childish, absurd and harmful. The ideal would be that instead of

⁴²Aulard, 135-136.

⁴³Lefebvre, 160.

⁴⁴Jervis, 271.

⁴⁵Ibid., 267.

⁴⁶Ibid., 267-268.

⁴⁷Ibid., 263.

religion men should be led by the light of reason and bound to each other by ties of mere common interest, by the principles of social organization, and by that imperious feeling which draws men to gather together and love one another. It was by “the wisdom of the laws” that the Convention would prepare for the “sole reign of philosophy, for the sway of morality alone. . . . Absurd dogmas will be no sooner recognized than despised. Very soon the religion of Socrates and of Marcus Aurelius and of Cicero will be the religion of the world.” But to attain this end we must go slowly, like nature. Let there be no Hébertism, no persecution.⁴⁸

Aulard concludes: “Thus the plan of substituting natural religion for Christianity *was reaffirmed*. Christianity could not be overthrown by violence. They hoped to do it by liberty—and strict legal restraints.”⁴⁹ Thus although this decree proclaimed liberty, it, in actuality,

prohibited all external ceremonies, signs or inscriptions and all public proclamations or calling of assemblies. No one might appear in public in canonicals or wear ornaments used in religious ceremonies. All religious gatherings were placed under *police supervision*. The communes were not to acquire nor let [i.e., rent] any place for religious purposes. No endowment, either permanent or temporary, might be created, nor might any tax be imposed for the maintenance of religion.⁵⁰

We can only conclude that in reality there was not that kind of freedom as some would think. Furthermore, it was not at all the religion of the Bible that was favored. The philosophies of Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, and Cicero were advocated as the religion of the world and, therefore, we can confidently say that this was not in any way a Christian revival; on the contrary, as was prophesied, God’s two Witnesses (the Old and New Testaments) *remained dead*. Says de Pressensé:

At the close of the Reign of Terror the moral condition of France was truly deplorable. The nation had begun by making of liberty a religion. Disgusted finally with the crimes committed in its name, and possessing no longer that faith which gives consolation in disappointment, and saves the soul from universal and morbid doubt, the people seem to have lost the faculty of believing in God. Thus the greatest bond of moral restraint was broken. . . . Never did debauchery parade itself with more audacity in open day. . . . A journal of the time gave the true explanation of this deplorable situation. “We are the only people in the world,” said the *Éclair*, “who ever attempted to do without religion. But what

⁴⁸Aulard, 139.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 139, emphasis supplied.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, emphasis supplied.

is already our sad experience? Every tenth day [this Sabbath of the infidels] we are astounded by the recital of more crimes and assassinations than were committed formerly in a whole year. At the risk of speaking an obsolete language, and of receiving insult for response, we declare that we must cease striving to destroy the remnants of religion if we desire to prevent the entire dissolution of society.”⁵¹

Thus there was no Christian revival yet. De Pressensé notes that

Entire religious liberty did not exist a single day during the whole course of the Revolution. Even under the “régime” of the separation of Church and State it was seriously trammelled by the general government. And in many cases the legal impediments were rendered tenfold more severe by the passions and injustice of the provincial magistrates. These acted almost everywhere in the interest of the anti-religious tendency.⁵²

No Repudiation of Atheistic Laws in the Spring of 1797

It is hard to believe that the Two Witnesses had come to life in France much before the end of the prophesied three and a half years. No sign of the influence of the Bible was perceptible in the disorderly situation that reigned supreme. Further, we are informed that the situation grew worse under a divided government. With

violent factions in the directory; it sank under its own weight and disorder reigned supreme. . . . The country, like its government, went blindly on at random. . . . The people threw themselves headlong into all forms of pleasure-seeking. . . . [T]he dissolution of morals was unbridled, gambling was carried likewise to unheard-of excesses; the police did nothing, bands of brigands multiplied. The south was laid waste by the “compagnons de Jésus” and the “enfants du Soleil”; the “chauffeurs” terrified the west. It seemed as if the whole state was on the verge of dissolution.⁵³

However, during the first part of the year 1797, a clear change came about. “The election of 1797 had fortified in the government the party of moderation. Several of the new delegates, such as Camille Jordan and Royer Collard, were strangers to the violent measures of the Revolution. They were especially strangers to antireligious passions, and represented constituents who were attached to Christianity, and more and more weary of the intolerance of the Directory. The legislative session began with a revision

⁵¹De Pressensé, 293-294.

⁵²Ibid., 292.

⁵³Victor Duruy, *A Short History of France* (London: Everyman's Library, 1918), 363.

of the revolutionary laws.⁵⁴ Although some advance was already made in behalf of Christianity in 1796, it was not until the first part of 1797 that the lot of the religious became more favorable:

But the lot of the religious was making advance toward betterment during the year 1796 and the first part of 1797. On June 17 Camille Jordan, deputy from Lyons, delivered an address in favor of the priests and calling for a revision of the laws respecting religion. On June 24 the directorium reported to the Five Hundred that, in consequence of the more favorable outlook in religious affairs, a large number of priests had returned and many religious organizations were asking for freedom of worship.⁵⁵

Camille Jordan, “a young man of good sentiments and a lively imagination,”⁵⁶ was “elected at Bordeaux to carry out a programme involving the *restoration of religion* on the basis of a liberal Separation.⁵⁷ The role of Jordan is recorded thus:

On the 4th Prairial Dumolard had applied for the nomination of a Commission *to revise the laws affecting the government of religious worship*. This was duly appointed: Camille Jordan was elected chairman, and the Council, while waiting for his report, sent a message to the Directors demanding the *immediate release* of all incarcerated priests.⁵⁸

Camille Jordan became the organ of the complaints which were everywhere made against the infractions of the liberty of worship. He pronounced a *memorable discourse* in favor of indiscriminate liberty of conscience for all citizens, and feared not to borrow arguments from the excellency of Christianity. . . . “If you desire to erect a dike against the fearful progress of crime and disorder, you must guarantee complete religious liberty.” Jordan then proceeded in the most reasonable manner to explain in detail how this liberty should be respected. . . . This discourse was a *marked* event. . . . The Assembly, by a strong majority, *repealed* the most of the intolerant laws which yet disgraced the code of France. Liberty of conscience obtained a signal triumph.⁵⁹

Among the most important subjects to which the new members purposed to direct their attention were religion and the laws concerning the priests. The commission charged with this

⁵⁴De Pressensé, 280-281.

⁵⁵*The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, 4:388.

⁵⁶Louis Adolphe Thiers, *The History of the French Revolution* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries, 1971), 5:91.

⁵⁷Madelin, 523, emphasis supplied.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 525, emphasis supplied.

⁵⁹De Pressensé, 280-283, emphasis supplied.

momentous subject appointed for its reporter young Camille Jordan. . . . Camille Jordan proposed the abolition of the oaths, the *repeal of the oppressive laws* which had been the consequence, permission to use bells, and to have cemeteries, in which each religion could place such religious signs as it pleased upon the graves. The principles of this report, though expressed with dangerous emphasis, were just.⁶⁰

The events linked with those developments culminating with Jordan's report clearly indicate that his work and address were not at all insignificant, but played a definite role in procuring a real change that made *large numbers* of priests return and *many religious organizations* ask for freedom of worship.

Jordan's address was *officially published* in the French *Gazette Nationale ou Le Moniteur Universel*. To all, he sacredly promised full religious freedom.⁶¹ Jervis explains: "A Committee was appointed to revise the laws of the Revolution, more particularly those affecting public worship and the clergy; and on the 17th of June, Camille Jordan, a young barrister from Lyons, presented its report, which is a document of *singular ability and interest*."⁶² He continues:

Jordan pointed out with stern emphasis the true sources which had produced the existing state of confusion and distress. "Within the last few years we have enacted thousands of laws; we have reformed all branches of our jurisprudence; and yet never has this noble empire been more shamefully ravaged by crime. Why is this? Because you have displaced from the hearts of Frenchmen that *great law* which was implanted there *by nature*, that law which alone distinguishes right from wrong, which alone gives authority to every other legislative statute. Recall that mighty law *to life and energy*; grant to all forms of religious worship the faculty of re-establishing it in every heart; then we shall have no further need of all this apparatus of ordinances and penalties. Religion, of whatever shape, ought not only to be tolerated, but protected; because all religion promotes morality, and is therefore beneficial to mankind. To proscribe religion of any kind in France, after the sanguinary lessons that we have received, would be an impious thought; it will never find admission among the representatives of the people; it is execrated within these walls. I swear it by the representatives of the people; it is execrated within these walls. I swear it by the shades of five hundred thousand Frenchmen

⁶⁰Thiers, 101-102, emphasis supplied.

⁶¹*Gazette Nationale ou Le Moniteur Universel*, no. 275, vendredi, 23 juin, 1797, 1097, Corps Législatif, Suite du rapport de Camille Jordan. "Que tous nos concitoyens soient donc aujourd'hui pleinement rassurés; que tous catholiques, protestants, assermentés, insermentés, sachent que c'est la volonté du législateur, comme le vœu de la loi, qu'ils suivent en liberté la religion que leur cœur a choisie. Je leur en renouvelle, en votre nom, la promesse sacrée: tous les cultes sont libres en France."

⁶²Jervis, 286, emphasis supplied.

slaughtered on the plains of La Vendée,—that awful monument of the madness of persecution and the extravagances of fanaticism! Let our fellow-citizens be henceforth fully reassured; I renew to them in your name the sacred promise—Religious worship is free in France!⁶³

If there was already free religious worship in France, why then this pleading address? Wouldn't that be like knocking on a door that has been already opened? We are compelled to admit that everything points toward the fact that there was *no real* religious freedom yet. And so Jordan, in his courageous and impressive speech, demanded a *complete restoration* of Christianity with all its signs, symbols, ceremonies, and practices.⁶⁴ It is, however, not surprising that not everyone agreed with all the details of Jordan's report, and it seems that particularly his pleading for the use of church bells was not appreciated by everyone and caused some hilarity that gave him the nickname Bell-Jordan.

After Jordan's presentation a report about the laws with regard to the clergy was presented: "A second report followed, presented by Dubruel, which had for its object the total abrogation of the penal laws against the clergy, and their reinstatement in all rights and privileges of French citizens."⁶⁵ A prolonged and sometimes heated discussion followed, but when at last the Council was ready to vote, a very remarkable result was gained: "When the vote was at length taken on the 18th of July [1797], there appeared an *immense majority* in favour of the first proposition of Camille Jordan and Dubruel; and the *iniquitous legislation of the Revolution against ecclesiastics was in consequence annulled.*"⁶⁶

This remarkable event that marked the end of the prophesied period of three years and a half, paved the upward way for the Bible and for Christianity. There was no foreign power imposed—it was the same body—France's own ruling Government that adopted after a period of terror of three years and a half "a resolution rescinding these decrees, thus granting toleration to the Scriptures."⁶⁷

George Croly summarizes the events as follows: "By the decree of the French Government, declaring that the nation acknowledged no God, the Old and New Testaments were *slain* throughout the limits of Republican France."⁶⁸ He continues: "In three years and a half from the abolition of

⁶³Ibid., 287, emphasis supplied.

⁶⁴Ibid., 288.

⁶⁵Ibid., 289.

⁶⁶Ibid., 290, emphasis supplied.

⁶⁷White, 287.

⁶⁸George Croly, *The Apocalypse of St. John or Prophecy of the Rise, Progress, and Fall of the Church of Rome; The Inquisition; The Revolution of France; The Universal War; and the Final Triumph of Christianity* (London: C. & J. Rivington, 1827), 174.

religion in France, it shall be restored, and even placed in a more secure and prominent rank than before.⁶⁹

Thus it was that on the 17th of June 1797 the “Council of Five Hundred” made a “Revision of the laws relative to religious worship,” which consisted of a number of propositions, “abolishing alike the Republican restrictions on Popish worship, and the Popist restrictions on Protestants.”⁷⁰ Croly mentions a number of issues that were brought forward in Jordan’s report:

- That *all* citizens might buy or hire edifices for the *free* exercise of religious worship.
- That *all* congregations might assemble by the sound of bells.
- That *no test* or *promise* of any sort unrequired from other citizens should be required of the ministers of those congregations.
- That any individual attempting to impede, or in any way interrupt the public worship should be fined, up to 500 livres, and not less than 50; and that if the interruption proceeded from the constituted authorities, such authorities should be fined double the sum.
- That entrance to assemblies for the purpose of religious worship should be free for all citizens.
- That all other laws concerning religious worship should be repealed.

Croly concludes:

Those regulations, in comprehending the whole state of worship in France, were, in fact, a peculiar boon to Protestantism. . . . The Church and the Bible had been slain in France from November 1793, till June 1797. The *three years* and a *half* were expended, and the *Bible*, so long and sternly repressed before, *was placed in honour*, and was openly the book of free Protestantism!⁷¹

Conclusion

Thus after the termination of the prophesied period of three years and a half in June 1797, a free and upward way was paved for the Bible and Protestantism. De Pressensé noted that

as soon as religion became free from the civil administration, and was left to itself, it recovered itself with astonishing rapidity from the discredit into which it had fallen. France witnessed at

⁶⁹Ibid., 177.

⁷⁰Ibid., 179-180.

⁷¹Ibid., 180-181, emphasis supplied.

the close of the eighteenth century the unexpected spectacle of a powerful revival of Christian faith.⁷²

Shortly after the Revolutionary laws against the church were annulled, a *coup d'état* took place with a temporary outburst of persecution of the priests, finally resulting in the captivity of the pope by Napoleon's General Berthier in 1798 and thus the power of the Church of Rome was checked. It is noted that "Finally a decree was passed to restore to the priests their civil rights though in September of 1797, during a temporary period of control by the republican radicals, persecution of the priests was renewed, and of the returned priests stern requirements were made."⁷³ Jervis writes:

The rapid successes of Napoleon Bonaparte in the north of Italy had paved the way for the execution of one of the favourite projects of the ruling powers of Paris, namely, the overthrow of the Pope's temporal authority.⁷⁴

The Constitutional clergy, again, while professing theoretically the deepest reverence for the Holy See as the centre of Catholic unity, were in reality thoroughly opposed to any programme of pacification which should assert in practice the spiritual supremacy of Rome.⁷⁵

The Reign of Terror had ended, following three and a half years of violence. Its ending brought with it true freedom of religion for all the people of France, in which each citizen could worship God in the manner each preferred, and thereby restoring the Bible to its rightful place.

⁷²De Pressensé, 292.

⁷³*The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, 4:388.

⁷⁴Jervis, 318.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 325.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL READING OF MALACHI

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Date completed: July 2008

Problem

The reading of ancient texts is a continuous challenge to later generations. Chronological, geographical, and cultural distance separates the communities where those texts emerged from later readers. This is especially true of the book of Malachi, written in the “obscure” Persian period. Current archaeological research on the Persian period has not been integrated to the study of the book of Malachi.

Method

This dissertation presents the relationship between textual and archaeological material in relation to Malachi. It provides a general description of the historical, political, and social circumstances that surrounded Yehud from the sixth to the fifth centuries B.C. The remains from excavations and other evidences of settlement infrastructure are presented, together with their suggested interpretation. Items of daily life that reflect Mesopotamian or Greek influence are determined to interpret the eastern or western influence on Yehud during the fifth century.

Archaeological realia of the Persian period are limited, but textual remains and traditions are described to reconstruct the world of Malachi. The religious milieu of Malachi is elusive and conclusions are based more on the absence of iconographic remains than on what has been found. The economic situation is considered in the fifth chapter, with a survey of industrial remains, architecture, and agriculture.

Conclusion

The methodology developed in this study enhances the reading of the book of Malachi through archaeological data. The “dark” Persian period and the “obscure” book of Malachi are illuminated in this study. The data provided sketch the political, social, religious, and economic landscape of the early Persian period. The analysis of Edom is a particular contribution because there is limited published material on the Edomites. This study also illuminates the practice of Yahwism in the early Persian period and the establishment of Pentateuchal Yahwism over other Yahwisms. The methodology of this dissertation can be adapted to study other biblical texts.

BOOK REVIEWS

Aleshire, Daniel O. *Earthen Vessels: Hopeful Reflections on the Work and Future of Theological Schools*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 177 pp. Paper, \$20.00.

Theological education has always raised questions in people's minds, never more so than in these days of flux and change in the church and society. Additionally, theological education has succeeded in attracting a horde of supporters and detractors alike, with the church, as well as the academy, supplying more than its fair share of detractors. Individuals bound for the seminary to nurture their call are known to have been cautioned about what they would likely encounter there, and some warnings have included talk that a seminary education is perilous to a life of faith and hope. Criticism of theological education has caused some seminaries to be defensive about their reasons for being and skittish about the need for change.

In *Earthen Vessels*, Daniel O. Aleshire seeks to make a case for the perpetuation of theological education and theological schools. Aleshire has had, and continues to have, an insider's view of the issues surrounding graduate theological education and has spent ample time wrestling with them purposefully and passionately. The author has been affiliated with the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) for almost two decades, serving for the last ten as the executive director of the organization that accredits theological schools in the United States and Canada. In this valuable book, in which he compares theological schools to earthen vessels because of their fragility and durability, Aleshire utilizes a research methodology he calls "appreciative inquiry" to explore the strengths and opportunities facing theological schools.

Given his affiliation with the Association of Theological Schools, a criticism that is sure to be lobbed at Aleshire is that he is the proverbial company man fighting to preserve an organization promoting a product that is, at best, on its way out. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Aleshire strives to be both balanced and unbiased in unearthing and dissecting the issues confronting, if not plaguing, graduate theological education at this critical juncture in the history of the church and the academy. The book is not so much a glance in the rearview mirror to see from whence theological education has come as it is a look through the windshield to see where it is headed.

Aleshire argues that there is a legitimate, if not indispensable, need for theological schools in spite of the changing social and religious landscape in North America. He begins to make his case for theological schools by boldly asserting that "seminary education makes a difference in the quality of pastoral ministry" and that his seminary training "was the most powerful educational experience" of his life (3). While acknowledging that some who never received their training from a theological school have excelled in ministry, Aleshire holds that theological schools "are the best place for theological education to be located" (18). He avows, "The work of ministry and priesthood needs schools because ministry is an increasingly complex task, because the educational level of parishioners is rising, because the world is an increasingly complicated place, because the religious and moral dilemmas in this age are increasingly demanding, and because schools are the

best setting in which the knowledge, skills, perceptions, and dispositions that are needed for this time can be learned” (19).

Theological schools seek to equip people for religious vocation, a goal that is not simply the “accrual of greater amounts of religious knowledge,” but the “transformation of learners into different kinds of Christian believers” (35). The author contends that theological education is, at heart, leadership development, and that this is never more so than with theological education for ministry. He lifts up assessment as a fundamentally significant element of teaching today, pointing out that, whereas educational institutions used to be rated in terms of their resources, student learning is now the barometer of a school’s effectiveness. More importantly, “the assessment paradigm makes teachers accountable for good learning instead of students accountable for good teaching” (50). And Aleshire reminds his readers that seminary faculty are the “most important texts their students read” (32). Theological education pays attention to subjects as well as to students. It focuses on interpretation, contextualization, performance, and formation, with students experiencing each, not in isolation, but in dynamic and symbiotic combinations.

Teaching and research in theological schools are two sides of the same coin. The criticisms that theological research is too often irrelevant and subjective may be met, Aleshire believes, by research that matters. He understands this to mean research that addresses particular agendas or needs in ecclesial communities, serves the broader purposes of religion, addresses wrongheaded tendencies in religious practices, and speaks to important human conditions. Such research will almost always result in thoughtful findings that will not die for lack of study or reading. Further, he sees the library as an important element or partner in the delivery of quality theological education.

Aleshire believes that theological schools will cease to exist if their systems of governance and administration are dysfunctional. He contends that a school cannot be great if good governance is lacking, and that trust is an indispensable element of a mutually profitable relationship between a school and its board. Yet, boards were intended to govern schools, not manage them; the latter responsibility rests with presidents and/or deans. He believes that the relatively low compensation scales for presidents of theological schools militates against getting top-notch scholars and leaders to accept the position, and is an issue that theological schools need to seriously examine.

Borrowing from the work of David Tiede, Aleshire says that theological schools serve the church in three ways: as abbey, academy, and apostolate. The concept of abbey underscores the relationship that exists between the church and theological schools. Aleshire points out what is glaringly obvious but often overlooked today, that “seminaries educate the leaders that ecclesial communities need,” and he asserts that theological schools are the “primary,” though not the only resource, the church has in attempting to sustain and renew its message and meaning. It behooves churches and theological schools, therefore, to value and strengthen their relationship with each other. Yet, “if theological schools are to serve the church as well in the future as they have in the past, change is going to be required” (139).

Particularly after the establishment of ATS in 1918, theological schools began to function more as academies than as abbeys, which primarily were institutions in remote, rural settings. As institutions of higher learning, theological schools, according to the author, face three critical issues: affordability, access, and accountability. Addressing each adequately calls for resolve and creativity.

The “apostolate” concept highlights the role of advocate that theological schools must play as Christianity undergoes dramatic changes globally. Writes Aleshire: “The Christian movement needs theological guidance, ministerial skill, sociological analysis, and congregational resources as it moves through these changes” (156). Our “discontinuous future with its multidirectional change” mandates that theological schools live up to their purpose of serving as arenas of learning, teaching, and theological research.

Aleshire’s subtitle, *Hopeful Reflections on the Work and Future of Theological Schools*, is intended to convey that, while the future is unpredictable, those associated with theological education must be resilient and irrepressible as they contemplate the future. To be sure, theological education may be different a quarter of a century from now, but we can be hopeful knowing that theological schools will adapt to the changing dynamics in an ever-changing world, and although theological schools may change more slowly than some academicians may wish, and more quickly than some church leaders may appreciate, in the end the change will serve all interested parties well.

This book should be required reading for seminary administrators, faculty, and boards. Each group will be given a better view of how the institution they serve can more effectively fulfill its mission, and what their role is in that process. True to the author’s intentions, the book is thoughtful, engaging, and highly readable.

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R. CLIFFORD JONES

Chilton, Bruce. *Abraham’s Curse: The Roots of Violence in Judaism*. New York: Doubleday, 2008. 259 pp. Paper, \$27.95.

Bruce Chilton begins with the day, in 1998, when a telephone call took him from home to a crime scene, near his church, where a young woman had died from a knife-blow to the throat. Later, during the killer’s successful insanity defense, the court learned that an obscure Afro-Caribbean religious rite—involving a god, a knife and a sacrifice—had provided motivation for the crime.

From here, Bruce Chilton’s compelling study goes on to explore how, in all three Abrahamic faiths, the Aqedah, or “binding” of Isaac, has itself helped foment religious violence. In the story, from Genesis 22, Abraham hears God commanding him to sacrifice Isaac, his only son, as a burnt offering. Abraham obeys, taking his son to the appointed place, then “binding him,” laying him on top of the wood, and raising his knife for the slaughter. The fact that God intervenes, and a ram dies instead of Isaac, has by no means diminished the honor bestowed on both father and son. The two of them became, in all three religious traditions, shining examples of faithfulness to God; the

one for being ready to kill his own child, the other for being ready to suffer martyrdom.

Examples of the story's impact follow. In their violent resistance to the foreign ruler Antiochus IV, for instance, Jews of the Maccabean movement inspired their fighters, and fighters' families with this story. Older Israelites could admire someone willing to sacrifice his child. Young men could look to Isaac for his willingness, out of loyalty to God, to die young.

Jesus called for self-sacrifice—or “readiness for martyrdom” (78)—and met with martyrdom himself. His Christian followers compared him with Isaac and came, as Heb 11:1-38 and 12:4 suggest, to see willingness for self-sacrifice as “the very substance of faith” (81, 90, 91). Patristic theology famously continued to venerate martyrdom, and made it into a “means of salvation for others” (105; cf. 124). Following the legalization of Christianity under an emperor (Constantine) who overlooked its nonviolence in his pursuit of military conquest, martyrs “became executioners as well as victims” (133). Christianity was now “state-sanctioned” and the orthodox could attack their competitors, including the Jews (134).

The Qur'anic Aqedah identifies “Ibrahim,” but does not name the son (though, over time, Islamic tradition came to favor the idea that it was Isma'il). Here the story's context is Ibrahim's conflict with his own people over idolatry. Amid all the difficulty, the Qur'an tells us, he had a “vision” of Allah's command that he sacrifice his son. And as in Gen 22, both father and son submitted; and again, at the last minute, the slaughter was averted.

Although Chilton condemns the hostile caricatures of Islam so commonplace in the West, he offers a forthright rehearsal of the movement's story. In the early seventh century, Muhammad began to receive revelations from Allah. In part because of pressure from local polytheists, he and his followers left Mecca for Medina in 622 C.E. Eight years later, still rock-solid in his monotheism and now the head of a small army, Muhammad returned to Mecca. By the time of his death ten years later, he had, through “preaching and conquest,” established his movement over much of the Arabian Peninsula (154).

The telling is forthright, but with a touch, nevertheless, of the fawning. Chilton assures us, for example, that religious hostility where Muhammad lived had by now made “military acumen” a basic survival strategy: a “pacifist perspective” was simply not an option (160). If later invocations of the Qur'anic Aqedah as backing for *martyrdom* are dubious (as he will argue), the fact remains that from the beginning the sword was an important element of Islamic practice. And to some degree this is, from Chilton's perspective, justifiable.

Each of the Abrahamic religions has appealed to the story of Abraham and his son in order to galvanize support for war. The “ethic of martyrdom” (196) prompted ferocious violence during the Crusades, during the Catholic-Protestant confrontations that followed the Reformation, during the horrific conflicts of the twentieth century. But Chilton makes a chapter-long argument, at the book's end, that neither the biblical story nor the Qur'anic one is really a call to human sacrifice. Both portray someone who interprets God's will mistakenly, and is then delivered from his mistake. For the Judeo-Christian

heritage, the breakthrough insight is God's "compassionate intervention" (203); for the heritage of Islam, it is God's leading "against the impulse" to offer human sacrifice (217).

Muhammad did make combat for the cause of Allah into "an article of faith," says Chilton, citing, for example, *Al Tambah* 9:19, 20 (215). But in contrast with some later Muslim interpreters, he did not use the Aqedah to glorify the sacrifice of young people. As for Jesus, the Gospels portray him *doubting* the need for martyrdom. And when he finally embraces it, it is not out of thoughtless "acquiescence" to an ideal. Jesus brings assessment of himself and his circumstances to the situation he is facing and makes his own "strategic choice" (209). It is here that one of the most striking sentences in the book appears. Chilton claims that "there is no doubt whatever but that the Christian tradition endorses the model of martyrdom that it inherited from Maccabean Judaism, and further develops that model" (209). The further development is that now, at the prospect of martyrdom, "insight into oneself and into the world" must come into play; life's business is "self-giving on behalf of others," and it can make no sense, in light of the Jesus story, to "mimic a single, heroic gesture" (210).

But is that the entire development? Doesn't the Sermon on the Mount (unmentioned in Chilton's book) suggest another, and still more radical, difference between the Jesus and Maccabean models?

It is hard to imagine that Chilton is unaware of the Radical Reformation or of the interpretive giants (John Howard Yoder, Stanley Hauerwas, James William McClendon Jr.) who, in the last 35 years, have given new prominence to its vision of nonviolent discipleship. Yet, whether out of obliviousness or obstinacy, he misses this—misses Jesus' unmistakable repudiation of the very violence that in all three of the Abrahamic religions martyrdom came, tragically, to embrace.

Arguably, Christianity alone among these religions has on the highest pedestal of authority someone who refuses the value of violent conquest even as he affirms the gift and wonder of life. That is a matter, of course, for further conversation, not least concerning the link Chilton finds in Islam between military action and religious faith. But from this generally provocative and valuable book, you wouldn't know that opportunity for conversation was even available.

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Coppedge, Allan. *The God Who Is Triune: Revisioning the Christian Doctrine of God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007. 345 pp. Paper, \$27.00.

In the current context of revived interest in Trinitarian studies, the debate between classical and open theism, and a rising interest in reconnecting biblical studies with Christian theology, Allan Coppedge undertakes a systematic exposition of the doctrine of God through the *trinity* of God rather than following the traditional pattern of discussing the existence and attributes of

God before the Trinity. In this strategic methodological reversal, Coppedge first addresses the doctrine of the Trinity and then lets the unfolding Trinitarian perspective affect the definition and explication of the attributes, roles, and work of God, particularly in creation and providence. In doing so, Coppedge reorders the attributes of God from the traditional classification (absolute, relative, personal, and moral) by placing God's personal attributes first. By making God's personal and moral characteristics primary, the role of God's relative and absolute attributes is modified, i.e., omnipotence, omniscience (foreknowledge), infinity, and immutability are reframed within a personal and moral context.

Integral to this methodology is how the person and work of Jesus compels a reconceptualizing of the nature of God. Jesus, Coppedge asserts, is the way into the progressive revelatory biblical understanding of "triune theism." "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made Him known" (John 1:1, 14, 18) and "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9) are hermeneutical. There is a finality and completeness in which God reveals himself in Jesus (Heb 1:1-3). If Jesus is the way of knowing God, then he becomes the key to organizing the NT material about the nature and personhood of God. This centering of the discussion of the nature of God in Jesus opens the way to understanding the OT monotheism of the triune God who reveals himself more fully in the NT as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Thus Coppedge begins with Jesus, moves to an understanding of the Trinity, and then develops the implications of beginning with the Trinity for understanding how God works in the world. Thirteen chapters unfold this progression. Chapters 1 and 2 touch on biblical foundations, with two suggestions for organizing the data, i.e., studying any passage that relates two persons of the Trinity together rather than limiting one's study only to passages that refer to all three persons; and taking literary *inclusio* seriously where NT books begin and end with references to two of the three persons of the Trinity. Chapter 3 unfolds the development of the Doctrine of the Trinity in light of implications of Eastern and Western foci in the discussion. Chapters 4 and 5 contrast how the Trinity may be approached in terms of God's relationships to the created order within himself as the *economic* or *ontological* Trinity. Chapters 6 to 8 place God's personal and moral characteristics as primary and hermeneutical in terms of understanding his absolute and relative attributes. Chapter 9 discusses the roles of God in terms of how the Trinity relates to the cosmos. Chapters 10 and 11 explore the relationship between the triune God and the world he created. Finally, chapters 12 and 13 unfold the doctrine of providence in view of God's direction of the world, his allowance of freedom, and encouragement for growth and maturity. Here foreknowledge, freedom, and providence are explored in terms of persons and freedom, both within the triune God and in relation to human beings.

The God Who Is Triune is very readable considering the conceptual difficulty of the Trinitarian doctrine and the philosophical/theological terms that Coppedge uses. The introduction is sufficiently engaging and suggestive so as

to pique interest toward reading further and to create openness on the part of the reader to the proscribed methodology as being not only sensible, but also right. Some portions of the ensuing material can be exhaustive in their coverage of the material, with evidence supporting Trinitarian theism being drawn from the whole corpus of biblical materials. However, in spite of this, the book is more theological and, at times, philosophical than it is a biblical study.

When Coppedge argues that how God relates *within himself* (ontological Trinity) should be consistent with what he has made known *about himself* (economic Trinity), he radically shifts the question from Does God exist? to What is God like? In doing so, the triune nature of God becomes apparent, and in that *trinity*, so does God's personhood. Not only does God's personhood become primary, but it naturally deserves priority of attention as well. Here Coppedge's methodology powerfully moves the discussion of the Trinity to some of the most profound and moving insights into the person of God—touching on God's being, his holiness, righteousness, and love in deeply personal perspectives rather than mere abstract or intellectual categories. His approach helps to illumine the doctrine of God (and all of theology for that matter) by adding a relational element to God's existence. God is a person in relationship—within the Trinity and with other persons whom he has created. Jesus becomes the key to understanding what it means to be a person. He reveals what a person is in both the divine and human senses. Jesus is the God-man who not only tells what God is like, but what God intends humanity to be. The implications for anthropology, theology, ethics, ecclesiology, salvation, sanctification, a personal relationship with God, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the life, are profound and engaging.

One of Coppedge's most stimulating and helpful discussions (chap. 9) explores the roles of the triune God and how through analogical language—particularly metaphor—the transcendent God makes himself known in the world. God uses human categories to help people understand him. Coppedge effectively demonstrates how the metaphors that imply the greatest degree of correspondence between God and symbols from this world are those taken from personal relationships. God's being, actions, and relationships are similar in many respects to humans'—both within himself and in relation to the world. Coppedge provides tables that outline the roles and subroles of God and that illustrate and underscore God's moral nature. The multiple images enable a more holistic and inviting picture of God. God's own personal and moral being reshapes these metaphors so as to become the standard for a new understanding of human being and roles. Here the organic link between the doctrine of the Trinity and moral life becomes both evident and forceful. The discussion becomes incredibly practical as it addresses particular ways in which this unique understanding of God informs faith and interpersonal relationships.

Ultimately Coppedge unfolds the implications of his methodology, bringing a balanced understanding of divine foreknowledge, freedom, and providence, along with the difference these understandings make for human freedom, choice, and being. While in some respects his final chapters are pastoral and practical by intent, they are, in effect, some of the more

theologically and philosophically reasoned parts of his work. By reminding the reader how the person of Jesus is key to understanding God, Coppedge opens the way for a Trinitarian theism that avoids the pitfalls of open theism, process theology, deism, pantheism, fatalism, and chance, as well as some of the rigid and rather impersonal perspectives of classical theism.

While most would not expect a book on the doctrine of the Trinity to do so, *The God Who Is Triune* will surprise readers who may have only tolerated the Trinity as a mere statement of faith and may cause them to actually embrace Trinitarianism. Coppedge's exposition of the entire doctrine of God based on a Trinitarian starting point is helpful. One finds an understanding of providence and freedom that entails inviting human persons to enter into genuine relations with God and each other in true freedom. I highly recommend this book as a great resource for both pastors and scholars. The implications of this study for contemporary moral life are incredible.

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Okoye, James Chukwuma. *Israel and the Nations: A Mission Theology of the Old Testament*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006. xx + 180 pp. Paper, \$28.00.

In *Israel and the Nations I*, James Chukwuma Okoye proposes a hermeneutic for studying mission in the OT. In the Foreword of the book, Okoye cites Carolyn Osiek, who concisely summarizes the problem: "What is the role of the Old Testament in Christianity? Is it only to prove the superiority of the Christian revelation, or to justify political claims without regard to contemporary suffering?" (xi).

The author assumes that readers come either with a mission background or a biblical background, but not both (xiv). He also claims that, by preserving the organic links between the Testaments without reducing one to the other, his book guards the integrity of the OT as the Word of God, although, writing from the Roman Catholic tradition, he recognizes as authoritative texts that are not included in the Jewish canon. He also employs the Documentary Hypothesis of the origin of the biblical text.

The author believes that Israel was not a missionary nation at the beginning, but became so later on. For him, the covenant between God and Israel was particularistic. Only when Israel opened up her covenant to include the Gentiles, did Israel become clearly missionary oriented. Until then only Israel was elected by God and election stands in tension with mission. Okoye insists that "such a focus is to be read not in isolation but in relation to internal transformations of the tradition that indicate that Israel's election had a missionary intention" (3). However, he is ready to accept Norman Gottwald's theory that Israel was formed in Canaan from oppressed peasants under the influence of the Moses group that came from Egypt simply because under such a scenario "election would be intimately connected with mission." He concludes that in the OT "the theme of mission shows itself to be the necessary accompaniment of that of election" (4).

Since “the Bible contains different models of mission operative in different faith communities at different times” (10), Okoye introduces his contribution to OT mission theology under four faces of mission: the universality of salvation and righteousness before YHWH, the “community-in-mission,” the centripetal mission, and the centrifugal mission.

Okoye finds the first face of mission in Gen 1–11, which explains why all the peoples of the earth need blessing as a result of curses on the soil, on the serpent, on Cain, and on Canaan. Although the author recognizes that the story could continue thus far only by God’s grace and forbearance, he believes that Abraham became the embodiment of this grace. Commenting on the reflexive and passive meanings of Abraham as the blessing for the nations (Gen 12:1-3), the author suggests that universalistic editorial input changed the text, for “earliest Israel did not yet understand the blessing of Abraham in a missionary and universalistic sense” (48).

Okoye argues that God never intended that Israel become an ethnic entity, separated from the Gentiles, but a spiritual one based on faith. He concludes that “the embers of mission would not glow in Israel until Israel rediscovered the primacy of righteousness of God, who freely calls all humanity to Godself” (54).

The second face of mission, the “community-in-mission,” assumes that all laws are considered part of the covenant between God and Israel or at least embedded within its context. Israel has to become a sacral worshipping covenant community, a model of a just society in the Promised Land. Israel’s covenant calls not only for separation from other nations, but aggregation to YHWH. As a “kingdom of priests,” Israel is a community-in-mission, serving others “by bringing them closer to God,” and serving God by “mediating God’s revelation and decrees to the community” (62). The implication is that the goal of election is mission, not salvation. The main duty of a priest, which is the doxology, becomes missiological. However, election proves to be no guarantee against divine retribution. When Israel manifested injustice and unrighteousness, and forgot its community-in-mission role, leading nonbelievers to disrespect God, it became God’s enemy.

The author believes that from the time of the exile God changed strategies in his relationship with people. Personal responsibility replaces corporate retribution, while divine surgery to replace peoples’ hearts precedes true repentance. Because there is no mention of the repossession of the land (Jer 31:31-34), all nations may discover themselves in the promise. The focus is solely on God’s character. Mission becomes the totality of God’s work—a work in which God’s people simply share.

The third face of mission, centripetal, is seen in the Psalms, which indicate that true worship leads to true society. God’s kingdom encompasses all nations, with Israel the medium through which the nations come to praise him. “God’s glory can be fully realized only when the families of nations share fully together in the worship of Yahweh and in life with Yahweh” (108).

Isaiah 2:2-5 is the classical text for centripetal mission in the OT. It is “the earliest expression of a belief in the eschatological glorification of Mount

Zion,” although Okoye believes it belongs to the (post-)exilic period (110). Mount Zion becomes the center of attraction, with a moral and spiritual focus rather than a geographical one. The nations come to the mountain by their own volition, attracted by the Torah revealed there. This Torah offers peace and fulfillment, and responds to the deepest human need.

The last face of mission, centrifugal, is found in Isa 56:1-8, the earliest mention of Gentiles religiously converting to YHWH based on an inclusive covenant. As a result, Egypt, Israel, and Assyria stand as blessings for the rest of the nations. Israel reaches its goal only when the blessing to bless is shared. This remnant of nations is defined not in national or ethnic terms, but in confessional language. Okoye also sees the centrifugal aspect of mission in Isa 66:19, in the sending of Jonah, and in the activity of the Jewish Diaspora in Egypt.

Finally, Okoye proposes that we read mission in the OT from a diversity of angles and allow for at least the four faces of mission. Although the author works with historical-critical presuppositions, *Israel and the Nations* represents an attempt to read the OT from an ecumenical and postmodern perspective. This makes integration of the four themes difficult, each floating on its own. However, the book provides interesting insights and angles, thereby making it an attractive reading. I recommend the book for seminary students who previously studied mission theology in the OT and for professors of mission.

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CRISTIAN DUMITRESCU

Osiek, Carolyn, and Margaret Y. MacDonald, with Janet H. Tulloch. *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006. 345 pp. Paper, \$21.00.

In *A Woman's Place*, Carolyn Osiek and Margaret Y. MacDonald combine their considerable knowledge of women and families in early Christianity and the Greco-Roman world to produce a fascinating work that pushes the boundaries of our consideration of women in early Christianity into new areas. Moving beyond more general important works such as *Women in Christian Origins* (Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo) and *Women and Christianity* (Mary T. Malone), *A Woman's Place* uses the growing insights of classicists about women and families in the Greco-Roman world to delve into the specific area of women in house churches in the earliest years of the church.

The authors refuse to assume earlier stereotypes such as the complete relegation of Greco-Roman women to a position of little influence who were hidden away in the private sphere of the home. Neither do they presume early Christianity's opposition to, or participation in, the treatment of women by the world. Instead, they produce a nuanced study that allows the primary documents to speak for themselves in conversation with the plethora of recent work on these subjects. In general, they deal carefully with the extensive gaps in historical data, creating hypotheses about what was likely the case, while pointing out the limited level of certainty available. Two aspects of

this study are particularly valuable. The first is the amount of material they have brought together and analyzed from Greco-Roman and early Christian primary sources. The second is the creative way in which they have framed and considered this material.

In the first three chapters, Osiek and McDonald examine the experience of women as wives, childbearers, and mothers within the house church and the way in which their presence and the presence of their children impacted the house church. The authors demonstrate how closely these primary Christian gatherings were linked to the life of the family in a sphere managed largely by women. Often these women found themselves in circumstances differing from the idealized Christian prescriptions. Thus the house churches seem to have been permeated by the presence of children and a wide variety of family concerns. Another chapter deals with the continuing practice of slavery in Christian households, discussing the slim evidence regarding the influence of Christian teaching on the treatment of female slaves. The first portion of the book concludes with a discussion of the idealized household code of Eph 5, showing how the counsel to husbands and wives reflects a desire to protect against a negative view of the church on the part of unbelievers, while at the same time inserting messages about Christian identity centered on the metaphor of wife as pure and holy *ekklēsia*.

The last portion of the book looks more specifically at how women were involved in leadership in the house churches. The generally accepted leadership of women within the home is placed alongside the evidence of women leading house churches to discuss the extent of women's influence on the Christian assemblies within their homes, particularly in the context of meals. One chapter considers the leadership of women at third-century Christian funerary banquets as depicted in a catacomb near Rome. Another discusses the widespread practice of woman as patrons in both the Greco-Roman world and the early church, which did not apparently differ much in practice between men and women. A final chapter looks at the way in which women were involved as agents of Christian expansion. For a few notable women, this is recognized to be through leadership, prophecy, and teaching, but evidence is given that most often it took place through the natural activities of caring for children and those in need, and social interactions in the neighborhood and marketplace.

There were places in the book where I found myself questioning a suggested interpretation, such as the liturgical interpretation of the words included in the Roman catacomb paintings, or the degree to which a woman's place as manager of household affairs would have automatically given her a leadership role in a church meeting in her home. But all in all I found it a well-written and stimulating work that enriched my understanding of women in the Greco-Roman world, and which helped to shine a helpful light upon a central aspect of the lives of women and of early Christians in general.

Perdue, Leo G. *The Sword and the Stylus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. x + 502 pp. Paper, \$38.00.

Leo Perdue introduces his reconstruction of the historical contexts of Hebrew wisdom with a prolegomenon ample in both its definition of wisdom and its review of wisdom literature and practice across the ANE and beyond (Egypt, Mesopotamia, Ugarit, Aram, Greece). Still establishing the general background for his study of the ancient Hebrew material, he follows his discussion of texts, terms, and themes—in those territories—with a discussion on wisdom's social character and the sages' roles. Unlike his opening remarks on ancient wisdom texts, this phase of his introduction does cover the Israelite and Judean situations. A concluding section on the rhetoric of the biblical material elaborates, with examples, on the variety of literary forms featured in seven different genres Perdue has earlier mentioned in his definition of "wisdom" (7). The seven genres are: wisdom sayings (proverbs, comparisons, beatitudes, "better than" sayings, abominations, and numerical sayings); teaching/instruction, aimed at inculcating moral behavior; aesthetic works (wisdom psalms, poetically crafted didactic poems); dialogues (Job being the best known); collections ("sayings of" such as Prov 1:1; 10:1; 25:1; Qoh 12:11); narratives of model sages (Joseph, Gen 37-50; Baruch, Jer 36, 45, 1 Baruch); and, finally, lists (e.g., cosmological elements, Job 38-39; animals, Job 40-41; wisdom's characteristics, Wis 7:21-23). The author also touches on key terms of Hebrew wisdom equivalent to those discussed earlier in connection with Greco-Roman culture and Greek wisdom and philosophy.

Entering on his main thesis, Perdue's correlations of Hebrew wisdom and historicopolitical context begin with the book of Proverbs, which he dates to the time of the Israelite and Judahite monarchy; he dates Job to the Neo-Babylonian Empire, except for its wisdom hymn (chap. 28) and Elihu speeches, both of which he considers reflections of postexilic period. The hymn shows Second Temple piety in its identification of wisdom with the fear of God. Elihu's sentiments, from the same historical period, are those of a dissatisfied sage representing "a marginalized community on the periphery of political and religious power" (139). Perdue finds the Wisdom Psalms to be a Persian product, while Qoheleth is consigned to Ptolemaic times. He locates Apocryphal Ben Sira and Wisdom of Solomon to the Seleucid era and Roman Empire respectively, finding their special contribution to Hebrew wisdom to be the notion of a divinely directed national history and the concept of immortality. Three chapters on "Continuing Streams" separately consider rabbinic wisdom, the general influence of apocalyptic on wisdom, and its particular impact at Qumran. The final eighty-one pages of Perdue's thesis consist of copious indices on modern authors consulted, ancient literature referenced, and biblical texts cited.

Perdue has written this book on wisdom and empire out of conviction that wisdom's proper understanding requires a mental move "out of the realm of philosophical idealism and into the realistic dimensions of history and social construction" (3). By conceding that wisdom literature, like historical reconstruction, is an act of the imagination (4), Perdue makes room for

individual idiosyncrasy. More substantively, he thus locates today's wisdom scholarship within the tradition of the ancient sages, who called on their own sapiential imagination to shape a cosmology and social world that were theologically coherent, ethically attractive, and morally compelling (5). The discipline they practiced, articulated, and documented in written literature signifies multiple elements inclusive of much more than data—the knowledge acquired through empirical experience, rational thought, and comparative analysis. Beyond mere data, wisdom comprehended the ability to acquire both theoretical and practical information and belief in a cosmic system of morality and order. Wisdom involved an investigative approach that sought to discover, expose, and rationalize the inherent order in creation, society, human thought, and human behavior. Finally, ancient wisdom was the province of privilege and the servant of empire, particularly through its schools, royal, prophetic, or otherwise, functioning as they did as one of wisdom's primary social locations (70). This servitude involved both the ideological articulation of poet-scribes, who justified the status quo, and the shaping of future generations of rulers—through scribal instruction to maturing royalty.

There is much to acknowledge in Purdue's sociological analysis. There is also sufficient room for disagreement, including, for example, and by his own acknowledgement, the precise dates and settings of the very texts he has dated and set (412). Beyond this, many of the themes he defines as wisdom's focus—providence, divinely led history, beauty, and practical morality—seem readily recognizable as foci of the prophetic genres. Moreover, his identification of YHWH as the center of the wisdom writers' imaginations (6) emphasizes in compelling terms wisdom's affinity with other allegedly more spiritual biblical genres, even as Purdue develops his thesis on secular politics and power struggle as textual nexus. Purdue may or may not believe that Yahweh was a product of the sages' imagination. But his work on wisdom hews much more closely to the traditional categories than does that of T. A. Perry (*God's Twilight Zone: Wisdom in the Hebrew Bible* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008]), who finds that Noah, Tamar, Pharaoh, Judah, Saul, Esther, and more are either positive or negative models of biblical wisdom. And yet both Purdue and Perry run the risk of defining away the biblical wisdom genre in the brilliance of their individual idiosyncracies, and their willingness to break new ground.

Finally, Purdue contends that to accomplish their intellectual objectives, the ancient sages had to move beyond “hidebound Aristotelian logic and empirical testing” to “esthetic description and expression” that produced language combining logic with beauty (5). This affirming tone on the sages' liberating move from Aristotelian categories raises its own wonder as to when the Hebrew sages and biblical writers in particular, might have experienced the need for such liberation, or whether, in fact, it may be the practitioners of current scholarship who need to be delivered from the categories of our own intellectual history in order to properly access the mindset of the ancient composers of the Hebrew Bible.

Perry, T. A. *God's Twilight Zone: Wisdom in the Hebrew Bible*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008. xxi + 208 pp. Paper, \$19.95.

T. A. Perry's iconoclastic *tour de force* attempts to explore a biblical zone of obscurity in order to design a new and much more pervasive wisdom than the one familiar to most Hebrew Bible students. It is a wisdom that begins at the beginning, with three chapters and ten different discussions based on Genesis. That book is evidently, for Perry, definitive of biblical wisdom. The author has accorded it much honor in the present treatise for it occupies the introductory position, is the focus of three chapters—a third of the book's nine, and spans more than a quarter of the book's analysis and commentary. Perry's principal focus is the term *tsaddik*, attributed to Noah in Gen 6:9. The term is common in biblical wisdom literature with that more than a quarter of all its Hebrew Bible uses found in three Solomonic sections of Proverbs. For Perry, the term refers, more than anything else, to the one who is for life, for preservation of seed, and for facilitating the blessing of Gen 1:28 that ensures humanity's fruitfulness, multiplication, and replenishing of the earth.

Following treatments of Noah, Tamar, and Pharaoh in Genesis, Perry progresses to Samson, whose proclivity for riddles suggests to our author "an evolutionary model for the origins of wisdom itself" (xix). With Francis Landy (*Semeia* 32 [1984]:131-48), Perry sees Samson as a "border" figure communicating between Philistine and Israelite worlds, consumed, at last, by that marginality. Perry puts this characterization to good use in developing his "twilight zone" metaphor as he emphasizes both the ambivalence that is and that engenders biblical wisdom as well as the pervasiveness of the phenomenon.

The book's fifth chapter, on Saul, emphasizes the first king's personal insecurities, while at the same time expanding "the dimensions of [his] importance" (89) and showing how three verses in 1 Samuel [10:11, 12; 19:24] provide the paradigm of proverb formation. Solomon, the subject of chapter 6, brings readers to the more familiar wisdom territory, where they continue through to the end, with three final chapters on Ps 1, Qoh 12:1-8, and Prov 30:18-20. The book is rounded out with a brief excursus ("Righteousness in the *Ethics of the Fathers*") whose final note reiterates what Perry argues in chapter 7, viz., that "God's and Israel's righteousness is of one kind and continuous" (182). Supplementary materials include two pages of abbreviations of sources, a preface, and seven pages of introduction, as well as twenty-six pages of bibliography, indices of names and subjects, ancient sources, and Hebrew words.

Perry's stimulating study may be well informed by the rabbinical material, but it is surely no place of convention. Perry's learning permits him, conceptually and methodologically, to be his own character, as idiosyncratic as his Saul or Samson. Conceptually, his understanding of wisdom allows for a range of champions including Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Judah, Tamar, and Joseph. It is a range clearly beyond the scholarly consensus that now excludes such characters as Joseph and Esther, finding that their inclusion requires "too loose" a use of terms (Michael Fox, *Proverbs*, Anchor Bible, 2000, 17,

n. 25). Methodologically, some may find that he has inverted the process of arriving at his conclusions, working with a preferred definition rather than extracting it from the wisdom texts before making his global application.

Inversion and topsy-turvy are, of course, Perry's stock in trade: his King Saul must be more important than has usually been granted; his Pharaoh's worries about Israel (Exod 1:10) are not primarily in military terms but rather in agricultural and productive ones (49); his proverbs are not timeless wisdom (90)—though one wonders now if they must then be timeless trivia or folly, for they are surely timeless; his Qoh 12 is neither allegory nor altogether literal; and his Tamar becomes the crowning simile of righteousness: Ps 92:12 should be translated "The righteous shall flourish like Tamar," *tamar* being both the proper name and the term for "palm tree." Enthusiasm for Tamar seems to specifically name her as more righteous than even Noah. This last may either be inadvertent or intentional. Only our text can tell, whose table of contents lists "Noah the Tsaddik," followed immediately by "Tamar the Greater Tsaddik." Tamar is, of course, by Judah's admission, more righteous than he (Gen 38:26). But Perry's definitions may allow incest and that which Habakkuk curses to be deemed "righteous" even if only "in a compromised way" (39), because Lot's daughters succeed in preserving seed by intoxicating their father (see Hab 2:15). Clearly much compromise is involved in Perry's radical definitions.

Characterization of Saul as modest, not knowing power, having no taste for it, loving his enemy David, is equally dubious (89), given the conceit and disobedience of 1 Sam 15, the slaughter of priests in 1 Sam 22, the arrogant insensitivity of 1 Sam 14:24-45, and the ruthless attacks on and pursuit of David (1 Sam 18:6-19:24). Nor is Saul's story in any way a narrative of "rags to riches." Saul's deferential attitude before Samuel and the crowd assembled to choose a king should not be confused with notions of poverty. Saul was not poor (1 Sam 9:1-3).

In the end, though, because he is both learned and independent, Perry's work provides a noteworthy example of constant dialogue with the biblical text, the sources of Jewish tradition, and the world of contributors to biblical scholarship. He is neither merely reflecting the views of others, nor repeating well-known traditions. Neither is he necessarily affirming established scholarly consensus. Those who find it fascinating to follow a brilliant mind at work will experience a great thrill even if they stumble a bit in Perry's twilight zone.

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LAEL CAESAR

Schneider, Tammi J. *Mothers of Promise: Women in the Book of Genesis*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 240 pp. Paper, \$21.99.

Most of the women in the book of Genesis are known by stigmatizing labels: Sarah as mean in regard to Hagar; Potiphar's wife being marked as a liar. But are these legitimate representations?

Tammi Schneider's purpose is to show that "women's roles in the narrative are more than just footnotes to the men" (10). Schneider, who is Professor

of Religion at Claremont Graduate University, asserts that women are just as important in the fulfillment of the divine promises as men (*Sarah: Mother of Nations* [New York: Continuum, 2004]). Women furthermore are markers of the status of society (*Judges* [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000]). Schneider indeed esteems the role of women highly, as seen in her thesis for *Mothers of Promise*. “The data reveal that *women* in Genesis *determine* who receives the promise from the Israelite Deity” (11, emphasis supplied). “Many details about the female characters shape the descriptions and actions of the male characters. In order to understand the role and function of the male characters, and of the Israelite Deity, we must pay attention to the fine details, role and function of the female characters” (13). And these details are what Schneider attempts to provide in this rather encyclopedic work on the women of Genesis.

The discussion of the female characters in *Mothers of Promise* is divided into four parts. The women treated in each category are all those who are the singular subject of at least one verb. Part 1 discusses the “Matriarchs”: Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel. Part 2 treats “Mothers of Potential Heirs (or Slaves, Concubines, Daughters, and Daughters-in-Law)”: Hagar, Esau’s Wives, Zilpah, Bilhah, Dinah, Mrs. Judah, Tamar, and Asenath. Part 3 includes “Mothers Who Predate the Promise”: Eve, Adah and Zillah, Milcah, Mrs. Lot, and Lot’s Daughters. Part 4 considers “Women Who Do Not Bear”: The Woman in the Garden, Deborah, and Mrs. Potiphar. Each part ends with a summary, and the overall conclusion asserts that “who the mother is controls the destiny of the children” (217).

Each woman in the book of Genesis receives a separate chapter, which begins with a systematic description of the female character and then uses a “verbing the character” approach to discuss each woman from two grammatical perspectives: as the subject of a verb or verbs, and as the object of either verbs or prepositional phrases. This is followed by an analysis of the woman’s specific relationships and a short conclusion. Thus the author gives a detailed but rather technical description of each woman.

All occurrences for each character are filtered out from the greater work of Genesis and brought together. This singular treatment of each woman brings into sharp focus her specific contribution to the whole narrative. Furthermore, although the discussion is rather technical, it does bring out a character description, based on all available data from the text that can bring new insights to the reader on who these women were and what they accomplished.

Since Schneider has done previous work on Sarah, the chapter dedicated to this matriarch is somewhat more extensive than the others. This chapter, more so than in the others, makes assumptions that do not appear to directly emerge from the text itself: “The reference to Pharaoh treating her as a wife implies that Abraham is not concerned about guarding sexual access to Sarah. Sarah cannot bear children, which is apparently the one thing her husband wants” (26). Although positive aspects are mentioned elsewhere, the somewhat negative tone toward the role of men in relationship to women is not limited to this example.

In order to let the role of the women play out more distinctly, the author has chosen not to use the modern name “God” in this work. Where the original Hebrew uses the Tetragrammaton YHWH, she uses “the Deity” or “the Israelite Deity.” Occurrences of *Elohim* are simply transliterated. By thus attempting to place God on an equal level with the other players in the narrative, she seeks to give the female characters greater independence of choice and action. The question, however, is to what extent the women themselves viewed their role as independent as Schneider describes, and also whether the text itself would allow for this.

The emphasis on the independence of women is characteristic of a feminist hermeneutic, which classically holds that what is said in the text concerning women needs to be expanded because of an assumed underreporting on women. Schneider claims, however, that with her verb-ing-the-character approach, close reading of the text itself, and bringing together of all the scattered textual data concerning a character, the classical feminist textual expansion is unnecessary because the text itself already supports the feminist position. But that conclusion is still a matter of interpretation of the available information that is gleaned from the text.

The contribution of *Mothers of Promise* is that it places the action and choices of women in the book of Genesis in perspective by giving a more synthesized view of each female character. Filtering out and bringing together all the relevant data concerning a specific woman brings to life the person behind the name and provides a deeper understanding of her experiences, character, and role in the text. Even though after reading the book one might not agree with Schneider’s thesis, presuppositions, or conclusions, she has provided a useful resource for textual studies by gathering together the bits and pieces of information on female characters in the book of Genesis.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

IWAN VOERMAN

Strong, Cynthia A., and Meg Page, eds. *A Worldview Approach to Ministry Among Muslim Women*. Pasadena: Wm. Carey Library, 2007. 354 pp. Paper, \$19.99.

Cynthia Strong is an Associate Professor of Missiology at Simpson University in Redding, California, who has served as a missionary in Korea and the Philippines. Meg Page has served among Muslims in Asia for seventeen years and continues to facilitate women’s ministry to Muslims through encouragement, prayer mobilization, and leadership-training materials. There are seventeen contributors to this book.

A Worldview Approach is divided into four parts. The first part deals with foundational issues of Muslim cultures, providing anthropological tools useful to understand how a Muslim family is organized and functions and what role the values of shame and honor play in the Muslim worldview. It also provides the necessary theological background for understanding the following chapters. Jesus Christ is presented as the one to cleanse shame, to rescue women from the world of magic, and to heal their hearts’ wounds and scars. His incarnational strategy is offered as a model for those who would

like to understand and be effective in ministry to Muslim women. A Christian response is offered to spirit beliefs, incantations, and power words. The three worldviews are then compared: honor/shame, guilt/righteousness, and power/fear, as well as suggestions about how to respond to dynamic family laws in a Muslim society and culture.

The second part of the book deals with case studies, which help us to understand the Muslim worldview, covers eight Muslim worldview groups including: educated and less-educated, urban and suburban, from the regions of the Arabic peninsula, sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, Russia, China, and South Asia. Special case studies deal with Wahhabi and Sufi women. The last case study offers insights into the search for identity of immigrant Muslim women to the West. Special emphasis is given to how the family, religious, and social structures impact women's worldviews, and how such worldviews influence evangelism, discipleship, and mission. Cultural and worldview elements are appraised in their context, such as time, space, relationships, purity, and folk beliefs. Barriers to and bridges between the Christian and Muslim worldviews have been identified, as well, while strategies, models, and methods that have worked in Christian outreach to the Muslim world are analyzed and recommended. Each case study opens with an introduction to the particular worldview presented.

Part 3 analyzes strategic issues related to ministry among Muslim women. Issues range from using the Qur'an for apologetics and witness, signs and symbols in the land, how to communicate Christ in the context of persecution, and how to disciple believers with Muslim backgrounds and develop leaders among them. A special emphasis is placed on oral communication. Three models of leadership are presented, one for North African Kabyle women in France, the second for women working among lower- and middle-class women believers in Suriname, while the third model comes from Southeast Asia and is contextualized for the persecuted church.

The last section of the book presents six case studies of Christian women working in Muslim cultural and social environments and facilitates a worldview transition for the Muslim women they are working with by using the applied incarnational model.

A Worldview Approach to Ministry among Muslim Women is an excellent and balanced introduction to an aspect of ministry that was considered taboo until recently. The worldview approach gives the best view from "under the veil." I recommend the book for both the practitioner and the scholar who want to deepen their understanding of ministry among Muslim women as well as to understand their own cultural and religious barriers.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

CRISTIAN DUMITRESCU

Swearingen, Marc Alden. *Tidings Out of the Northeast: A General Historical Survey of Daniel 11*. Coldwater, MI: Remnant Publications, 2006. 272 pp. Paper, \$14.95.

Marc Alden Swearingen is currently the pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hickory, North Carolina. Previously he worked two years as a full-

time evangelist and four years on the pastoral team of a larger church. He earned a B.A. in Anthropology and History from the University of Maine in 1991 and an M.A. in Religion-Evangelism from Southern Adventist University in 2004. *Tidings out of the Northeast: A General Historical Survey of Daniel 11* proposes historical and contemporary matches to provide a historicist interpretation that is easy to understand for lay people and that clarifies the role of God's people in the end time. The book is an important contribution because during recent years, Adventist scholars in general have been very reluctant to interpret Dan 11, especially its last six verses.

In chapters 2–6, the author briefly interprets the prophecies of Dan 2, 7, and 8, as well as Rev 13 and 17. The historicist interpretation sees these prophecies running in parallel throughout history to the establishment of God's kingdom at the second coming of Christ. Here Swearingen offers a summary of the interpretations made by recent and past Adventist scholars and writers. His review of Rev 17 draws more from Roman Catholic sources and the writings of Ellen G. White.

Chapter 7 identifies “transitional points” in Dan 11 that connect them with the parallel prophecies reviewed in chapters 2–6. The passages that serve as transition points are Dan 11:2-3 (Media-Persian Empire, 539-331 B.C.); 11:4 (four Hellenistic empires, 301-330 B.C.); 11:20 (Pagan Rome and Augustus, 27 B.C.–14 A.D.); 11:21-22 (Pagan Rome and Tiberius, 14-37 A.D.); 11:31 (Papacy, desolating power, 538 A.D.); 11:33-37 (Papal dominance, 538-1798 A.D.); 11:40 (Time of the end, beginning in 1798).

Chapters 8–13 provide an exposition of Dan 11:1-39. Swearingen's historical explanations in chapters 8–12 parallel the positions found in the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Uriah Smith's *Daniel and Revelation*, and Alonzo T. Jones's *The Two Republics*, with some reference to historical works. Chapter 13 draws extensively from historical works and Roman Catholic sources.

Chapter 13 argues that the identity of the king of the north should be the same both before and after Dan 11:39. Swearingen follows the interpretations of James White and Louis Were by, for example, connecting the king of the north with the little horn (Dan 7–8), and identification of the man of sin (2 Thess 2:3).

Chapters 15–20 focus on Dan 11:40-45 and 12. Like most Adventist expositors, Swearingen interprets “the time of the end” as beginning around 1798. He agrees with several others in identifying the king of the south (in Dan 11:40-45) as Soviet atheistic communism. However, he is in the minority, or even alone, when he interprets the “glorious land” as “all faithful Christians.” He considers the symbols for “worldly people,” “members of non-Christian religions,” and “spiritual Babylonians” to be the ancient nations Edom, Moab, and Ammon. The land of Egypt is identified as the “remaining communist countries,” the Libyans and Ethiopians as symbols of the “Islamic religion.” The “glorious mountain” is seen to be the 144,000 who are faithful to the biblical Sabbath. The “tabernacles of his palace” is understood as the union of church and state, and the phrase “between the seas” is seen as a reference to “Sunday laws in all nations of the world.” The “tidings from the east and

north” are interpreted as the “loud cry of the three angel’s messages” (Rev 14:6-12; 18:1-4). Finally, chapters 21 and 22 give a paraphrase of Dan 11 and summarize the results of the study.

Among other interpretations, Adventism has witnessed two major approaches to the text: a history-oriented approach, focusing on an actual, temporal fulfillment; and a Scripture-oriented search for the actual meaning of the biblical text. The author attempts to build a bridge between those approaches by first constructing a biblical framework and only then searching for fulfillments in historical time. Comparing parallel prophecies to find similarities or “transitional points” is a substantial step in that direction.

However, when Swearingen uses topical rather than verbal or terminological parallels, he enters unsafe ground. Topical parallels can easily lead the interpreter to make artificial connections. He also tends to read details of one passage into another that does not cover exactly the same ground. For instance, Rev 17 and Dan 11 partly cover the same historical period but do not necessarily talk about the same events, as Swearingen would like to suggest. Another is his discovery of Sunday legislation in Dan 11:45. Since there are almost no terminological parallels to 11:40-45, an investigation of the OT background of the terms involved is essential.

Sometimes explanations are given without providing sufficient exegetical or historical support. For example, although the explanation of “ten toes” (21) is regularly employed in evangelistic presentations on Dan 2, the text itself neither provides the number of “toes” nor does it give any prophetic detail about them. The explanation of the toes as ten kingdoms is an inference, read back from the information given in Dan 7. Further, assuming that Dan 2, 7, and 8 are parallel prophecies, the author concludes that the powers in Dan 7 have to be the same as in Dan 2 (17). Without careful documentation, this can appear to be circular reasoning.

The author uses several arguments that are not compelling. He is correct that the term for “cleave” in Dan 2:43 also occurs in the Hebrew of Gen 2:24 (14), but the Hebrew term for “cleave” is used in a variety of contexts. The context of Dan 2:43 does not immediately suggest a marriage background. The marital meaning of “cleave” is possible, but not necessary.

The last part of the book (chaps. 15–22) uses almost no exegetical sources. Yet, this is the part of the book that deals specifically with Dan 11:40-45. The number of references to historical and contemporary works, newspaper reports, and quotations from the writings of Ellen G. White rises sharply in these chapters. Swearingen freely associates statements of White that are not at all related to Dan 11:40-45 or the chapter in general as explanations of these verses. The fixing of specific dates for prophetic dates to occur (e.g., 1929, 1989, 1991) to certain phrases in the text is exegetically vague (186).

Swearingen interprets the “Libyans” and the “Ethiopians” of v. 43 as a symbol of “Islamic religion” (216). Since in ancient times, however, these nations were related to and often fought beside the Egyptians, it seems just as logical to interpret them as confederated atheistic powers. Another example of a less-than-compelling argument would be the “glorious holy mountain”

interpreted as the 144,000 (228). Although Rev 14:1 presents the 144,000 as standing on Mount Zion, the 144,000 are not identical with Mount Zion. Since “Mount Zion” and “the holy mountain of God” are expressions that are often used to refer to God’s dwelling place, his temple, or Jerusalem (Pss 2:6; 3:4; Isa 27:13; 56:7; Ezek 20:40; 28:14; Dan 9:16, 20), an interpretation of the “glorious holy mountain” as God’s heavenly dwelling place or his heavenly sanctuary would be more convincing.

Tidings out of the Northeast: A General Historical Survey of Daniel 11 fulfills its promise to give a historical survey, but the tone of the book is generally more popular than scholarly. It lacks a deeper exegetical foundation and succumbs to the temptation of reading historical reports into the biblical text, especially in Dan 11:40-45. Nevertheless, the book remains useful in that it provides more material on Dan 11 than any other extensive historicist work and suggests a commendable procedure in connecting Dan 11 to other prophecies.

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DENIS KAISER

Tutsch, Cindy. *Ellen White on Leadership: Guidance for Those Who Influence Others*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2008. 159 pp. Hardcover, \$16.99.

Cindy Tutsch, who holds a D.Min. in Leadership from Andrews University, is an associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, Maryland. One of the primary responsibilities of her position is to promote among youth and young adults an understanding of and appreciation for Ellen G. White. A key component in this endeavor is bringing White into the twenty-first century and helping postmoderns discover how she speaks to issues that matter to them. In this book, Tutsch translates White’s counsel on leadership from its nineteenth-century milieu into the current dialogue about leadership.

The relevance of leadership issues in a postmodern world is shown by the proliferation of leadership books published in the late twentieth century. The exponential increase in literature on leadership seems to be even more marked near the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century. So why add another book to the seemingly endless number of leadership books already published? Tutsch’s book fills two clear voids that exist in this arena. First, very little on leadership has been published from a specifically Adventist perspective. Thus Adventist leaders do not have a good tool to help them filter through various leadership theories and determine which ones may just be passing fads and which ones are built on eternal truth. Second, though a small compilation of White writings on leadership exists, it does not provide the broader theoretical and experiential background that Tutsch provides in this compilation and commentary.

Throughout the seven chapters of the book, Tutsch places White in conversation with contemporary thought leaders on leadership such as John Kotter, John Maxwell, Richard Greenleaf, Ray Anderson, Rick Warren, and others, and shows how her leadership principles speak with transcendent clarity to the leadership issues of today. In fact, she suggests that White speaks with perhaps even greater clarity to the underlying issue that fuels the

enormous interest of postmoderns in leadership theory: a desire for meaning in life. Tutsch shows that one of White's unique contributions to leadership theory is her focus on the Spirit. White argues more strongly than any of the other authors in her book that a leader must be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Thus time spent with God in Scripture study and prayer is central to the life of the leader. It is through a living connection with Jesus Christ that leaders draw meaning and purpose for their life and leadership.

Tutsch calls attention to another of White's unique contributions: she grounded both her theoretical and experiential understanding of leadership in a worldview built on the concept of cosmic controversy and the second coming of Jesus Christ. Tutsch demonstrates how the theme of a cosmic struggle between Christ and Satan formed the foundation for all of White's spiritual and practical counsel on leadership. Additionally, she explains how the present expectation of the second coming of Jesus Christ formed the framework for White's understanding of visioning, empowerment, and leadership process.

Each chapter ends with a section titled "Practicing What She Preached." A core value of postmoderns is authenticity. In these sections, Tutsch spotlights White's authenticity, showing that she did not just promote theories of leadership, but also lived out in her own life the principles she promoted. This section also helps to provide a glimpse of the historical context of White's leadership thought.

Tutsch brings White's voice to bear on two leadership issues important to postmoderns: inclusive empowerment and social action. She presents evidence that White promoted leadership empowerment that was race-, gender-, and age-inclusive. While much of contemporary leadership literature focuses on gender inclusivity in leadership, little focuses on racial or age inclusiveness. Tutsch shows that, for White, social activism is not an option for a leader. She points out that White gave more counsel to leaders on care for the poor, the needy, and the marginalized than on any other topic.

Tutsch's conclusions could be strengthened by analyzing the context in which each quotation originated. However, her purpose is to make the book user-friendly to a broad and diverse readership—people in the entire spectrum of leadership. She convincingly argues that, in White's view, the act of becoming a Christian gives every believer the responsibility to develop leadership skills. Every Christian is expected to lead to Christ those within their sphere of influence, whether that sphere of influence is the family, the school, the neighborhood, the workplace, or the local or global church.

Tutsch has produced a reader-friendly book that is accessible to anyone interested in leadership regardless of their background in leadership theory. This book will enable readers to filter through all of the voices on leadership and to ground their own leadership on eternal biblical truth and not just the latest craze or trend.

Wuthnow, Robert. *After the Baby Boomers*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007. xviii + 298 pp. Hardcover, \$29.95.

Robert Wuthnow is a sociologist at Princeton University and a sought-after author. His previous works include *Growing Up Religious: Christians and Jews and Their Journeys of Faith* (2000), and *Acts of Compassion: Caring for Others and Helping Ourselves* (1993), for which he was awarded a Pulitzer nomination.

Wuthnow's latest book, *After the Baby Boomers*, focuses on the current generation of young adults and their attitudes to religion, and how being or not being religious shapes the different aspects of their lives. He does this by sketching a picture of the American young-adult population (21 to 45 years) and their relationship to religion in chapters 1–5. In subsequent chapters, he takes a closer look at the religious lives of young adults: their spirituality (chap. 6), faith and family (chap. 7), the effect of religion on politics (chap. 8), emerging trends in the effect of immigration on religion and vice versa (chap. 9); and the use of the Internet and its effects on religion (chap. 10). He concludes with a chapter on youthful congregations.

Wuthnow seeks to explain “how twenty- and thirty-somethings are shaping the future of American religion.” He does this by statistical analysis of data extracted from General Social Surveys over the last thirty-five years. Comparing the 1970s to the years 2000–2002, he provides a variety of different graphs explaining the being and doing of young adults. These statistics give a clear overview of the religious attitudes of young adults and are easily interpretable. He also provides an expanded explanation on each of these charts.

Among the apparent differences between 1970 and 2000 are the lifestyle choices affecting marriage (marrying at an older age as compared to 1970), children (fewer), and higher education (increased attendance, especially of women). These lifestyle differences are reflected in the religious experiences of the twenty- and thirty-somethings, resulting in declining church participation, a shift in orthodox beliefs (more young adults in the twenty-first century believe in life after death, but fewer believe in either God or Jesus), more church shopping, and rising involvement in virtual churches, i.e., “Web site[s] or chat room[s] to which people come to worship” (213).

Besides these charts, and the information they provide, short anecdotes taken from qualitative interviews also provide interesting insights about the particular population described (e.g., a single female who was the only twenty-something attending her Baptist church) (69). These stories give a face to the impersonal numbers and percentages; however, they are, unfortunately, too infrequent. They give little hint of *why* young adults leave the church, a question statistics cannot always answer. Wuthnow tries to give explanations and answers to different problems presented, but they remain merely theories, not conclusive explanations as to *why*. The discipline of sociological research used here by Wuthnow is, therefore, not enough. More than mere facts are needed; we need concern.

Wuthnow's main argument in this book is “that unless religious leaders take younger adults more seriously, the future of American religion is in doubt” (17). He contends that “we provide day care centers, schools, welfare

programs, family counselling, colleges, job training programs, and even detention centres as a kind of institutional surround-sound until young adults reach age 21, and then we provide nothing . . . all the major decisions a person has to make about marriage, child rearing, and work happen after these support systems have ceased to function” (216).

Wuthnow seems to be speaking here as a social scientist, rather than as someone whose true concern is retaining young adults within the church. He presents few proposals for potential action, and his idea of a congregation seems too similar to a “business” or “religious market” (81, 189). The overall impression he gives is that the church is no more than a voluntary organization. Although the statistics presented in this book are a useful tool and give plenty of information on the religion of young adults, the book remains descriptive.

A comparable book is Roger Dudley’s *Why Our Teenagers Leave the Church* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000). Although Dudley’s book contains statistics comparing teenagers (15-16 years) with young adults (25-26 years), he is more prescriptive in his implications and analysis than is Wuthnow. Dudley provides fewer statistics than Wuthnow does, but offers more suggestions for action. Whereas Wuthnow’s book attests that many twenty- and thirty-somethings leave the church (a fact confirmed by Dudley, 35), it fails to give solutions for how to bring those twenty- and thirty-somethings back to the church. It should be made clear, however, that Dudley’s book does not provide absolute solutions, but in his longitudinal study, he found factors that greatly influenced whether or not teenagers left the church, such as family worship in the home and personal involvement in the church.

Although *After the Baby Boomers* does not deal with the psychological side of choices made by young adults (*why* they have left the church), or the effect of these choices on congregations, it does provide interesting insights into the demographics of this generation. It even appears that Wuthnow’s book predicts a long-term positive trend. On one hand, while he sees the negative trends of declining religious involvement in twenty- and thirty-somethings (compared to the Baby Boomer generation), the next younger generation of young adults want to go back to traditional church life, showing implicitly that the church still has a mission and a future.

For those looking for answers as to *why* young people leave the church or *how* the church can attract them back, this is not the right book. However, for those who are engaged in young-adult ministry and who are interested in facts and general implications, this is a useful tool and worth one’s time.

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LINDA WOONING-VOERMAN