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SCOTTISH BULLETIN OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

The scope of the *Bulletin* is broadly defined as theology, especially Scottish and Reformed, whether biblical, systematic-dogmatic, historical or practical, and Scottish church history. Articles submitted for publication should be sent to the Editor, books for review to Rutherford House (see below).

Contributors are free to express their own views within the broad parameters of historic evangelicalism. The opinions of contributors may not be assumed to be those of Rutherford House or the Scottish Evangelical Theology Society.

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The *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* is published twice yearly by Rutherford House in association with the Scottish Evangelical Theology Society, whose officers are:

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The *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* is indexed in *Elenchus*, *Cerdic*, *IZBG*, *ATLA* and *Relig. Theol. Abstr.*

Subscriptions should be addressed to: Rutherford House, 17 Claremont Park, Edinburgh EH6 7PJ. e-mail: subscriptions@rutherfordhouse.org.uk

Rates from 2005: £12.50; Students £6.00 (UK)

Overseas surface £14.50; Overseas airmail £17.50

ISSN 0265-4539

Single issue £7.00

EDITORIAL

Ndiyanibulisa egameni likaYesu Kristu, umSindisi wethu. As I anticipated in my last Editorial, I am now writing from my office in Dumisani Theological Institute, King William's Town in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The isiXhosa greeting with which I began (which means 'I-greet-you in-the-name of-Jesus-Christ Saviour of-us') opens each worship service and church meeting of the isiXhosa-speaking Free Church in Southern Africa. It has become a helpful reminder to me (as I have come to recognise what is being said!) that although I have come to a country far from my homeland and very different (not least in terms of the climate!), and to people whose history and culture are not my history and culture, yet every Christian I meet here has, like me, found salvation *only* in the person who bears the hellenised name (easily recognisable in either isiXhosa or English), Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). Regardless of our ethnic origin or our present place of domicile or our language, if his grace has transformed us then we have been made part of a single redeemed family which allows us truly to describe Jesus as 'umSindisi wethu': *our* Saviour.

Now that we are here in South Africa, my main responsibility will be to teach the Bible in a way that is appropriate for an African context. What exactly that means in practice is, I think, beyond my ability to say at present. I have lived in Scotland all my life and have learned to study and to teach the Bible in that context. This is not a fault – everybody has to come from somewhere – but it does mean that I cannot assume that what was appropriate in Scotland is necessarily appropriate in South Africa and now I must take the role of learner before I can be an effective teacher.

While the process of learning to teach the Bible in Africa will no doubt require a lifetime, I have been employed to teach *now* and so I cannot put the task off indefinitely. Thus, I have tried to locate some resources which might help me to teach with some sensitivity to my new context. I have decided to share some of the results of my search here, not primarily because I expect that many readers living outside Africa will themselves have to teach the Bible in Africa (although some of you might – do not discount the possibility), but because it may be useful for readers in other contexts to be aware of the serious reflection which is being carried out, in Africa and elsewhere, on how the Bible is being and should be read in

Africa. One significant resource which I have discovered is a large volume edited by Professors Gerald West and Musa Dube, entitled *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*.¹ This collection of some thirty-nine articles reflects something of the variety of approaches to reading the Bible. Many of these articles are by no means evangelical in perspective (although there are some evangelical contributors) but there is no other book which provides such a wide-ranging introduction to the use of the Bible in Africa. Some features are particularly notable: a sense of the diversity of Africa – the experience of certain Christians in Malawi is different from that of another group in Nigeria and different again from the experience of various South African Christian communities – and a strong emphasis on the need for biblical interpretation which speaks to the (often harsh) realities of life. Of quite a different character is the work of Professor Bennie van der Walt, recently retired from the Institute for Contemporary Christianity in Africa at the Potchefstroom campus of North West University (formerly Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education). In his book, *The Liberating Message*,² Professor van der Walt argues that it is necessary to develop a holistic, biblical worldview in order to address the situation in Africa. This book, and his more recent volume, *Understanding and Rebuilding Africa*,³ are important contributions to a sensitive Christian understanding of the situation in Africa. These books have been helpful to me in my attempt to be sensitive to my new African context and I hope that others may find that they provide a window into the needs and challenges facing the churches in Africa.

How then should I teach the Bible in Africa? To some extent, it is necessary to teach skills and methods which apply everywhere: use of original languages (whenever possible); careful attention to context; interpretation appropriate to literary genre, etc. But perhaps there are some issues which demand particular emphasis. Tentatively, I have concluded that I must teach the Bible in (South) Africa emphasising at least three such principles: Firstly, I must emphasise that the Bible is God's own account of how he has acted in history. There is no benefit to Africa in transplanting the events recorded in the gospels into African soil and constructing an 'African Jesus'. The 'scandal of particularity' is that an African's hope – and the hope of every other person – lies in Jesus, a Jewish man, who was God incarnate and who died on a cross in Israel in the first century AD. Secondly, I must emphasise the relevance of the

¹ Leiden: Brill, 2001.

² Potchefstroom: ICCA, 1994.

³ Potchefstroom: ICCA, 2003.

biblical text. This is not, however, to manipulate the text; it is simply to recognise and to make clear that the Bible has its own relevance to issues of politics, economics, education, etc., as well as to one's spiritual life. There is, of course, a danger that in attempting to use the Bible to address various social and political issues, one might neglect the crucial matters of how human beings are to relate to the Creator whom they have offended and yet who has provided a redeemer. Yet there is no reason why there should be any dualism which faces us with an either/or choice. For example, one can scarcely read Ephesians 2 without appreciating *both* its profound presentation of God's gracious salvation *and* its implications for human relationships. Thirdly, I must provide ways in which my African students can offer their own readings of the text, rather than simply accept mine, while challenging them to reflect critically on their readings in conversation with the readings of others.

As time goes on, I hope that I will develop these principles and others as I engage in conversation with colleagues and students here in South Africa. As the process continues, I would like to ask *SBET* readers in Africa and elsewhere to take an interest in and to pray for the teaching of the Bible in Africa.

In this number

The first two papers in the present *Bulletin* were originally presented at the excellent meeting of the Scottish Evangelical Theology Society, held in April 2005 at the Faith Mission College, Edinburgh. The theme for the conference was 'Being Disciples/Making Disciples' and those of us who attended were privileged to hear two gifted speakers lead us into further reflection on this important topic.

The lead article is by Professor John Webster of the University of Aberdeen. Although Professor Webster delivered the Finlayson Memorial Lecture at the conference, that lecture was delivered as the second part of a two-part presentation and so we have decided to hold the publication of the Finlayson Memorial Lecture back to the next number of *SBET* in order to preserve the integrity of Professor Webster's work. The first part of the presentation, which is published here, is a refreshingly biblical-theological treatment of the call to discipleship. The original oral delivery in a conference setting is reflected in the published version of the address. Readers of *SBET* have already benefited from Professor Webster's writing and I am delighted that we can enjoy a double measure of his helpful reflections in this *Bulletin* and the next.

The second article is by the other conference speaker, Dr David Smith, of International Christian College, Glasgow. Dr Smith is well known as a

sensitive interpreter of contemporary culture as well as of Scripture, and as an able academic with a missionary's heart; these qualities are evident in his helpful discussion of the challenges to discipleship in (post?)modern, Western society, drawing on the writings of D. Bonhoeffer and Z. Bauman, among others.

As our third article, we are glad to welcome an exegetical-theological contribution from Dr James Hamilton, Assistant Professor of the Houston campus of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr Hamilton examines the evidence relating to how God was present with his people according to the OT documents from Joshua to Malachi, having already examined the relevant material in the Pentateuch in a previous article published elsewhere.

Finally, Dr Tim Trumper concludes his two-part study of the implications of renewed attention to the Pauline doctrine of adoption with particular consideration of the potential impact on the theology, soteriology and doxology of Westminster Calvinism.

I offer my grateful thanks to each of these authors for making their work available in the *Bulletin* and I am delighted to be able to present these papers to you, the reader. I trust that you will find these papers stimulating and helpful – perhaps even provocative – and that you will use them to develop your own Christian thinking and ministry. We also, of course, have a healthy selection of book reviews to help you read wisely and effectively, and I wish to express my grateful thanks to my colleague, Dr Iain D. Campbell, for his diligent work as Review Editor, as well as to all our reviewers for their contributions.

Alistair I. Wilson

DISCIPLESHIP AND CALLING

JOHN WEBSTER, KINGS COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

I'm very grateful for the opportunity to spend this time with you reflecting on some issues about the theme of discipleship. My intention is to set our minds to work by offering a theological account of Christian discipleship, and to that end I have divided the material into two themes: 'Discipleship and Calling', and 'Discipleship and Obedience'. In arranging the topic in this way, I am reiterating what I take to be a twofold gospel principle for the theology of the Christian life, namely, that grace both precedes and commands action. In this first session, I propose to reflect on the call to discipleship, and above all on the one who constitutes that call, Jesus Christ, who is himself the grace and command of God in person. Tomorrow I propose to go on from there to consider the shape or direction of discipleship in response to the summons of Jesus. Our questions, therefore, are: who is Jesus Christ? Who are those whom he calls to follow him? And how are we to characterise the life to which he calls them? Such, I hope to suggest, are the basic elements of a theology of discipleship. Before I move into the exposition itself, however, I want to stand back and speak a little more generally about the place which the topic of discipleship has in the more general theology of the Christian life.

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE THEOLOGY OF THE CHURCH

The task of a theology of the Christian life is to describe that form of human existence which is brought into being and upheld by the saving work of God. Most generally described, the concern of theology at this point is with what happens when, through the activity of the Holy Spirit, that which has been objectively accomplished in the incarnation, passion and resurrection of the Son of God is unleashed in human history, making sinful creatures into the children of God. In Protestant theology, mapping this reality is often done by offering a theology of the *ordo salutis*, the order of salvation. This term refers to an account of the history of salvation as it takes place in the Christian believer. A sequence of 'moments' is traced – including, for example, adoption, regeneration, conversion, faith, justification, sanctification, perseverance – in order to portray how through the Spirit God's grace in Christ shapes Christian existence in time. This

portrayal is commonly filled out, further, by a theology of the church as the communion of saints in which Christian existence takes place, and by an account of the stance of the Christian in the world. It is then completed by an account of the glorification of the Christian in which the life of faith is brought to eschatological perfection.

Within this scheme, the topic of discipleship has traditionally enjoyed little profile. At best, it has played an informal or illustrative role, with the main lines of the theology of the Christian life structured around the Pauline and Johannine theology of union with and life in Christ, rather than the Synoptic theme of following Jesus. There are, of course, counter-examples. Discipleship is a prominent topic in those Anabaptist ecclesiologies which have exercised such a considerable hold on contemporary Christian theology and ethics. Above all, there is a single exposition of the theme in a book of quite extraordinary spiritual and theological resonance, namely Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship*¹ – perhaps the most potent piece of Christian writing to come out of the German church conflict, and certainly the most widely disseminated. It was Bonhoeffer's genius to perceive that appeal to the notion of discipleship could be immensely powerful in extracting the church from its hopelessly compromised stance; at his hands, discipleship became the clue to a radical ecclesiology and ethic marked above all by nonconformity and Christian integrity.

Bonhoeffer, of course, was not attempting a comprehensive theology of the Christian life: his book is an emergency work, directed to a church in peril. We in our turn would be unwise to over-invest in the theme of discipleship and expect that everything which needs to be said about the Christian life could be said under that head. Discipleship is only one among a range of motifs in the theology of the Christian life. But it is, I want to suggest, uniquely qualified to draw our attention to one feature of that life, namely its eschatological character, that is, the drastic separation which marks the lives of those who are called to be the followers of Christ. Discipleship means dislocation; and that dislocation is in an important sense a permanent characteristic of the Christian condition. A church which is aware that confessing Christ and following him entails a measure of isolation and loss of esteem is a church which is taking its eschatological condition seriously, and so a church about which we may entertain some hopes. Where discipleship has become a strange idiom,

¹ D. Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001).

however, we may take that as a sign that the church may be disregarding its eschatological condition and fitting itself too snugly into the world.

But the motif of discipleship is not the only motif in the theology of the Christian life, and should not be extracted from its place in the wider scope of God's dealings with humankind as creator, reconciler and perfecter. Discipleship ought properly to be expounded with an eye to the more systematic theology of the nature and ends of human creatures in the economy of God's grace; if it is not, then the eschatological aspects of the Christian life can be isolated and inflamed in such a way that Christian existence collapses into a single moment. Nevertheless, the theme of discipleship should serve to remind us that theologies of Christian existence which eliminate the eschatological find it acutely difficult to articulate Christian *difference*. One does not need to look far to see the sad compromises into which neglect of this can betray us.

Let me move into the substance of my exposition with a few verses from the opening chapter of the Gospel of Mark:

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, 'Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased.'... Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.' And passing along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. And immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and followed him (Mark 1:9-11, 14-20).

We can try to explicate this event of the summons of the Lord and the obedient response of his hearers by asking three questions: (1) who is this one who calls to discipleship? (2) what is the substance of his call? (3) who are those who are called by him?

WHO CALLS TO DISCIPLESHIP?

Who is this one who passes along by the Sea of Galilee and calls Simon, Andrew, James and John, and in calling them also now calls us? By what authority and with what legitimacy does he issue this summons to them, and so also to us? The one who calls is Jesus, the Father's beloved Son;

his call is supremely authoritative and lawful because it is the call of the one who is in person the saving rule of God and who brings help and blessing to sinners.

Mark's account of the call of the first four disciples is preceded by his presentation of Jesus' baptism, which leads – after the brief interval of the temptation in the wilderness – to the announcement of the opening of Jesus' public ministry in Galilee. The baptism is especially important because of its character as manifestation: there Jesus is disclosed as the one who in a wholly unique way bears to us the presence and action of God himself. When Jesus calls his hearers to follow him, therefore, he calls in the power of what has been declared of him at his baptism. What is the content of this declaration?

First, Jesus is the definitively new and unsurpassable revelation of God. At his baptism the heavens are 'torn apart' in a literally apocalyptic moment: God Almighty cleaves the world apart, comes down (cf. Isa. 64:1), and speaks to reveal the identity of Jesus. The sheer *intrusive* character of the event is striking. Jesus has not reached this point as the result of long ascetical training or study of the Torah: his status is simply declared in a single cataclysmic moment. In a real sense, Jesus does not *belong* here with 'all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem' (Mark 1:5); his baptism by John is not as it were his natural setting, reaffirming his kinship with others, but the occasion for an eschatological declaration of his difference. He is, as John confesses, 'mightier than I' (Mark 1:8). The coming of Jesus is thus not simply one more episode in the religious history of humankind. It shatters that history; as he appears, the old passes away and the new comes.

Second, what is declared of Jesus is that he is God's only Son, the unique object of the Father's good pleasure. 'Thou art my beloved Son', the divine voice announces, 'with thee I am well pleased' (Mark 1:11). Among the Old Testament material echoing in this statement is, of course, Psalm 2. That psalm speaks of the supreme lordship of the son who is appointed to rule, by virtue of which he is undefeated by 'the kings of the earth' (Ps. 2:2). 'The rulers take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed' (Ps. 2:2); but their conspiracy is a derisory affair because of the divine decree: 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you' (Ps. 2:7). In the person of the Son, the eternal will of God to rule and bless all things will be brought to effect. It is this triumph of God's purpose in the Son which is announced at Jesus' baptism. *He* is God's Son; he is the beloved, loved of the Father in a singular way, delighted in by the one from whom he comes. He is all this antecedently, by nature and not by adoption. And

he is known to be such not by speculation or imaginative projection, but by the revelation of God.

At his baptism, therefore, Jesus is declared to be the definitive revelation of God, the only Son in and as whom God rules. This one, Mark tells us, *comes*: comes from Nazareth to the Jordan, comes from the wilderness into Galilee, and finally comes to the lakeshore and the first disciples. In the one who bears this divine status, there takes place a divine *movement*. At his coming, God himself comes; his nearness is the nearness of God. Later in the Christian theological tradition, this will be expressed by talking of the coming of Jesus as the divine mission, the Father's sending of the Son in which the divine procession is reiterated and externalized. For the moment, we simply note that for Mark he, the mightier one, the beloved, is the presence of God, God's being in movement towards his own.

This movement in which God comes brings about an entire reorganization of human life and history. The condensed statement which Mark sets at the opening of Jesus' public ministry sums this up: 'Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel"' (Mark 1:14f.). Most basically, what Jesus proclaims is 'the gospel of God', that is, the good news whose content is nothing other than God himself. All that follows in Mark's story is 'gospel' because its subject and agent is the Lord God himself, the only hope of creatures. In the ministry and preaching of Jesus, therefore, we are faced not simply with a creaturely judgment, blessing and summons, but with God himself extending himself towards us. The good news of God is from God, about God, enacted and made known by God.

Because Jesus is in this way God's own action and self-communication, human life is qualified in a quite new way, for by the coming of Jesus, everything is redefined: 'The time is fulfilled.' With the coming of the Son of God, a definitively new stage in God's history with his creatures has opened up. Human history has been gathered together and taken to the climactic moment in which God's purpose from all eternity, secretly at work in the past, is now dramatically visible in the mission of the Son. The time of preparation and expectation is past; the eschaton, the new and final age, has broken in: 'The kingdom of God is near.' That is, in Christ God is present to rule. The creaturely realm is no longer ours to possess, defend or extend at will, no longer our territory, because one fact alone now determines that realm: God's kingdom is drawing near, and his nearness means that our pretence to be masters of our own terrain is overthrown. What Mark is reaching towards is, I think, a confession that with the

coming of God in Jesus, the great pretence is over, namely the pretence that human life is isolated from God, that we can go about our affairs as if we did not do so in his presence. The coming of Jesus puts an end to the destructive myth that God keeps his distance; in him, God loves us, drawing near and rescuing us from ruin.

The coming of God and his kingdom in Jesus is thus both a negation and an affirmation. The negation is this: in Jesus Christ, the world's pretended autonomy is finally and unconditionally cast down. But the affirmation is no less important: the coming of God in Christ is supremely *helpful*. God's rule does not obliterate human life, but restores it. It brings order, shape, coherence, direction; it makes possible the renewal of authentic creaturely form. It does so, of course, only by launching an onslaught on the disorderly, shapeless, incoherent and directionless reality with which we have surrounded ourselves and which we have, indeed, become. But the rule of God invades and assumes the reins precisely in order to bless human life, to come to our aid and re-establish us in our creatureliness and direct us to our perfection. It is in this sense that we may say that God's gracious eschatological rule perfects nature. Jesus' summons is a summons to life.

The time has come; God is near to demonstrate his saving, restorative rule. This divine movement is grace; but it is also command. Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God meets us both as blessing and as obligation. In the same way that in the Old Testament revelation of God's purpose, election is always election to a way of life, so here: the announcement of the gospel brings with it the command of law, precisely because the gospel concerns God's *rule* in human life. Here the command is summed up with extreme compression: 'Repent and believe the gospel' (Mark 1:15). Repentance is not mere remorse, though it may include such; primarily it is conversion, that is, the redirection and renewal of human life following from the fact that God has already come among us and is already at work, making all things new. To repent is to confess this divine intervention; it is to acknowledge the fact that, though we have conspired to clear the world of the purpose and claim of God, God has not left us to rot but has come to us and reclaimed us with sovereign mercy as his own. Repentance therefore also includes a turn to the one who comes, in order to give ourselves to the new vocation which God has for his creatures. This is why repentance is inseparable from believing in the gospel. Conversion or repentance only makes sense on the basis of trust in the gospel, that is, on the basis of God's declaration of his saving presence. Repentance and faith together constitute the shape of human life which has been overtaken by the promise and call of God's kingdom in the person of the beloved Son.

Let us draw the threads together. Who is the one who calls us to discipleship? He is God's only Son. Manifest at his baptism as one who shares in the eternal being of the Father and who is accompanied by God the Holy Spirit, he is God's word and rule in person. In him our time and space are torn apart and remade into time and space for the presence of God. In and as this one, Jesus, God is with us. This is the one who calls. And this is why his call and claim are authoritative and legitimate. Why can he summon so unconditionally? Why is it that his call is not simply one more voice crying out to be heard, but a call which sets before us the one claim which transcends all others? How is it that he sets his claim before us not as an object for our inspection and consideration but as a claim to which we are already inescapably subject? The answer can only be this: the unconditional authority of his call and the legitimacy of its claim, are rooted in the fact that Jesus is who he is, the bearer and presence of God to us. His authority and legitimacy do not rest on the fact that we find him morally or religiously persuasive: in this matter, our judgement is not competent. He claims us as Lord because he is Lord; his claim has supreme authority and is supremely justified because it is *his*, the claim of the one who alone is in himself all authority and righteousness, and so who alone has the prerogative to make an absolute summons. Our next question is: what is the substance of his call? To what does he summon those whom he meets?

THE SUBSTANCE OF JESUS' CALL

The substance of Jesus' call is: Follow me. To orient our reflections on this simple and direct command, two preliminary characteristics need to be noted. First, as we have already remarked, it is a call of self-establishing, because divine, authority. The economy of Mark's presentation of the call narrative here (and also in the call of Levi in Mark 2) is remarkable: Jesus appears, issues his call, and those called follow immediately; the entire episode is over in a matter of moments. What we have here is not simply an instance of Mark's characteristic terseness; nor do we have a blueprint of the psychological processes of conversion. It is not a point about the disciples but about Jesus: an indication of the categorical authority of his call to follow. His is a call which demonstrates its authority in the act of being uttered. The summons comes without supporting evidence: no miracle, no discourse from Jesus to explicate his person. Rather, the call presents itself with all the self-evidence of the divine Word. It does not assert itself as if it expected to have to face the reality of opposition, resistance or counter-claim, but is a word of command which is calm, effortless and therefore properly and finally authoritative. It has *absolute*

force; it is beyond comparison; it occurs with true, legitimate, divine authority. In no way is it insecure, needing to press itself upon the attention of its hearers, for it simply makes itself known in a wholly immediate, unexplained way, presenting itself not for our judgement but for obedience. Why? Because here we have God speaking in person.

Second: this self-establishing divine call is the imperative force of God's grace. 'Grace' is the coming of Jesus. It is shorthand for the fact that in Jesus we have the enactment and therefore the manifestation of God's saving rule. In him we have God's servant and chosen one, the one on whom the Spirit rests and who will bring justice to the nations; in him we have one in whom God's righteousness will triumph by the making righteous of many (Isa. 42:1; 53:11). Grace is the coming of this one, his saving and restoring presence through which creaturely existence is reconstituted. But this presence is not only indicative but also imperative; it is grace as command and obligation, grace which not only justifies but also sanctifies, grace which elects but elects for active holiness. How else, indeed, would grace really be grace? If it did not present itself with this imperative import, if it did not also have as its end rekindling of obedience and renewal of life on the part of those whom it addresses, then it would not be the restoration of the covenant, but simply a unilateral declaration: 'You are my Son.' But that declaration concerning the Son is a declaration that the Son *rules* and therefore *calls*. His lordship is metaphysical; but because it is metaphysical it is also moral, a summons to life and direction. The deity of Christ *claims* us for itself.

What may we now go on to say about the substance of the claim as it announces itself here in the call: 'Follow me'? Jesus issues a call to *follow*. His summons, that is, is to life in a particular direction, characterised by a particular movement (in Mark's Gospel, of course, the motif of discipleship as following Jesus on a journey is especially prominent). Jesus' intervention in the lives of those to whom he comes is not only to be conceived as an ascription of status. Discipleship does indeed involve a change of status on the part of the one called; it is not simply a task but a task which rests upon a divine decision and determination. But here the point is that this divine determination is no mere happy possession of blessedness, on the basis of which the one called can enjoy some kind of achieved repose. It is appointment to movement, movement in relation to a greater divine movement which is already underway in Jesus himself, the movement of the coming of God. This movement on our part is what is indicated in the command to follow.

The following commanded by Jesus is a responsive movement on the part of the one called. The substance of Jesus' call is not that his hearers

should initiate or set a direction for themselves, but rather that they should move in a direction which has already been marked out in advance. What does the follower of Jesus do? *Follow*. Indeed, the call to follow Jesus involves renouncing self-direction, that is, abandoning an existing path and striking out along a new path which can only be entered upon as autonomy is broken. 'Following', as we shall see, is inseparable from 'cross-bearing'; the followers of Jesus are called to go in a direction they do not wish to go.

Further, the command is to follow at a distance. 'Follow after me', Jesus commands Simon and Andrew (Mark 1:17). In the movement required of the disciples, there can be no question of their being companions on Jesus' way in the sense of fellow-travellers of equal ability or dignity. Between the one who is followed and the one who follows there is always an unbridgeable distance – like the cloud and the pillar of fire in the wilderness, Jesus goes ahead of his followers. He is present with them; but he is present always as the transcendent Lord. Nor can there be any hope for the eventual closing of the gap between Jesus and those who follow. The distance between him and them is not such that we may expect that it will gradually narrow and finally close entirely, as the disciples grow in knowledge or skill or virtue. They are permanently, by nature and not merely temporarily, those who come after him. The summons to follow does not look ahead to growing proximity, but to a condition in which the disciples walk in the wake of Jesus, pulled along by his movement, set in motion by him but always *unlike* him and so *behind* him. In this connection, much can be made of the distinctiveness of following Jesus over against the relations between rabbi and pupil or between moral model and the one who imitates such an example. The pupil becomes a rabbi; the imitator grows like the model; but the disciple never moves beyond the condition of following. There is no assimilation to be awaited: even at the end of the disciples' journey with Jesus in Mark, after the resurrection, Jesus continues to 'go before' his disciples (Mark 16:7), anticipating them as they hasten in his direction.

The call, then, is to *follow*; and the following is always marked by the chasm between, on the one side, the electing God and, on the other, the elect. The substance of Jesus' call is, further, 'Follow *me*'. It is irreducibly personal, a call to enter into a movement which is a relation to Jesus himself. Everything hangs on this. Jesus speaks in his own name, with his own authority. He does not refer the one called to some other, not even to God himself. Discipleship is a matter of following Jesus as personal absolute, the absolute in person. It is not a command to take upon oneself a commitment to some cause, principle or truth beyond or behind Jesus, as

if Jesus were the symbol or highest instance of something other than himself. The name of Jesus cannot be eliminated without losing everything; as Bonhoeffer put it, in the matter of discipleship 'Jesus is the only content.'²

This point is particularly important to register because there exists a permanent temptation, theological and practical, to substitute something else for the offensively particular name of Jesus, to search for something more generic, something which does not bring with it the affront of Jesus' implausible and singular direction: 'Follow *me*'. It is a temptation to which the church has often succumbed and continues to do so: contemporary substitutes for the name of Jesus include: justice; spirituality; inclusiveness; orthodoxy; moral truth. However valuable some of these generic realities may appear to be, however much gospel resonance they may bring with them, they run the risk of abstracting from the pure singularity of Jesus and his command. His name – his non-transferrable identity as *this* one – is the one reality in which salvation is to be found. And his name is to be filled out, not by reference to some principle which he illustrates or which may even be drawn from him. He is the divine self-declaration in person; he is who he is.

Once again we sum up so far. Jesus the beloved Son goes his way. He enters into and moves through human history, cleaving open our time and space, reclaiming them as the domain of his lordship. His presence is what makes here and now into what they are: places and occasions in which we are encountered and blessed by him. In that encounter we are blessed, because we are ineluctably faced with the command of God: self-established, lawful, omnipotent, beyond any rivalry. We are set in motion as he strides ahead of us and call us to come after him. With this, we move to our third question: who are those who are called by him? What is to be said of those summoned by his command?

WHO DOES JESUS CALL?

Once again, the leanness of Mark's narrative helps set our thinking in the right direction. The sheer brevity of his presentation of those who are called is startling: we have their names, the activities they were about, their employment, but nothing more. Andrew, Simon, James, John, Levi, fishermen and a tax-collector. Beyond this, Mark has no interest; they have no significant features beyond this bare recital, which serves only to identify them. Unlike, for example, figures in the Lucan infancy narratives such as Zechariah and Elizabeth, those who receive the call of Jesus in

² Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, p. 59.

Mark have no history of expectation or preparation anterior to the coming of the Messiah. His arrival breaks in on them like an accident, cutting clean across the grain of their lives. There is no neat match between their past and their present; for Mark, the call to follow Jesus excludes any straightforward sense that the new life can be built on the foundations of the old. Jesus simply comes, apparently ignoring their existing world and announcing that from now on they are to follow him. What are we to make of this feature of the narrative? The point can be put negatively and positively.

Negatively, nothing can be said about the competence, suitability or readiness of those who are called. It is not that Mark lays especial emphasis at this point in his presentation of the disciples upon their incompetence, unsuitability or lack of readiness, though that will follow. At this early stage, it is simply that such matters are ignored, as having no bearing. One way of articulating this would be to say that the divine summons which sounds out in the command of Jesus is sheerly *creative*. It *makes* disciples, and makes them out of nothing. Jesus' call is not such that it reorganises or refocuses energies and abilities which pre-exist; it does not harness some antecedent capacity on the part of Simon, Andrew and the rest, recruiting them for the project of the coming kingdom. The disciples move, not from anticipation or eligibility, but from nothingness. Followers is what they are *not*; they are made such by the command. All that needs to be said about those called is to be found in the call and the one who calls.

Disciples, therefore are brought into being by Jesus' call; their following is an eschatological event, part of the new creation in which God in Christ makes all things new. Accordingly, to put the point positively, discipleship is a matter of election. Those who are encountered by Jesus and his call to follow him are faced by an unconditional determination and appointment. 'Follow me' is not an invitation but a command. In this call, there does not take place a meeting between equal partners: on the one side, Jesus and his call, and on the other those who attend to him and make of him what they will. The call of Jesus does not look to a future decision on the part of the disciple, by virtue of which it might become effective. Rather, the call sets before its hearer a decision which has *already* been made. It places the one called under a conclusion. Here in Jesus' call we do not have the first stages of the gathering of a voluntary assembly of those who choose discipleship; we have the outworking of the eternal divine purpose: he destined us in love.

Jesus' call is thus the revelation of God's determining will. As with the election of Israel, so here: the imperative 'You shall be my people' is an

imperative which brings a divine indicative to bear upon the life of those to whom it is uttered. To respond to this summons, to drop everything and follow the movement required by the Lord of the covenant, is simply to go the way which has been determined. It is to acknowledge the conclusion which has already been reached, to enact the vocation which has already been foreordained. The almost nonchalant way in which Jesus calls – *of course* following is the only way forward, the only possibility! – underlines the immutability of the divine decree which is here set in motion: what kind of impediment can there be?

Yet it would be incomplete to end the description of the disciple there. The conclusion under which those called by Jesus are placed is not a blank fate; it is appointment to a task, to life in a particular direction and movement. Those foreordained by God are appointed to a particular end, and to a history which moves towards that end. It is a fundamental misunderstanding of predestination to think of it as entailing immobility, passivity; creatures are foreordained by God to live and move and have their being. And so the revelation of God's conclusion in the call of Jesus is the revelation of the living and moving in which the disciples will have their being. God's call does not merely fix them, but ordains them to be and act. To follow the call of Jesus, to stand beneath this conclusion, is to be quickened.

This quickening is a matter for exploration in tomorrow's lecture. For the present, what is important to secure is that the call to discipleship is not Jesus as it were engaging in a kind of coaxing, influencing or demanding. It is Jesus setting in motion the eternal will of the Father. That will is absolute and antecedent, not contingent on the cooperation of creatures. But God's will is not blank necessity. God's will is the way which he has for us. His will is his law; and his law is not simply statute but the path of life. To exist under the conclusion of God's will is not to sit still but to walk. And it is to that walking that disciples are summoned by the one whose call undoes, remakes and blesses. His call is the way in which our appointment to life in the society of God reveals itself and makes itself effective; and therefore it is at its heart the summons of divine love.

CONCLUSION

By way of brief conclusion, let me offer two suggestions about how these reflections on the theology of discipleship may help us as we try to discern the church's task.

First, it is very important for us to grasp that the Gospel stories about Jesus and his disciples are stories which address us in a direct and

immediate way. They are not only records of what took place there and then; they are also the voice of the risen Christ to the company of his saints. Here Jesus lifts up his voice and instructs his church through the testimony of his apostles. In reading Mark, therefore, we are not simply immersing ourselves in an historical record from which we may perhaps be able to draw edifying pastoral implications. We are being addressed by the risen one about the situation of the people of God now. This is what is meant by speaking of Holy Scripture as the Word of God; we mean, not only that God has spoken but that God speaks. The event of Jesus' summons looks ahead to a history which continues to take place in the world. For the one who was appointed by the Father and empowered by the Spirit to command the world to follow him, not only was, but is; not only spoke but speaks; not only called but calls. The one whom Mark presents is the living one, the one who died and is alive for evermore. Accordingly, the event of his call to discipleship is not finished business. It extends with inexhaustible power into the present; it reiterates itself as Jesus Christ speaks and summons now. Through the power of the Holy Spirit Jesus Christ is among us exercising his prophetic office, manifesting himself to us, revealing to us both who we are and what his will is for us. If that is the case – if Jesus Christ truly is present and self-communicative, if there really is one among us from whose mouth there issues the sharp two-edged sword of the Word of God – then the situation which is described in Mark's presentation of the calling of the disciples is in some measure our situation. This is who we are. We also are encountered by this one, the beloved Son of God, the proclaimer of presence of God's kingdom. We also are addressed by his call; we also are appointed to heed him and move after him.

Jesus Christ is not absent and he is not silent; he is present and eloquent. It is out of this fact that we may begin to address some of the anxiety and distress which afflicts much of church life in the present. The church of Jesus Christ is the creature of the Word, and in the power of the Spirit it lives from the Word. That is, it comes into being and is sustained through the word of the gospel spoken by the living Christ. At times, however, the church is persuaded that Jesus Christ no longer speaks, or at least does so with a voice so faint as to be scarcely audible. The church falls into that persuasion for all sorts of reasons. Sometimes it's because very clever people tell the church that what God says is a great deal more complicated, or difficult of access than the church once thought, and that the church requires their professional services to help them pick out the important bits from the rubble. Sometimes it's because hard-pressed and earnest officers of the church lose their grip on the gospel. Most often it's

because all of us in some way stop listening to the divine Word: we know that it is the only word which can absolve us and bless us with life, but we find its judgement and exposure hard to take, and so we become selectively deaf. What hope is there for us? If in this situation the church is to be renewed in its discipleship and hear the summons of Christ, it can only be by making its own the confession and prayer of the psalm: 'My soul cleaves to the dust; revive me according to thy word!' (Ps. 119:25). That prayer is the clue to the church's renewal, because it is the clue to the church's being; that is, we can pray that prayer and expect an answer, because there really is a Word of God, borne to us by the Spirit from the living Christ through Holy Scripture. He speaks, and listening to his voice, the dead receive new life.

Second: a church which lives from the Word of the living Christ will be able to adopt a rather free and sometimes unimpressed attitude to the other voices which clamour for its attention as it tries to live the life of discipleship and extend Jesus' call to others. The church learns what it is and how it is to act by sitting in the school of the gospel, there to learn of the ways of God with and for his saints. Because of what the church is taught there – because it sees itself and its surrounding context, its friends and its self-styled enemies, in the gospel's light – it will not be too affected by all the other things that it is told. Above all, the church will not let itself be trapped into reinventing itself endlessly for the sake of keeping up with the rhythm of the world. An excitable and unstable church cannot properly minister the gospel, and stability comes from constant, patient attention to Christ and his Word, and the avoidance of overstimulation. Of course, the church will be alert to and interested in what the world says; it will listen courteously and genuinely, hoping to catch an echo of the Holy Spirit's voice. But it will not be mesmerised or overawed by what is said. This does not mean that the church is to be some sort of catatonic institution, self-absorbed and unresponsive. It is simply to say that the gospel outbids the world every time. Jesus himself speaks more authoritatively, legitimately, winningly and interestingly than the world. If the church really loves the world, then the church will give its mind to listen to Jesus' prophetic presentation of himself; it will attend to the gospel, not as something it already knows but as something it must always learn. Hearing the gospel will help the church to help the world. It will enable the church to see the world without the masks which the world puts on to hide from the things which it fears or hates or longs for but dare not face. Maybe the world is late modern, postmodern, late capitalist, globalized, and so on. But to the church it has been given to confess where we really are. We are at the place where the living Jesus accosts us, and all

around us, with his infinite mercy and love; where he presents us with the great divine *fait accompli*; where he calls us to follow; and where he expects of us the obedience which is both his due and our fulfilment: 'They left... and followed him.'

DISCIPLESHIP IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

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At the heart of the biblical text which provided the motivation and shaped the practice of modern Protestant missions is the summons of the risen Christ to 'go and make disciples of all nations' (Matt. 28:19). The influence of this 'Great Commission' has been enormous and the history of the Western missionary movement reveals that obedience to what was seen as Christ's command became the driving force which sent an army of evangelists to every corner of the globe. Despite the existence of other motives for missionary witness within the Gospels, the idea of obedience to a command, of the *duty* of mission, tended to overwhelm alternative texts with the obvious danger that service for Christ, even when involving great personal sacrifice, might become compromised by a spirit of legalism.¹

In relation to our subject, we may ask whether, or to what extent, the missionary task identified in this favoured text has been properly understood? In many of the debates which have taken place in Evangelical circles concerning the relationship between evangelism and social action, appeal has been made to this passage in defence of the priority of evangelism as though the passage self-evidently justifies such a position. But, reading this text within the context of Matthew's Gospel as a whole, we must ask what is implied by the activity of 'making disciples', and whether this is the same thing as multiplying 'converts' by means of a verbal presentation of the gospel, often shorn of any mention of the call to discipleship. Or again, and perhaps even more disturbingly, we must surely ask whether it is possible to 'make disciples'; whether, that is, we can engage in faithful mission, without first reflecting on whether we ourselves meet the criteria by which we might credibly claim to be disciples.

Questions like these are both necessary and urgent in view of the fact that in this same Gospel Jesus is heard repeatedly warning that many people who confess him as 'Lord' and claim to be his disciples have no

¹ See David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), p. 341.

valid grounds for such confidence. His warnings make it abundantly plain that neither a correct form of words, nor the apparent ability to preach with prophetic power, nor even the exercise of charismatic gifts are sufficient criteria to claim the name 'disciple'; that title belongs only to those who *do the will of my Father who is in heaven* (Matt. 7:21-23). Discipleship then is defined in a fundamental way in relation to *praxis*; it involves a distinctive way of being human in which the unique life of Jesus of Nazareth continues to be visible before a watching world as individuals and communities confessing him as 'Lord' endeavour to 'walk as Jesus did' (1 John 2:6).

THE CHALLENGE OF DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

If the teaching of Christ compels us to look afresh, with humility and trembling, at the familiar words of the 'Great Commission', so too, I suggest, does the witness of Christian history. In 1937 in the deepening shadows of pre-war Germany, Dietrich Bonhoeffer completed a series of studies on the subject of discipleship which were published under the title *The Cost of Discipleship*. In a socio-political context in which German Christians were making terrible compromises with an evil and idolatrous ideology, Bonhoeffer subjected his own Lutheran tradition to a searching critique, arguing that Martin Luther's liberating stress on the grace of God had hardened into a lifeless dogma which divorced his doctrine from its 'inevitable corollary, the obligation of discipleship'.² In language that has become familiar, Bonhoeffer claimed that German Christianity had turned the costly, demanding grace of God into 'cheap grace without discipleship'. Thus emptied of its ethical and moral demands, Christianity had achieved 'success' – in that it became socially acceptable – but at the immense cost of 'secularizing the Christian religion as never before'. Christianity, Bonhoeffer said, had become indistinguishable from 'bourgeois respectability', reduced to weekly religious acts which provided spiritual reassurance to the comfortable, for whom 'cheap grace' offered a way of avoiding the need even to attempt to follow Christ. In a sentence we may well ponder, Bonhoeffer concluded: 'It is terrifying to realise what use can be made of genuine evangelical doctrine.'³

Tragically, Bonhoeffer's testimony went largely unheard, but as Europe was engulfed in the mechanized violence of modern warfare and the

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 41.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

atrocities of the Holocaust, his critical analysis was vindicated as German Christianity proved itself powerless in the face of a pagan ideology. Ernst Christian Helmreich, at the conclusion of a massive study of the responses of the German churches to the rise of Hitler, concluded that they were slow to react 'and cannot be said to have won any glorious battles against Nazi activities and Weltanschauung'.⁴ On April 8, 1945, Bonhoeffer's prophetic voice was silenced by a Nazi execution squad and he sealed his testimony to 'costly grace' with his own blood.

LESSONS FROM THE HOLOCAUST

We will return to Bonhoeffer's work later, but first, I want to introduce a profoundly searching analysis of Western culture which will serve to underline the urgency and seriousness with which the subject of discipleship needs to be examined today. We will discover that Bonhoeffer's clarion call has lost none of its relevance and power and the failure of German Christianity in the 1940s, instead of being a kind of aberration of merely academic interest to us, is in fact a startling wake-up call to the Christian movement in the age of globalization.

While Dietrich Bonhoeffer was immersed in the struggles of the Confessing Church in Germany in the 1940s, a teenage Polish boy named Zygmunt Bauman was studying the works of Karl Marx as a member of the Red Army in Soviet Russia. Driven by a Jewish passion for social justice, the young Bauman became a Communist, but quickly concluded that the Marxist vision of a humane society was being betrayed in the Soviet Union. He became a sociologist, teaching at the University of Warsaw until 1968 when an anti-semitic purge forced him and his wife Janina into exile in Israel. This was a shattering experience, made more difficult by the inability of the Baumans to settle in the Jewish state. Israel, Bauman says, 'was a nationalistic country, and we had just run away from nationalism'.⁵ An invitation to become head of the Department of Sociology at the University of Leeds in 1972 provided a way out of the impasse and led to his long exile in Britain, which he has described as 'my second home'.⁶ Now 80 years old, Zygmunt Bauman continues to lecture

⁴ Ernst Christian Helmreich, *The German Churches Under Hitler: Background, Struggle, and Epilogue* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979), p. 463.

⁵ Madeleine Bunting, 'Zygmunt Bauman: Passion and Pessimism', *Guardian Literary Review*, 5 April 2003, p. 23.

⁶ Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000 [2nd ed.]).

and write, producing on average one major book every year, all of them characterised by an extraordinary degree of critical insight and undiminished moral passion.

In 1991, Bauman published *Modernity and the Holocaust*, a volume that created a tremendous stir, being warmly welcomed in Germany but provoking fierce controversy in Britain, America and Israel, where the author was accused of 'letting the Germans off the hook'. Bauman wrote this work as the result of the publication of his wife's memoirs, *Winter in the Morning*, in which she recalled the horrors of the 1940s and (in his words) 'opened my eyes to what we normally refuse to look upon'.⁷ In the introduction to *Modernity and the Holocaust* he confesses that he had previously accepted the widespread assumption that the ghastly events of that period were correctly understood as 'an interruption of the normal flow of history, a cancerous growth on the body of civilized society, a momentary madness among sanity'.⁸ The Holocaust was, in other words, an *aberration*. It constituted a terrible and almost inexplicable *interruption* of the 'ascent of man', a *reversal* to the unbridled passions and barbarism from which modernity has, mercifully, delivered us. However, Bauman's reflections on the subject led him to the surprising and alarming conclusion that, since the Holocaust 'was born and executed in our modern, rational society, at the high stage of our civilization and at the peak of human cultural achievement', it could not be explained away as simply 'a Jewish problem', but is a problem belonging squarely within *modern 'society, civilization and culture'*.⁹ Bauman's thesis then, is that the Holocaust must be seen as 'a rare, yet significant and reliable test of the hidden possibilities of modern society'¹⁰ and that, as such, the warnings it contains need to be heeded wherever modernization is occurring and should provoke serious critical examination of some fundamental and largely unquestioned assumptions concerning the culture of the modern world.

I wish to suggest that this remarkable analysis of the culture of modernity can illuminate the problems that Christians appear to have in

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 208. The German sociologist Hans Joas, commenting on the impact of Bauman's work in Germany, says that *Modernity and the Holocaust* 'struck the German debate like a bolt of lightning' and that it is 'one of the very few truly sociological attempts to interpret this most horrible fact of modern history'. Hans Joas, *War and Modernity*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), p. 163.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. viii.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. x. (Italics in the original text.)

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 12.

living as the disciples of Christ in the context of Western culture. At the same time, it highlights the urgent need to discover ways of recovering the revolutionary *praxis* by which such discipleship is expressed, while also suggesting that Bonhoeffer was exactly right to stress the *cost* of following Jesus.

Bauman refers several times to an 'etiological myth' which underpins modern Western culture and has become deeply embedded within the consciousness of modern people. According to this myth, humankind has emerged from pre-social barbarity and, despite lamentable lapses into primitive modes of behaviour, progress toward the time when the entire world will be 'civilized' is continuing. Viewed through the lens of this myth, the Holocaust can be understood in only one way: it was a ghastly eruption of primitive passions, a setback on the path of progress, and a summons to redouble our efforts to extend the control of civilized values across the world. But what if such a reaction ignores and suppresses evidence that there are fundamental errors in the modern worldview? And what if our failure to submit our theory of modernity to serious critical scrutiny and a determination to simply press on with the modern project may actually increase the possibility that human tragedies on the scale of Auschwitz and the Gulags *will be repeated in the future*?

Bauman's critical analysis of modernity in the light of the Holocaust focuses first on the emergence of the kind of technical rationality which made possible the speedy and efficient accomplishment of defined goals within modern organizations. Nation states and business corporations alike require forms of bureaucratic organization in which precision, clarity, absolute discretion, and submission to authority become central features. In the classical period of sociology Max Weber had identified the emergence of bureaucrats operating according to such a technical rationality and 'without regard to persons', as a crucial factor in modernity. Weber himself recognised the dark side of this development and, in a famous passage, wondered whether the human spirit would eventually rise up in revolt against the restrictions and humiliations it suffered in such a technical culture. The emergence of an army of 'specialists without spirit', combined with the power which the possession of material goods had come to exercise over the lives of modern people, resulted in human beings finding themselves trapped in what Weber called 'an iron cage':

The rosy blush of... the Enlightenment seems to be irretrievably fading and the idea of duty in one's calling prowls about in our lives like the ghost of dead religious beliefs.... No one knows who will live in this cage in the future, or whether at the end of this tremendous development entirely new

prophets will arise, or whether there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals, or if neither, mechanized petrification, embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance.¹¹

According to Zygmunt Bauman, once we understand this central feature of the modern world, the Holocaust stands revealed as an almost quintessentially modern event: the systematic extermination of vast numbers of people was possible only in a context in which a veritable army of bureaucrats functioned efficiently and without regard to the ultimate outcomes of their individual actions. Thousands of Germans who, outside business hours were respectable members of society, carried out their work under the influence of 'moral sleeping pills', acting as functionaries in a vast bureaucratic system. As Bauman says, most participants simply composed memoranda, drew up blueprints, talked on the telephone, destroying a whole people 'by sitting at their desks'.¹² Indeed, after the war many of those accused of crimes against humanity argued precisely that their actions had been done in the line of duty and so possessed *no moral value*. And they had a point, says Bauman, when we realise that such arguments differed little from what 'sociology has been saying all along, or from the seldom-questioned, and still less frequently assailed, common sense of our modern, rational society'.¹³

Bauman's critical reflection concerning the way in which his own academic discipline had marginalized issues of ethical and moral concern broadens out into a remarkable discussion of science in general which he describes as being '*a language game with a rule forbidding the use of teleological vocabulary*'.¹⁴ From its beginnings modern science raised the flag of value-freedom on its standard as it marched into the future, abandoning the binding force of all normative thinking, particularly that of religion and ethics. Once having attained a position of cultural dominance, science effectively 'silenced the preachers of morality' and in the process became 'morally blind and speechless'.¹⁵ But having thus dismantled the barriers that might have closed off the route to genocide, science became compliant with unscrupulous power and proved itself impotent in preventing the state from engaging in systematic crimes against humanity. The Holocaust thus exposes the dangerous vacuum that exists at the heart

¹¹ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Unwin, 1985 [1930]), p. 181-2.

¹² *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 24.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 18.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 170. (Italics in the original.)

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 108.

of modern cultures in which the power to inflict unimaginable levels of destruction on the world is developed while normative philosophical and ethical questions are placed off-limits at the very point at which they most need to be the subject of serious and urgent discussion. The Holocaust is thus revealed, in the words of the German historian Hans Mommsen, as the *mene tekel* of the modern state.¹⁶

THE ROOTS OF ETHICS

In 1990 Zygmunt Bauman's book on the Holocaust was awarded the European Amalfi Prize and he delivered a lecture at the prize-giving ceremony entitled 'Social Manipulation of Morality'. He confessed himself happy that the central message of the book had been recognised as vitally important, a message he summed up as being 'about the hidden and unseemly face of our confident, affluent, brave world, and the dangerous game this world plays with the human moral impulse'.¹⁷ Modern societies divorced morality from utility and, while this separation lies at the foundation of many spectacular scientific successes, it must also be linked to civilization's 'most terrifying crimes', so that the reconciliation and reuniting of science and ethics 'is the one chance our world may have to come to terms with its own awesome powers'.¹⁸

How might such a reconciliation be brought about? In the first place, Bauman insists that we need to revise our understanding of the nature of the moral impulse within human beings. In the modern world ethics (like religion) has been treated as a purely human invention designed to function as the glue that holds society together. Morals are socially constructed and fulfil a strictly utilitarian purpose. But the inadequacy of such an understanding of morality is clearly exposed by the horrors that have scarred the history of twentieth-century Europe. What is more, it becomes impossible to speak about 'right' and 'wrong' when passing judgement on people who had complied with whatever was decreed as 'moral' within the society of which they were part. In a devastating sentence Bauman comments that sitting in judgement on the perpetrators of Auschwitz 'was not an easy task for those who guarded the secrets of the Gulag and those who were secretly preparing for Hiroshima'.¹⁹ What is required then is a fundamental rethink of the nature and source of morality and a search for a

¹⁶ Quoted by Bauman, *Ibid.*, p. 184.

¹⁷ The lecture is printed at the end of the second edition of the book: *Ibid.*, p. 209.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

new theory open to the possibility that normative ethics belong to 'the very modality of human existence'.

In a remarkable passage toward the end of the Amalfi lecture, Bauman reflects on the consequences of the loss of belief in God for modern societies. The era which witnessed the unleashing of unprecedented technological powers was the period in which the world was declared to be *disenchanted* by Max Weber, and released from the moral restraints linked to belief in the Creator by Nietzsche's announcement of the *death of God*. The removal of God 'created a vacancy': the office of 'supreme legislator-cum-manager, of the designer and administrator of the world order, was now horrifyingly empty' and this vacancy on the throne became 'a standing and tempting invitation to visionaries and adventurers'. Now humanity, unaided by normative ethics and unrestrained by a sense of accountability to the Creator, set about the task of restraining chaos and recreating the world. The 'classless society, the race-pure society, the Great Society were now the task of man'. But precisely the combination of enormous technological power and a determination to use this in the service of a series of humanly-conceived, mundane visions of utopia made the Gulags, Auschwitz and Hiroshima possible. There are, Bauman concludes, many tasks human rulers may perform, but constructing 'a perfect world order is not... one of them'.²⁰

Zygmunt Bauman writes as a sociologist, not as a theologian. Using the imagery of the world as a garden to be controlled, designed and managed, he says, perhaps wistfully, that in a world densely populated with knowledgeable gardeners 'no room seems to be left for the Gardener Supreme, the gardener of gardeners'. Nonetheless, it is clear to him that the roots of morality have to be sought 'beneath societal arrangements' and that far from being the product of human society, the origins of morality transcend any and all merely local, particular contexts. He constantly

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 218-19. This passage serves as a reminder of other secular analyses of modernity which focus attention on the problem of defining 'right' and 'wrong' in the absence of God. For example, Albert Camus' penetrating critique of revolution in *The Rebel* contains very similar language to that used by Bauman: 'When man submits God to moral judgement, he kills him in his own heart. And then what is the basis of morality? God is denied in the name of justice but can the idea of justice be understood without the idea of God? Have we not arrived at absurdity?' Elsewhere Camus states this same problem in a memorable phrase: 'The sky is empty, the earth delivered into the hands of power without principles.' Albert Camus, *The Rebel* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), pp. 57, 117.

repeats the view that powerful moral drives 'have a pre-societal origin' and that human societies, far from magically creating ethical standards and behaviour, have often made 'immoral conduct more, rather than less, plausible'.²¹

The implication of this is that it is perfectly possible to behave ethically and to find oneself in *conflict* with societal norms. Indeed, acting morally may frequently involve 'taking a stance dubbed and decreed anti-social or subversive by the powers that be *and* by public opinion'. Ethical convictions do *not* necessarily contribute to social cohesion and unity; indeed they may in many situations become profoundly counter-cultural. Doing what is 'right' may involve 'resistance to societal authority and action aimed at weakening its grip'.²² At this point Zygmunt Bauman meets Dietrich Bonhoeffer as sociological analysis of the Holocaust and its lessons for the modern world begins to overlap with the experience of the isolated German pastor who wrote, 'Just as Christ is Christ only in virtue of his suffering and rejection, so the disciple is a disciple only in so far as he shares his Lord's suffering and rejection and crucifixion.'²³

THE CHALLENGE OF DISCIPLESHIP

In what ways then can my earlier claim that Bauman's work illuminates the problems that Christians have in living as the disciples of Jesus in the context of the modern world be justified? Bauman is obviously aware of the ethical failure of German Christianity at the time of the Holocaust, observing that the churches failed to resist the evils of the time and that the exceptions were limited to a relatively small number of isolated individuals. It seems to me that Bauman's exposition of the power of a technical rationality, accompanied by the rigid separation of life into private and public spheres, and the exclusion of ethical and religious discourse from the latter, helps to explain *why* Bonhoeffer's contemporaries had secularised the Christian faith, making it indistinguishable from 'bourgeois respectability'.

And this was far from being a failure of the pre-war German churches alone: Western Christianity in general has been profoundly shaped by the modern culture which is the subject of Bauman's searching critique.

²¹ *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 198. On the same page he makes the significant observation that moral people can be driven into immoral action 'provided that they are convinced that the experts... have defined their actions as necessary'.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 199.

²³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, p. 71.

Evidence of this (if any is required) can be found in Peter Berger's sociological analysis of twentieth-century American Christianity, published in 1961 under the title, *The Noise of Solemn Assemblies*. Berger discusses the core values that dominate American life, including the crucial acceptance of the need to operate smoothly within 'the large bureaucratic structures that dominate most of our life today'.²⁴ In this context, American Christianity remained strong and prosperous and church leaders were inclined to assume that it continued to exercise considerable influence over the American people. The reality, says Berger, is that 'the person listening to the minister in church is a radically different one from the person who makes economic decisions the next day' because in the professional sphere actions become determined 'by a radically different logic – the logic of business, industry, politics, or whatever other sector of public life the individual is related to'.²⁵ Berger's conclusion, which is strikingly similar to Bonhoeffer's in the German situation forty years earlier, is that 'church membership in no way means adherence to a set of values at variance with those of the general society; rather it means a *stronger and more explicitly religious affirmation of the same values held by the community at large*'.²⁶

With an insight that now appears to have been prophetic, Berger suggested that the task of American Christianity in such a context was that of securing its *disestablishment*; it needed to break free from a fatal entanglement with a culture that guaranteed it prosperity, but at the terrible cost of making discipleship all but impossible. In words that set the agenda for our further discussion, Berger observed that the informal 'religious establishment' in America was 'designed to prevent the encounter with the Christian message'.²⁷ He continues:

To say the least, it is difficult to imagine how the religiously mature, and psychologically adjusted church member in our situation can come to terms with the naked horror of Calvary, or the blazing glory of Easter morning. Both his religion and his culture compel him to sentimentalize, neutralize, assimilate these Christian images. If he did not do so, they would challenge

²⁴ Peter Berger, *The Noise of Solemn Assemblies: Christian Commitment and the Religious Establishment in America* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), p. 45.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 41. (Italics mine.)

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

his religiosity and his respectability and might even threaten his so-called mental health.²⁸

The root cause of the problems identified here, I suggest, is that the centuries-long assumption that Western Christianity exists within a cultural context compatible with the faith of Christ meant that it largely failed to recognise the significance of the changes brought about by modernity, and so ended up, in Lesslie Newbigin's words, as 'an advanced case of syncretism'.²⁹ Newbigin's claim that European Christianity has lived so long in a state of peaceful co-existence with a post-Enlightenment culture that it is almost impossible for it to recover the standpoint of a genuinely missionary approach to that culture, corresponds both to Bonhoeffer's critique of the church in the 1930s, and to Bauman's description of the privatization and domestication of ethical imperatives within modern culture.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the challenge of the call to discipleship in a world within which the kind of culture analysed by Bauman is being globalized, is more urgent than ever. Much of Bauman's later work is focused on the emergence of post-modernity and the human consequences of economic globalization.³⁰ These books seem to me to offer a most valuable resource for the understanding of the times in which we live and they serve to highlight both the great urgency of the call to discipleship, and the opportunity presented by the situation today. Commenting on the positive responses of many young people to Bauman's work, his fellow sociologist Richard Sennett has said: 'Contrary to all the clichés about young people being disengaged and not interested, they are attracted to the idea of ethical action ... they want something with teeth. So it really appeals to them when someone tells them that they're responsible for relating to others in an ethical way.'³¹

This surely suggests to us that a Christianity faithful to the call of Christ, a call that (to quote Bonhoeffer) drags the disciple 'out of his relative security into a life of absolute insecurity', and involves a faith that

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

²⁹ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Other Side of 1984: Questions for the Churches* (Geneva: WCC, 1983), p. 22-3.

³⁰ See, for example, *Postmodernity and Its Discontents* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997); *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998); *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001); *Liquid Love* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003); and *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004).

³¹ Quoted in Bunting, 'Zygmunt Bauman: Passion and Pessimism', p. 20.

DISCIPLESHIP IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

becomes real in acts of ethical obedience, so offering an alternative way of being human to that seen as normative within the modern world, can respond to the deep longings of a generation wearied by the superficiality and greed of the hollowed-out culture of the West. Almost the last words Lesslie Newbigin uttered in public in 1996 were these:

I have said that this so-called Western, modern, scientific, free market culture is the most powerful in the world at the present time.... And it seems to me that in the century that lies ahead of us these are the three major factors that will compete for the allegiance of the human family: the gospel, the free market, and Islam.... As to Islam: while the other great world faiths are deeply significant and worthy of respect, none of them makes that same claim for universal significance. As to the free market: the crucial question is going to be whether the Christian Church can recover its confidence in the gospel in order to be able to challenge with confidence the enormous power of this ideology that now rules us.³²

Or, to revert to Weber's imagery: is it possible that Christians can break out of the 'iron cage' in which they, along with other people, find themselves imprisoned? Is it conceivable that 'entirely new prophets will arise', able to speak a liberating word that breaks open the confined, one-dimensional worldview in which we are trapped? And, in this context, will Christians give serious and sustained attention to the question of what it might mean to be the followers of Christ, seeking to fulfil the unchanged mandate to make disciples 'of all nations' in a globalized world?

DISCIPLESHIP IN A MISSIONARY CHURCH

In now turning to consider the challenges facing Christians in the Western world who seek a recovery of genuine discipleship, I want first to notice some significant changes that have taken place in recent years and have set this discussion in a rather different context to that within which Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote *The Cost of Discipleship*. Not that his exposition has lost any of its power and relevance; on the contrary, it seems to me that the flow of history since the 1940s may mean that we are now in a situation in which Christians are better able to hear Bonhoeffer's voice and more likely to respond to his call.

In the first place, the demise of Christendom is now widely recognised, and from every side one hears calls for the creation of new forms of the

³² Lesslie Newbigin, *Signs Amid the Rubble: The Purposes of God in Human History* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), p. 118-19.

church in which the demands of discipleship will be treated seriously. As far back as the middle of the twentieth century the Catholic theologian Karl Rahner had recognised that European Christians now found themselves in a *diaspora* situation in which the faith that once dominated the continent would 'cease to be a religion of growth and would become a religion of choice'. The time had arrived for Catholics to wake up to the fact that a 'homogeneous Christian West' was a thing of the past and to find the courage to abandon 'the old facades which have nothing or very little behind them'. In a remarkable passage that challenges Christians within and beyond the Catholic tradition, Rahner pleaded:

Let us get away from the tyranny of statistics. For the next hundred years they are always going to be against us, if we ever let them speak out of turn. One real conversion in a great city is something more splendid than the spectacle of a whole remote village going to the sacraments.³³

In the meantime, in North America, despite the continuing strength of the kind of culture-religion discussed and critiqued by Peter Berger, an ever-growing number of Christians have recognised the changed historical and cultural context within which they are placed and are now engaged in the search for new models of the church-in-mission. Douglas John Hall speaks for many when he says that the Christian movement in the West can have a significant future in which it will rediscover faithfulness to the apostolic vision and be of 'immense service to our beleaguered world', but that this will happen *only* if Christians stop trying to have 'the kind of future that nearly sixteen centuries of official Christianity in the Western world have conditioned us to covet'.³⁴ Elsewhere Hall has responded to the challenge posed by Berger's earlier work and has discussed at great length exactly what theology, worship and mission might look like in the context of a disestablished Christianity in North America. In such a situation Christians would be freed to live as a community of disciples whose life together would be shaped by kingdom values.³⁵

³³ I have quoted Rahner from Douglas John Hall's book, *Confessing the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), pp. 221-2. The original source is Rahner's *Mission and Grace: Essays in Pastoral Theology* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1963).

³⁴ Douglas John Hall, *The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1997), p. ix.

³⁵ See his three volumes of contextual theology under the general title *Christian Theology in a North American Context – Volume 1, Thinking the*

The second development that has placed us in a changed context relates to the emergence of what is now called 'World Christianity'. At the Lausanne Congress in 1974 the implicit assumption held by many Western Christians that their faith was a culture-free expression of the gospel was repeatedly called into question by fellow-believers who, coming to Christ from other cultural situations, recognised the absurdity of such a claim. The electrifying address of Rene Padilla in which he exposed an Evangelicalism which peddled 'cheap grace' around the world and lived in an easy compromise with ideologies that were in conflict with the gospel, can still stir the spirit and trouble the conscience more than a quarter-of-a-century after it was delivered. Padilla challenged his hearers to leave Lausanne 'with a repentant attitude with regard to our enslavement to the world and our arrogant triumphalism, with a sense of our helplessness to break away from our bonds, and yet also with great confidence in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ...'.³⁶

In the decades that have elapsed since that historic event, Christianity has continued to grow across the Southern hemisphere and the historical significance of this remarkable phenomenon, and its likely importance with regard to the future of our world, is increasingly recognised. In relation to our concern with discipleship, the new Christian heartlands in Africa, Latin America and Asia are home to millions of believers who belong to churches of the poor. As in the past, the gospel has taken root in contexts characterised by suffering and deprivation where it enables vast numbers of people to survive in appalling social and economic conditions with great dignity and with an extraordinary sense of hope. However, as the members of these growing and maturing churches become aware of the fact that their poverty is not unrelated to the spread of Western modernity and the impact of an economistic worldview on their traditional cultures, they may well wonder why Christians no longer live as the 'Third Race', displaying to the world an alternative economics and a distinctive understanding of what it means to be a human being. There are many indications that Christians in the South feel a growing sense of impatience with their brothers and sisters in the North for the illicit compromises they appear to make with a secular, materialist and frequently violent culture,

Faith (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); *Volume 2, Professing the Faith* (1993); *Volume 3, Confessing the Faith* (1998).

³⁶ Rene Padilla, 'Evangelism and the World' in J. D. Douglas (ed.), *Let The Earth Hear His Voice* (Minneapolis: Worldwide Publications, 1975), p. 145-6.

and their questions simply increase the urgency with which the issue of discipleship needs to be addressed.³⁷

There is a third factor at work today which places discipleship high on our agenda, namely the deepening sense of crisis *within* modern, Western culture and the indications of a growing search for alternatives to a way of life that creates such profound unhappiness and threatens the very future of our beautiful planet. We have noted earlier the evidence of a positive reaction to the work of Zygmunt Bauman on the part of Western young people and there *is* evidence (to use the subtitle of a book by John Carroll) that the Western world is *dying for want of a story*.³⁸ Jeremy Seabrook, in a profoundly moving study of the problem of ageing, articulates a question that is asked by a growing number of people in the modern world:

When we consider the condition of the elderly, and the way in which they are disproportionately represented among the disadvantaged of the earth, a central question, which many had thought laid to rest by the global triumph of industrial society, returns to haunt us. Is the creation of ever more wealth synonymous with the betterment of human lives? Is the well-being of vulnerable people really dependent upon perpetually rising incomes, or does the creation of wealth itself militate against social cohesion, belonging and solidarity?³⁹

Surely in a world where the centuries-old institutional forms of Christianity are crumbling, where millions of new believers in the churches of the poor demonstrate the reality of a radical faith in God and ask why we are so wedded to an excess of material things, and at a time

³⁷ For example, consider the words of Alex Araujo, a Brazilian Christian, spoken at the Iguassu Consultation in 1999: 'the Western church may not be able to escape the strong grip of economic globalization without the help of the emerging church. What does the church look like when it is so heavily influenced by material affluence and driven by the mechanistic values of growth and efficiency? How do brothers and sisters who live at the margins of this worldwide globalization pattern experience communion with Christ and his family? We must learn to listen to and learn from them.' Araujo's paper was entitled 'Globalization and World Evangelism', in William D. Taylor (ed.), *Global Missiology for the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), p. 64.

³⁸ See John Carroll, *The Western Dreaming* (Sydney: Harper/Collins, 2001).

³⁹ Jeremy Seabrook, *A world growing old* (London: Pluto Press, 2003), p. 51. Seabrook is an extraordinarily insightful writer, see his earlier book *The Race to Riches: The Human Cost of Wealth* (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1988).

when Western young people seek for ethical values and a sense of purpose in life, we must respond to Bonhoeffer's challenge that 'faith is only real when there is obedience, never without it, and faith only becomes faith in the act of obedience'.⁴⁰

FACING THE CHALLENGE

So then, where do we discover the real challenges in following Jesus today and what kind of changes will be needed if we and our churches are to make credible the claim that we are his disciples? The starting point, it seems to me, must be where we discovered it to lie at the beginning of this study, namely, with a focus on *praxis* and its central and defining role in discipleship. This is already a move that may disturb us given the fact that we have always insisted on the priority of *faith* and, for very good reasons, have been concerned that talk which puts deeds in a primary position is in danger of subverting the gospel.

However, it is not a matter of here displacing faith in the order of salvation, but rather of insisting with the Epistle of James that the faith which truly saves *can never remain alone*, otherwise grace is cheapened. As Bonhoeffer put it: 'We poured forth unending streams of grace. But the call to follow Jesus in the narrow way is hardly ever heard. Where were those truths that impelled the early church to institute the catechumate, which enabled a strict watch to be kept over the frontier between the church and the world, and afforded adequate protection for costly grace?'⁴¹ The linkage between faith and works in the early church is surely incontrovertible; the followers of Christ are the people of *the Way*, they model in both personal and social life a revolutionary love which both attracts and repels a watching world. It attracts by its sheer beauty, but repels because it seems beyond the reach of those who have yet to discover the Source of this new life. Everywhere in the New Testament the distinctive ethical life of Christians is seen as being fundamental to their witness and is watched over and guarded with an apostolic zeal which flows from the conviction that the honour of Christ is at stake here. Those who claim to belong to Christ *must walk as Jesus did*; they have abandoned the world and its desires and now *do the will of God*. Those who fail to see the repeated stress on *praxis* in the letters of the New Testament must be wearing the wrong glasses! 'He who *does what is right* is righteous' and those who fail to do what is right are *not* children of God. This is clearly

⁴⁰ *The Cost of Discipleship*, p. 54.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

difficult language for Christians reared in a culture-religion which leads them to expect a close fit between their belief and practice and that of the surrounding world. But such Christians must either relearn the language of the New Testament or run the risk of finding themselves unable to join a community of faith determined to follow the Son of God.

In the light of this I want to propose that the call of discipleship requires us to revisit our understanding of the nature of conversion and the process whereby converts are *initiated* into the Christian faith and community. We have heard Bonhoeffer referring to the catechumate in the early church, and it is worth asking whether in a post-Christendom context we have lessons to learn from those who followed Christ in the hostile world that existed before the coming of a 'Christian society'. In the first centuries of Christianity preparation for baptism was a crucial aspect of enabling converts to make the transition from the dominant culture to another culture 'patterned on the way of Christ'. I have reflected often on the relevance of two accounts of conversion that have come down to us from this period, those of Justin Martyr and Origen. Here is Justin:

After being persuaded by the Word [we] renounced them [demons] and now follow the only unbegotten God through his Son. Those who once rejoiced in fornication now delight in self-control alone; those who made use of magic arts have dedicated themselves to the good and unbegotten God; we who once took most pleasure in increasing our wealth and property now bring what we have into a common fund and share with everyone in need; we who hated and killed one another and would not associate with men of different tribes... now, after the manifestation of Christ live together and pray for our enemies and try to persuade those who unjustly hate us, so that they, living according to the fair commands of Christ, may share with us the hope of receiving the same things.⁴²

The reference to demonic powers, to addiction to sex and money, and to a way of life characterised by greed and selfishness, all suggest that the cultural context being described here is similar to the one in which we find ourselves at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Jeremy Seabrook, who was quoted earlier, observes that modern culture is now so dominated by owning and consuming that it imposes upon people a 'compulsion to wealth that has nothing to do with human need, but is part of a soulless

⁴² Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, in Andrew Bradstock & Christopher Rowland (eds), *Radical Christian Writings: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), p. 2.

system that we must inhabit and which inhabits and animates us'.⁴³ This he says, is a form of *possession* which renders people incapable of distinguishing between their own unappeasable hunger and the insatiable search for profit within the world system. In this context, conversion can never be reduced to a mere decision of the will, a mental adjustment that involves no real transformation of life; there is a *cost* to be met, a *transition* to be made that may prove long and painful, a *way of life to be learned* that demands perseverance, a teachable spirit, a desire to become a *new person*.

The extent of this challenge is seen clearly in the second example of conversion from this period. Here is Cyprian, writing to Donatus and describing how utterly impossible the Christian ideals seemed to be to him:

While I was still lying in darkness and gloomy night... I used to regard it as a difficult matter, and especially difficult in respect of my character at that time, that a man should be capable of being born again.... How, said I, is such a conversion possible, that there should be a sudden and rapid divestment of all which, innate in us has hardened in the corruption of our material nature, or acquired by us has become inveterate by long-accustomed use? These things have become deeply and radically ingrained within us. When does he learn thrift that has been used to liberal banquets and sumptuous feasts?⁴⁴

Once again, the extent of the change required in coming to Christ is evident; conversion seemed to the unregenerate pagan an utterly impossible barrier. Cheap grace solves the problem by divorcing faith from discipleship, but, as Bonhoeffer said, such a move, while leaving the church nominally orthodox, casts doubt over whether it any longer 'follows its Lord'. Is it not then clear that if we are to recover the practice of discipleship in the context of deeply pagan culture, we need to review both our understanding of conversion and the means by which we prepare enquirers for initiation into Christ and into the life of the disciple-community?

⁴³ Jeremy Seabrook, *The Race to Riches: The Human Cost of Wealth* (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1988), p. 19.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

GOD WITH MEN IN THE PROPHETS AND THE WRITINGS: AN EXAMINATION OF THE NATURE OF GOD'S PRESENCE

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I. INTRODUCTION

Evangelical biblical theologians have the joyful task of seeking to incorporate everything the Bible says into our expositions of the theology contained in the Bible. Unlike our more critical counterparts, we do not (intentionally) excise texts that do not fit into our paradigms. It is clear from the NT that the New Covenant faithful become and remain believers because they are regenerated and indwelt by God's Spirit (e.g. Gal. 3:3; Rom. 8:9-11). Some infer that, 'Since He keeps the NT saint by indwelling... it seems reasonable to believe that He kept the Old Testament saint in the same way.'¹ One of the working hypotheses of the present study is that John 7:39 forbids this inference.² The thesis of this study is that God's presence *with*, not *in*, his people is the OT's way of describing how believers were kept. In order to establish this thesis, I will seek to show that there is no evidence in the material in the OT from Joshua

¹ Leon J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), p. 70.

² John 7:39 bars the path to the conclusion that Old Covenant believers were indwelt. See chapter 4 of my dissertation, 'He Is with You and He Will Be in You' (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003), a revised version of which will appear from Broadman & Holman. John 7:39 does not say that the Spirit did not exist prior to the glorification of Jesus, nor that the Spirit was not giving spiritual life to believers. John 7:39 does say that *those who had believed were about to receive* the Spirit. In view of the 'reception' language in John 14:17 and 20:22 (7:39; 14:17; and 20:22 all employ forms of *lambano* ('I receive')), it seems that the reception of the indwelling Spirit is in view in John 7:39.

through to Malachi that OT saints were continually indwelt by the Spirit on an individual basis.³

John 7:39 indicates that the Holy Spirit would not be received by believers until after the cross.⁴ This study seeks to establish what the OT does and does not say about the presence of God with regard to its faithful. The aims of this study are two: first, to draw attention to the pervasive reality of God's presence with his people in the Prophets and the Writings;⁵ second, to argue that God maintains his Old Covenant remnant by abiding with his people.

These two points are significant because in the OT there is a direct correlation between the favourable presence of God and the well-being of his people, physical as well as spiritual. The OT, however, does not present God creating and keeping his believing remnant by granting his Spirit to continually dwell in each individual member of the remnant. God's dwelling place in the OT is in the midst of his people, but in the midst of them means in the tabernacle and later the temple, not in their individual bodies.

This investigation will follow the salvation historical timeline reflected in the OT, paying attention to the relationship between the presence of God and the faithfulness of the Old Covenant remnant.⁶ There are a number

³ For a similar study of the Pentateuch, see James M. Hamilton, 'God with Men in the Torah', *WTJ* 65 (2003), pp. 113-33.

⁴ Cf. also John 14:17 and 16:7. Pace W. C. Kaiser, *Toward Rediscovering the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), pp. 139-40; B. B. Warfield, 'The Spirit of God in the Old Testament,' in *Biblical Doctrines* (1929; reprint, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1988), esp. pp. 128-9; Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*. See further James M. Hamilton, 'Old Covenant Believers and the Indwelling Spirit: A Survey of the Spectrum of Opinion', *TJ* 24 (2003), pp. 37-54. For a whole Bible treatment of these issues, see Hamilton (note 2). For a summary, see James Hamilton, 'Were Old Covenant Believers Indwelt by the Holy Spirit?' *Them* 30 (2004), pp. 12-22.

⁵ Samuel Terrien argues that this motif, God's presence, is central for biblical theology (*The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology*, Religious Perspectives 26 [New York: Harper & Row, 1978], pp. 3-4).

⁶ The title of this study reflects the approach mandated by W. J. Dumbrell, 'any theology of the Old Testament had best adhere to the Hebrew canonical sequence of Law, Prophets, and Writings' (Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988], p. 11). The rabbis seem to have followed this arrangement (cf. *b. B. Bat.* 14b), and it was articulated by Jesus himself (Luke 24:44). Because this study is concerned with the elucidation of salvation-history, it will proceed through the material chronologically.

of ways in which God's presence is communicated in the OT. Perhaps the two most prominent are the direct statements that 'God was with him'⁷ and the many references to God's dwelling place.⁸ Beginning from the period of the conquest and the reign of the judges, continuing through the period of the monarchy with the construction of the temple and the pre-exilic prophets, then through the period of the exile and the return, and finally in the writings that accompany these events, it will be argued here that the faithful remnant in the OT were maintained by God's presence *with* them. We begin with the conquest and the judges.

II. THE CONQUEST AND THE JUDGES

There is no evidence in the Pentateuch that each individual member of the believing remnant was continually indwelt by the Holy Spirit of Yahweh. There is, on the other hand, plenty of evidence to indicate that God's presence remained *with* his people. Indeed, God took up residence in the tabernacle (Exod. 40:34), not in each individual believer.⁹ The picture sketched in Torah receives yet more detail in the narratives that recount the conquest of the land and the period of the judges. As the period before the monarchy is described, no more evidence is given to indicate that all believing Israelites were indwelt by the Holy Spirit for the duration of their walk with God. On the other hand, the pentateuchal notes that ring God's presence *with* his people continue to be sounded.

We read of God *with* his people, of Yahweh *in the midst of* and *among* the people. The nation *meets* with God, and continues to conceive of life as being lived *before* and *in the presence of* Yahweh. The best explanation for all of these expressions is Israel's conviction that their God inhabits the

⁷ This can take the form of Yahweh stating, 'I will be with you', or of the narrator observing, 'Yahweh was with him (them)', or of one character stating to another, 'May Yahweh be with you' or 'Yahweh is with you'. See the column 'God with Men' on the five charts at the end of this study. Cf. M. A. Grisanti, *NIDOTTE*, 1:1024.

⁸ See the five charts at the end of this study for various ways in which God's dwelling place is designated; the multitude of references shows that this theme pervades the OT.

⁹ Hamilton, 'God with Men in the Torah'.

tabernacle he instructed them to build.¹⁰ This section will discuss these themes in Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and 1 Samuel 1:1–7:17.¹¹

A. God was with him

God was *with* the fathers, he was *with* the people to bring them out of Egypt and sustain them in the wilderness, and once again he promises to be *with* Joshua (Josh. 1:5).¹² Joshua then commands the people, 'Do not tremble and do not be dismayed, because Yahweh your God is with you wherever you go' (1:9).¹³ The people then respond to Joshua's charge with the words, 'May Yahweh your God be with you just as he was with Moses' (1:17). The threefold stress on Yahweh's presence *with* the people at the outset of the conquest demonstrates the significance of the reality for the nation's well-being.¹⁴

When the capture of territories by individual tribes is related, we read, 'And Yahweh was with Judah, and they took the hill country' (Judg. 1:19). Similarly, 'And the house of Joseph went up also to Bethel, and Yahweh was with them' (1:22). As the period of the judges is summarized, the writer notes, 'And when Yahweh raised up judges for them, Yahweh would be with the judge in order to save them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge' (2:18).¹⁵ Yahweh's presence with the judge is not only for physical protection, it also had a sanctifying effect upon the nation, for we read, 'And when the judge died they would return and cause more corruption than their fathers' (2:19).

The pattern established by this early summary is carried through the narratives found in Judges. Only with Gideon is the phrase, 'Yahweh is with you' explicitly stated (6:12, 16). But when the judges were raised up

¹⁰ C. R. Koester, *The Dwelling of God: The Tabernacle in the Old Testament, Intertestamental Jewish Literature, and the New Testament* (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1989), p. 8.

¹¹ 1 Samuel 8 and following will be discussed below with the monarchy. Representative passages will be given here. For more references, see Chart 1: 'God's Presence in the Conquest – the Judges.'

¹² T. C. Butler, *Joshua* (Waco: Word, 1983), p. 12.

¹³ Unless otherwise noted all translations of biblical texts are my own.

¹⁴ Butler calls this 'one of the basic roots of Israelite faith' (*Joshua*, p. 12).

¹⁵ The summarizing nature of this verse can be seen in the frequentative *w-qatalti* forms continuing the temporal *kī* (cf. Joüon §119 u–v; §166 n–o; GKC §112 e; §164 d).

and 'the Spirit of Yahweh' came upon them, Yahweh was with his people.¹⁶

One of the emphases of the book of Ruth is that while the nation is largely degenerate in the period of the judges, the faithful of the land are those who seem to be insignificant. The book of Ruth testifies to the presence of a remnant, however small, within the nation. Significantly, this remnant is preserving the line of the Messiah (Ruth 4:18-22).¹⁷ It is no accident that Boaz greets the reapers with the words, 'May Yahweh be with you' (2:4). The statement demonstrates that even in the midst of everyday life Boaz has pious desires for the people with whom he deals. Expressions of this nature are rare in these accounts of the days when the judges ruled Israel. The only other instance of such a phrase I have located occurs in a description of Samuel, 'And Yahweh was with him' (1 Sam. 3:19). Indications that each individual member of the faithful remnant was continually indwelt by the Spirit are not to be found in these narratives.

B. God in the midst of the people

Just as Yahweh was in the midst of the camp as the Israelites journeyed in the wilderness, Yahweh was in the midst of the community during the days of the conquest and the rule of the judges. Joshua tells the people that, 'In this you shall know that the living God is in your midst, when he indeed dispossesses from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, and the Jebusite' (3:10).

Later in Joshua, when civil war is narrowly averted (22:10-30), Phineas comments upon the reconciliation, 'Today we know that Yahweh is among

¹⁶ Cf. D. I. Block, 'The rulers functioned as agents of the divine presence' (*Judges, Ruth* [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999], p. 131). The Spirit 'came upon' Kenaz (3:9-10), 'clothed' Gideon (6:34), 'came upon' Jephthah (11:29), 'began to impel' Samson (13:25), 'rushed upon him' (14:6, 19; 15:14), and then 'departed from upon him' (16:20). None of these expressions indicate that the Spirit dwelt in these people continually, nor do they show that the remnant of this time period (e.g. Ruth, Boaz, Naomi) were indwelt by the Spirit. What Kenaz, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson experienced is similar to what Bezalel (Exod. 31:2-3; 35:31), Oholiab (31:6), Saul (1 Sam. 10:9; 11:6; 16:14), and David (16:13) experienced. OT saints can be regenerate and occasionally empowered, while NT saints are regenerate, continually indwelt, and sometimes empowered.

¹⁷ C. F. Keil, *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel*, vol. 2 of *Commentary on the Old Testament*, by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch (1866-91; reprint, Peabody: Hendrickson, 2001), p. 339.

us' (22:31). This comment arises because the tribes who had built the altar that occasioned the conflict had not intended to be unfaithful to Yahweh (22:31). Phineas is confident that the nation's assurance of Yahweh's presence has not been threatened because he is satisfied that those who had built the altar had not meant rebellion (22:29). When the nation is later unsuccessful in battle, and in the process loses possession of the ark, dejection is expressed with the words, 'The glory has departed from Israel' (1 Sam. 4:21). Again, God is *with*, but not *in*, his people, and here the loss of his presence is symbolized by the loss of the ark.

C. Before Yahweh

The biblical authors describe life as lived 'before Yahweh', thus communicating their conviction that Yahweh is present with Israel.¹⁸ The Jordan is crossed 'before Yahweh' (Josh. 4:13). Lots are cast for land 'before Yahweh' (18:8, 10). Joshua gives the people a final charge prior to his death 'before Yahweh' (24:1). Both acts of piety (1 Sam. 1:12) and acts of wickedness (2:17) are committed 'before Yahweh'. This seems to be another pointer in the direction of God being with, but not in, his people.

D. The dwelling of God

God's dwelling place is described in a number of ways in the narratives being considered. Identifying an omnipresent being (cf. Ps. 139:7-12) with a particular location is always an analogical oversimplification.¹⁹ Nevertheless, when reference is made to the tent of meeting (Josh. 18:1; 19:51), the tabernacle (22:19, 29), the ark of God (Judg. 20:26-27; 1 Sam. 4:4; 6:7),²⁰ or the temple (1 Sam. 3:3), it is always with the understanding that God is there.²¹

E. Summary

As in the period of the wilderness wanderings,²² in the period of the conquest through to the regency of the judges there is no evidence that God's Spirit continually indwelt each individual member of the remnant. Also, as before, there is evidence that Yahweh had enabled (i.e. circumcised

¹⁸ Ian Wilson, *Out of the Midst of the Fire: Divine Presence in Deuteronomy* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995). For a catalogue of references to this reality in the Prophets and the Writings, see the relevant column on the charts at the end of this study.

¹⁹ Cf. B. E. Baloian, 'Anthropomorphisms,' *NIDOTTE*, 4:391-4.

²⁰ S. T. Hague, *NIDOTTE*, 1:503, cf. also p. 506.

²¹ Wilson, *Out of the Midst of the Fire*, p. 217.

²² Hamilton, 'God with Men in the Torah'.

the hearts of/regenerated) some to believe and live by faith. These are sustained in faith by God's promises and presence in the midst of the nation, which they experience when they appear before him (cf. 1 Sam. 1:1-18). These narratives give no evidence that God's Spirit continuously indwelt the faithful of this time period.

III. THE MONARCHY AND THE TEMPLE

Because this examination of the OT is treating the material historically, this section will examine both the narratives that record the period of the monarchy and the writing prophets who were active in the pre-exilic period. It will again be seen that God is *with* – but not *in* – his people. It is also necessary to note that there is evidence in these narratives that believers understood their need to be enabled by Yahweh to obey, and that they thought of God dwelling in their midst in the temple, not in each of them as individuals. For example, David prays,

O Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, preserve this [willingness (29:17)] forever in the intentions of the plans of the heart of your people, and make their hearts firm toward you. As for Solomon my son, give to him a complete heart to keep your commandments, your testimonies, your statutes, in order to do all of them and to build the temple for which I have made provision (1 Chr. 29:18-19).

David clearly thinks that the people need Yahweh to sustain them in their good intentions, that if Solomon is going to have the necessary heart Yahweh must give it to him, and that Yahweh is going to dwell in the temple. This seems to warrant the conclusion that there were some whose hearts God had inclined toward obedience. In the OT's terms, they had circumcised hearts (cf. Deut. 10:16; 30:6), but there is nothing in the text to support the conclusion that God's Spirit took up residence within them. The Lord's dwelling place was the temple (cf. 1 Kgs 8:57-58).²³ When God's Spirit does take up residence within people, worship at specific locations will end (cf. John 2:16-21; 4:21-24).²⁴

A. Narratives of Israel's monarchy

Beginning in 1 Samuel 8 and continuing through 2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings, the reader finds accounts of the nation from roughly 1,000 BC down

²³ W. Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995), p. 47.

²⁴ R. E. Averbeck, 'Tabernacle', in *DOTP*, p. 826.

to the destruction of Jerusalem (586 BC) and the Babylonian captivity. The Chronicles were written after the exile, but they deal with the period of the monarchy and will be included at this point in the discussion. These accounts deal with the state of the nation from the beginning of the monarchy until the nation is taken into exile.²⁵

So far in the narratives under consideration, we have seen a plenitude of evidence that Yahweh was *with* his Old Covenant remnant, and his presence has been communicated in a variety of ways. What we have not seen is any direct evidence that the biblical authors meant to communicate that the Holy Spirit indwelt each member of the faithful remnant.²⁶ As before, so here: direct statements that, 'Yahweh was with him', continue to be made. The biblical authors continue to conceive of life 'in the presence of' or 'before Yahweh'. The tent of meeting, the tabernacle, and the ark continue to figure significantly, and God's presence among his people is dramatically reinforced when Yahweh comes to dwell in the temple. Each of these themes will be briefly considered here.²⁷

1. *God with his people.* Samuel assures Saul with the words, 'For God is with you' (1 Sam. 10:7).²⁸ Samuel assures the nation, 'For Yahweh

²⁵ Space constraints require that the Chronicles be included here, but the different needs that the Chronicler wrote to meet are not being ignored.

²⁶ It might be objected that the indwelling of the Spirit was yet to be revealed, and, because revelation is progressive, the fact that the Bible does not speak in those terms is no indication that the reality was not being experienced. One would think that those who wish to read the OT 'on its own terms' (i.e. no reading the NT into the Old) would not make recourse to this argument. Ironically, however, some of the most insistent that the NT not be read into the OT are inclined to this position. There are at least two responses to this argument from progressive revelation. First, the OT passages that indicate that a day will come when the Spirit will be poured out are always passages that point to the age to come. Second, the argument from progressive revelation is an argument from silence that flies in the face of John 7:39, which dictates that the Spirit will not be received until Jesus is glorified.

²⁷ As in the foregoing discussions, representative passages will be cited. For a fuller list of passages on each theme, see Chart 2: 'God's Presence in the Monarchy' below. Note the frequency of these expressions.

²⁸ It seems that when Samuel tells Saul that the Spirit will come upon him, the reader is not intended to conceive of the Spirit 'indwelling' Saul. Samuel says to Saul, 'the Spirit of Yahweh will rush upon you with the result that you will prophesy with them, and you will be turned to another man. And it shall be when these signs come to you, do for yourself whatever your hand finds, for God is with you' (1 Sam. 10:6-7). The Spirit will *come upon* Saul

will not abandon his people on account of his great name' (12:22). David is routinely characterized as one whom God is with (16:18; 17:37; 18:12-13).²⁹ On one occasion Yahweh indicates that he has been with Israel throughout their history since the Exodus (1 Sam. 7:7). For Israel to succeed she must 'be strong and act, and may Yahweh be with the good' (2 Chr. 19:11).³⁰ At the dedication of the temple it becomes clear that Solomon regards Yahweh's presence with his people as having a sanctifying effect upon them. Solomon prays, 'May Yahweh our God be with us as he was with our fathers! May he neither forsake us nor abandon us, that he may incline our hearts to himself, to walk in all his ways, to keep his commandments and statutes and judgments just as he commanded our fathers' (1 Kgs 8:57-58).

The significance of 1 Kgs 8:57-58 cannot be overstated. The dedication of the temple is the apex of Israel's national history. Her wisest king reigns; her territory is expansive; her economy thrives; her enemies are subdued; and her God has been pleased to dwell in her midst. Solomon knows that God's presence with the people via his dwelling in the temple is the key to national sanctification, so at the dedication he asks Yahweh to

and God will be *with* him. Later we read, 'Now the Spirit of Yahweh had departed from being with Saul' (16:14). It is difficult to be sure whether or not we are meant to understand from this passage that Saul was enabled to believe (i.e. regenerated). The fact that he was 'turned to another man' (10:6) is countered by the fruit he later bore – he tried to kill David (e.g. 19:1, 10) and Jonathan (20:33), consulted with a witch (28:8-19), and does not appear to have died in faith (31:4). We cannot be sure of Saul's status before God, but we can say that the Bible does not tell us that Saul was indwelt by the Spirit for the duration of his earthly sojourn, for the Spirit left him (1 Sam. 16:14). There does seem to be an indication that the Spirit being upon Saul was a special anointing for kingship: Samuel says to him, 'And Yahweh has departed from upon you.... and Yahweh has torn the kingdom from your hand' (28:16-17).

²⁹ For the many references of this nature, see Chart 2 below. With regard to David and the Spirit, as with Saul we read, 'And the Spirit of Yahweh rushed to David from that day forward' (1 Sam. 16:13). Because the next verse recounts the Spirit leaving Saul, the author probably intended to contrast Saul's experience with the Spirit with that enjoyed by David. In my view, this contrast should inform our understanding of Ps. 51:13 [ET 11], 'Do not take your Holy Spirit from me.' If David knew that the Spirit of anointing for kingship had been taken from Saul upon his sin, would he not have expected that the same could happen to him?

³⁰ This verse captures the biblical balance between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Both are necessary and affirmed.

dwell in the temple and thereby incline the hearts of the people to obedience (1 Kgs 8:57-58). This text demonstrates that Yahweh did indeed operate upon the hearts of his people. He enabled them to believe. But as has been seen above, their maintenance in faith is not effected by God's Spirit dwelling in them. Solomon understands the sanctification of the remnant not as coming through God dwelling in each of them, but as coming through God dwelling in the midst of them – in the temple.

When the nation first took a king, Samuel promised that Yahweh would not abandon his people (1 Sam. 12:22). But as the nation's sin under the monarchy neared its completion, in faithful fulfilment of the covenant curses (cf. Deut. 27-28), Yahweh declared his intention to abandon his people (2 Kgs 21:14). As will be seen below, though he abandoned the city to be plundered and the temple to be burned (25:9), believers were nevertheless preserved through the exile (e.g. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego).

2. *In the presence of God.* As we have seen above, because God is present in the midst of the people, he sees what the people do, hears what they say, and they live before him. On special occasions, such as the selection and anointing of a king, the people appear before God (1 Sam. 10:19; 11:15; 1 Chr. 11:3). When Saul disobeys, Samuel rebukes him for doing 'the evil in the sight of Yahweh' (15:19). Similarly, when David sins the narrator comments, 'The matter which David had done was evil in the sight of Yahweh' (2 Sam. 11:27). At the dedication of the temple Solomon makes reference in his prayer to Yahweh's servants 'who walk before you with all their hearts' (1 Kgs 8:23).³¹ Kings are evaluated on the basis of whether they do good or evil 'in the sight of Yahweh' (e.g. 15:5, 8; 16:7, 25).

When the evil of the nation had reached its completion, 'Yahweh was exceedingly angry with Israel, and he removed them from his presence.... he cast them out of his sight.... he removed them from his presence' (2 Kgs 17:18, 20, 23). Judah remained (17:18) but not for much longer. Yahweh soon proclaimed, 'I will also remove Judah from my presence just as I removed Israel. And I will reject this city which I have chosen, Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, my name shall be there' (23:27). In some real sense, living before Yahweh in the Old Covenant was bound

³¹ Solomon's reference to those who walk before Yahweh with a whole heart (1 Kgs 8:23) and Hanani the seer's dictum that, 'As for Yahweh, his eyes are roaming in all the land that he may strengthen the hearts of those who are complete toward him' (2 Chr. 16:9), hint at the presence of a remnant whose hearts are circumcised.

up with living in Israel, particularly in Jerusalem near the temple. More of this will be seen when Israel's other writings are considered, but for now it suffices to mention that this mindset explains the many places where the Psalmists long to be in Jerusalem at the temple. For example, 'I rejoiced when they said to me, "Let us go up to the house of Yahweh!"' (Ps. 122:1).

3. *The tabernacle.* Before David brought the ark into Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:12-17), and before the ark's sojourn among the Philistines and various sites in Israel, it had apparently been in Shiloh (1 Sam. 4:3-4). Meanwhile the tabernacle and its altar seem to have been located in Gibeon (2 Chr. 1:3-5).³² Prior to the building of the temple, when Yahweh put his name in Jerusalem to be worshiped only there, worship at Gibeon was acceptable. After all, Solomon sacrificed there (1 Kgs 3:3-4), and that night Yahweh appeared to him in a dream granting his request for wisdom (3:5-14). Solomon responded by going to Jerusalem to sacrifice before the ark, but this does not appear to be in repentance for having sacrificed at the tabernacle in Gibeon.³³

God's presence with the ark is stated when the narrator describes it. We read, 'The ark of God which is called by the name, the name of Yahweh Sabaoth, who sits with respect to the cherubim³⁴ upon it' (2 Sam. 6:2; cf. 1 Chr. 13:6). The ark was eventually placed in the holy of holies (1 Kgs 8:1-11).

God's presence with the tabernacle is seen in his response to David's desire to build the temple, 'But I have been going about in a tent, even in

³² Prior to the construction of the tabernacle Moses would meet with God in the 'tent of meeting' (Exod. 33:7-11). After the tabernacle was constructed, the tabernacle was alternately referred to as the tent of meeting (cf. e.g. 1 Chr. 6:31-32). When David brought the ark into Jerusalem he apparently felt no compulsion to bring the tabernacle to Jerusalem as well, for he pitched a tent for the ark in Zion (1 Chr. 15:1), while the tabernacle Moses built remained at Gibeon (1 Chr. 21:29; 2 Chr. 1:3).

³³ P. House, *1, 2 Kings* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), pp. 109, 111-12.

³⁴ Translation of the phrase *yoshev hakeruvim* (2 Sam. 6:2; 1 Chr. 13:6) is difficult. *hakeruvim* is an 'indirect accusative of local determination' (Jouön §126h; cf. also GKC §118q). The NASB renders this phrase, 'who is enthroned *above* the cherubim'. KJV, NKJV, and NIV read, 'who is enthroned *between* the cherubim'. ESV and NRSV read, 'enthroned *on* the cherubim'. The lack of consensus arises from the vagueness of the Hebrew phrase - we are not told precisely where (above, on, or between?) with respect to the cherubim Yahweh sits, but he is there.

the tabernacle' (2 Sam. 7:6). God had dwelt in the midst of his people in the tabernacle, and the people had lived in his presence before him. The ark represented God's presence with his people. David's desire to build the temple was answered by God's promise to build David's house, and his promise that David's seed would indeed build the temple (7:12-13).

4. *The temple.* Since he was not allowed to build the temple himself, David commenced gathering necessary materials for the house of cedar Solomon would build. In God's providence, the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite in the mountains of Moriah was chosen as the site for the temple (2 Sam. 24).³⁵ Once Solomon's kingdom was established (1 Kgs 1-5), he began building the temple (6:1) and was seven years in building it (6:38).

Just as select individuals were 'filled with the Spirit of wisdom' (Exod. 28:3; cf. also 31:2-3; 35:31) for the work on the tabernacle, Hiram of Tyre was 'filled with wisdom and understanding and knowledge to do all work with bronze' (1 Kgs 7:14).³⁶ Just as 'the cloud covered the tent of meeting and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle' (Exod. 40:34), 'the glory of Yahweh filled the house of Yahweh' (1 Kgs 8:11). Just as 'Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled upon it' (Exod. 40:35), 'the priests were not able to stand in order to minister from the presence of the cloud' (1 Kgs 8:11). Just as Yahweh demonstrated his acceptance of the nation by taking up residence in the tabernacle, he took up residence in the temple. Walther Eichrodt points out that all the places

³⁵ Terrien's explanation of why this site was chosen appears to reject the reasons given in 2 Samuel 24 (*Elusive Presence*, pp. 187-8).

³⁶ This 'filling' was not normative for all Israelites. Phrases such as 'filled with the Spirit of wisdom' do not reflect the way that the Israelites referred to all 'giftings' or 'talents', for talented singers are not described as 'filled with the Spirit of wisdom for making song'. Ezra is not described as 'filled with the Spirit of wisdom for teaching Torah'. David's talent with the harp results in him being described as 'knowing how to play' (1 Sam. 16:18). In this same context, as David's blessed life is described, we read, 'And Yahweh is with him' (16:18), but not that he was 'filled with the Spirit of wisdom for making music'. Other descriptions of facility in various arts include 'wise' (1 Chr. 22:15), 'learned/trained' (25:7), 'discerning/skillful' (25:7). The descriptions of people being 'filled' with skill for a task are rare and come on highly significant occasions – the building of the tabernacle and the temple, respectively. The only places in the OT where *ruach* (spirit) is used with *mal'e* (fill) are Exod. 28:3; 31:3; 35:31; Deut. 34:9; Mic. 3:8. Those who experienced this 'filling' in the OT were equipped for particular tasks.

from which Israel could approach her God 'are ultimately superseded by the Temple of Zion'.³⁷

There are a few observations regarding Solomon's prayer of dedication that will prove important for the present inquiry. First, though it is true that Yahweh has just filled the temple (8:10-11), Solomon acknowledges from the outset that Yahweh is not contained by the temple (8:27). Further, Solomon pleads no fewer than eight times for Yahweh to hear *from heaven* when his people pray *toward this place* (8:30, 31-32, 33-34, 35-36, 38-39, 42-43, 44-45, 48-49). Neither aspect is insignificant.³⁸ On the one hand Solomon asks Yahweh to hear from heaven, 'your dwelling place' (8:30, 39, 43, 49). On the other hand, there is a real sense in which Yahweh is to be addressed from the temple in Jerusalem – so after the inevitable sin of the people (8:46) they are to repent by seeking God in Jerusalem at the temple. This explains why it matters that Daniel, in exile, has windows opened toward Jerusalem as he prays three times a day (Dan. 6:10). Again, Yahweh's presence in the temple is presented as enabling the nation to obey (cf. 1 Kgs 8:57-58; 1 Chr. 29:18-19).

After Solomon's death the nation begins a slow but persistent decline. Remarkably, no mention of the temple is made between 1 Kings 14 and 2 Kings 10. As Israel spirals into the likeness of her neighbours, as the kings induce the people to increase transgression, the place Yahweh has chosen to put his name is not part of the story. Eighteen chapters with no mention of the temple is all the more startling when we recognize that the dedication of the temple, with the glory of God filling the temple just as it had done the tabernacle, was the apex of Israel's national prowess. The author takes the reader to the summit of a great mountain at the dedication of the temple, only to drop the reader down the sheer precipice of Israel's plummet into idolatry. It seems that the author wants Elisha's question, 'Where is Yahweh, the God of Elijah?' (2 Kgs 2:14) to echo through these sad pages of Israel's sin where the temple is not mentioned.³⁹

³⁷ Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961, 1967), 1:103.

³⁸ Pace H. D. Preuss, *Old Testament Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1995, 1996), 2:45. Agreeing with Averbeck, 'Tabernacle', 825; G. J. Wenham, 'Deuteronomy and the Central Sanctuary,' in D. L. Christensen (ed.) *A Song of Power and the Power of Song* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993), p. 103; T. N. D. Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth* (CWK Gleerup, 1982), p. 31; cf. also p. 37.

³⁹ Cf. 2 Kgs 1:3, 6, 16, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel?' The answer is provided in the words of a non-Israelite, Naaman, in 5:15, 'Behold, I know that there is no God in all of the earth except in Israel.'

In the latter half of 2 Kings, one of the factors by which Israel's rulers are evaluated is how they posture themselves with regard to the Deuteronomic demand for centralization of national worship.⁴⁰ In other words, the kings are evaluated by their attitude toward the temple. Moses had declared that Yahweh would choose one place to set his name and that he was to be worshiped only there (e.g. Deut. 12:5, 13-14).⁴¹ That the kings are evaluated by this standard is most apparent in the statements about a king's attitude toward (1) the high places and (2) the temple.

First, the references to high places that were or were not destroyed are not in every case high places where other gods were worshiped, but places *other than the temple in Jerusalem where the people sought to worship Yahweh*. Thus, the narrator of Kings is commenting upon each king's adherence to Moses through these references to high places. This explains how a king could do what was right in the eyes of Yahweh even though the high places were not taken away (cf. 2 Kgs 12:2-3; 14:3-4; 15:3-4, 34-35). It also explains Rabshakeh's taunt to the people on the wall that Yahweh will not help them since Hezekiah had taken away Yahweh's high places and altars (2 Kgs 18:22).

Second, the pious kings are concerned with the temple and its repair. Jehoash is righteous to collect money for the maintenance of the temple (12:4-16). The reader is struck by so much attention paid to the temple after it had not been mentioned for so long. In the eighteen chapters prior to the beginning of Jehoash's story (2 Kgs 11:1), the closest one comes to finding a reference to God's dwelling place, or the place he has chosen to set his name, is Naaman's request. He wants two mule-loads of holy ground to take back to Aram that he may worship Yahweh (5:17). After Jehoash, the good king Josiah is also concerned with the temple's repair (2 Kgs 22:4-7).

Solomon had achieved a delicate balance. He recognized that while God chose to dwell in the temple, he simultaneously dwelt in heaven and could by no means be contained or manipulated through a house made with human hands. As piety came to be associated with the upkeep of the temple, it is not surprising that in some cases the balance was lost. This results in the need for Jeremiah to rebuke the people for the superstition

⁴⁰ Cf. G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1962, 1965), 1:336.

⁴¹ Cf. J. G. McConville, *Grace in the End* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993); S. Westerholm, 'Temple', in *ISBE*, 4:759; G. E. Wright, H. H. Nelson, and L. Oppenheim, 'The Significance of the Temple in the Ancient Near East', *BA* 7 (1944), pp. 41-88.

that the temple of Yahweh would somehow magically protect them from their enemies (cf. Jer. 7:4). They are correct that the temple is central to their well-being as a nation, but incorrect to assume that the temple guarantees Yahweh's presence.

Chronicles was written for the encouragement of the remnant that had returned to the land from exile. One of the chief objectives of this remnant was to rebuild the temple, so it is not surprising that both books of Chronicles are replete with references to the temple. Even after the exile, the dwelling of God is in the midst of the people, in the temple. When we get to the Gospels in the NT, Jesus himself is often shown referring to the temple as the house of his father (e.g. Luke 2:49; John 2:16).

It seems to have been generally held that Yahweh was enthroned in heaven, somewhere above the cherubim who guarded each end of the ark, which was perhaps his footstool, and that the train of his robe filled the temple.⁴² In the midst of all these references to God's presence *with* his people, one simply does not come away with the impression that each member of the believing remnant was indwelt by God's Spirit. Apart from the NT, one might not even suspect that such a thing would be possible.

B. The pre-exilic prophets

Yahweh did not leave his people without a witness.⁴³ He graciously sent emissaries to his chosen nation. The prophets who delivered God's word during the monarchy assured the people and the kings that Yahweh would be *with* them. They continued to affirm that life is lived *before God* because God dwells *among* the people as he resides *in the temple*. The city Yahweh chose for himself, *Jerusalem*, would be the capital of the globe. The emphasis on God's presence *with* rather than *in* his people matches what has been seen thus far. Each of these themes will be briefly discussed.⁴⁴

1. *God with his people*. As Isaiah urges King Ahaz to trust Yahweh instead of Egypt, he announces Yahweh's intention to be with his people. The very name of the child whose birth will be a sign to Ahaz, Immanuel, means 'God with us' (Isa. 7:14). Much could be said about this theme in

⁴² For passages giving this impression see 1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15; 1 Chr. 13:6; Pss 80:1; 99:1; Isa. 6:1; 37:16; Matt. 5:34-35.

⁴³ Contrast A. Malamat, 'Prophecy at Mari', in R. Gordon (ed.) *The Place Is Too Small for Us*, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995), p. 53.

⁴⁴ Once again, representative passages will be given in this discussion. For more passages of this nature see Chart 3: 'God's Presence in the Pre-Exilic Prophets'.

Isaiah 7–12, but here it suffices to note that what is hoped for, and what provides assurance and motivation not to fear but to trust Yahweh (cf. 41:10), is the presence of God *with* his people (cf. Isa. 8:8, 10). Yahweh even promises to the remnant that he will bring them back from exile, ‘When you cross over the waters I will be with you.... Do not fear, for I am with you’ (43:2, 5).

When Yahweh calls Jeremiah to prophesy he too is told, ‘Do not fear their presence, for I am with you’ (Jer. 1:8, cf. 1:19). Jeremiah also communicates to the people that they should not fear, for God will be with them and redeem them from Babylon (30:11; 42:11; 46:28). Amos too expresses his desire that Yahweh be with the people (Amos 5:14).

2. *In the presence of God.* The prophets speak of life as though it is lived before God. Isaiah refers to trips Israelites made to the temple courts for sacrifice as times when they would appear before Yahweh (Isa. 1:12). The sins of the nation are regarded as defiance in his glorious eyes, which see all that takes place (3:8). Rejoicing also takes place in God’s presence (9:2 [ET 9:3]).

Jeremiah regards the nation’s detested things as things which cannot be tolerated if the nation is to enjoy God’s presence (Jer. 4:1). He marvels that the people do not tremble at the fact that they live in the presence of God (5:22). The nation is threatened that if it does not repent it will be cast out of God’s presence (7:15). Like Isaiah, Jeremiah regards the nation’s sins as having been committed before the eyes of Yahweh (7:30; 32:30-31). To be rejected is to be cast out of Yahweh’s presence (23:39). Tellingly, Jonah leaves Israel to flee the presence of Yahweh (Jonah 1:3).

The ethical appeals to God’s presence *with* the people – defiance in his eyes (Isa. 3:8), wonder that they do not fear God (Jer. 5:22) – are reminiscent of the ethical appeals that Paul makes to the indwelling Spirit experienced by the believers he addressed (cf. e.g. Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 6:19). The pre-exilic prophets regard God as dwelling among the people in the temple, with the result that they speak of life as being lived before Yahweh. They do not give us evidence that they regarded individual members of the remnant as continually indwelt by God’s Spirit.

3. *God among the people.* Isaiah proclaimed what would be true of a future day, but was no less true when he announced it, ‘Great in your midst is the holy one of Israel’ (Isa. 12:6). Statements that refer to the people drawing near to God, or to Yahweh’s nearness, assume that Yahweh dwells in the midst of his people (29:13; 58:2). Recounting Yahweh’s mercies to his people, Isaiah claims that the people ‘rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit’ (63:10). In the previous verse Isaiah had referred to ‘the angel of his

presence'⁴⁵ who had saved the people (63:9). Then as the people remember the days of old, Isaiah asks, 'Where is the one who brought them up from the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is the one who put in the midst of it [the flock] his Holy Spirit?' (63:11). The reference to the angel of Yahweh's presence, the Holy Spirit whom the people grieved, and the Holy Spirit 'among' the people are all ways of referring to God's presence with his people in the wilderness.⁴⁶

The OT has given no indication that God's Spirit indwelt each individual member of the remnant, but it has given every indication that God was always present with his people.⁴⁷ It would therefore seem misguided to take this as a reference to the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit seen in the NT,⁴⁸ particularly when John 7:39 indicates that the Spirit had not been given before Jesus was glorified.

In summarizing the expressions of God's presence *with* his people by dwelling *among* them in the pre-exilic prophets, we see that Jeremiah gives voice to a question that is very similar to the one asked by Isaiah (63:11). He says, 'Is Yahweh not in Zion? Is her King not in her?' (Jer 8:19). Jeremiah later affirms, 'But you are in our midst, O Yahweh!' (14:9). Through Hosea Yahweh proclaims, 'For I am God and not man, the holy one in your midst' (11:9). Similarly, Amos declares, 'For I shall pass through the midst of you, says Yahweh' (5:17). Through Joel Yahweh promises, 'And you shall know that I myself am in the midst of Israel' (2:27). This passage in Joel is informative because Yahweh has just proclaimed his presence (2:27), and in each of the next two verses he declares his intention to 'pour out' his Spirit on all flesh (3:1-2 [ET 2:28-29]).⁴⁹ Micah denounces the people's false confidence, mocking the way that they assure themselves saying, 'Is not Yahweh in our midst? Evil will not come upon us' (3:11). Speaking of the city collectively, Zephaniah declares, 'Yahweh is righteous in her midst' (3:5; cf. 3:15, 17).

Direct evidence from the OT that each individual member of the Old Covenant remnant was permanently indwelt by the Spirit of God has not

⁴⁵ B. S. Childs, *Isaiah* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 2001), p. 523; F. Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, vol. 7 of *Commentary on the Old Testament*, p. 599.

⁴⁶ Delitzsch writes, 'we have here an unmistakable indication of the mystery of the triune nature of God the One' (*Isaiah*, p. 601).

⁴⁷ Childs, *Isaiah*, p. 524.

⁴⁸ Pace Warfield, 'The Spirit of God in the Old Testament', pp. 121-2.

⁴⁹ The 'outpouring' prophesied by Joel does not result in people being continually indwelt by God's Spirit, but in people prophesying (cf. Joel 3:1 [ET 2:28]).

been found in the pre-exilic prophets.⁵⁰ What has been found is in harmony with what was seen in the patriarchal narratives, in the narratives of the exodus and the wanderings in the wilderness,⁵¹ in the narratives of the conquest through the period of the judges, and in the period of the monarchy. Namely, that God was *with* the people he had chosen. God also chose a place to set his name, and we turn now to the many references to localities in the prophets under consideration.

4. *The temple and Jerusalem.* There are countless references to the temple, the house of Yahweh, Jerusalem, and Mount Zion in the pre-exilic prophets (see chart 3). The holy city is central for the nation's piety – for instance, Jonah's prayer comes to Yahweh in his temple (Jonah 2:7). The city is also linked with the eschatological hope, and when Yahweh reigns over the earth all nations will stream to his capital city to worship and learn his ways (Isa. 2:1-4; cf. Mic. 4:1-3). The importance of this location is such that it is not surprising that some began to trust in the location rather than in Yahweh, incurring Jeremiah's rebuke (Jer. 7:4). Israel's deepest woe is that Yahweh's sanctuary would be defiled (Lam. 1:10), worse yet that this would mean that Yahweh had in fact rejected it (2:6-7). Zephaniah states that those who defile Yahweh's house will be held accountable for their actions (Zeph. 1:9).

C. Summary

Throughout the period of Israel's monarchy locations are significant. From the holy high places before centralization was accomplished (e.g. 1 Sam. 9:14) to the glory of Yahweh filling the temple to abide there (1 Kgs 8), no Israelite would have questioned the significance of worshiping God from particular locations. Further, once the temple was built, if any faithful Israelite had been asked where the Spirit of Yahweh remained, he would surely have said something like, 'He is enthroned above the cherubim over the ark' (cf. 2 Sam. 6:2). Dwelling in the midst of his people, Yahweh was *with* them. His people lived their lives *before* him. Their God was in their midst, and once Jerusalem was chosen and the temple was built it was *wrong* to attempt to worship Yahweh from any other place. This much the texts clearly tell us. The texts give us no indication that believing Israelites were themselves inhabited by the Holy Spirit.⁵²

⁵⁰ So also L. Neve, *The Spirit of God in the Old Testament* (Tokyo: Seibunsha, 1972), p. 57.

⁵¹ Hamilton, 'God with Men in the Torah'.

⁵² Walther Zimmerli, *Old Testament Theology in Outline* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1978), pp. 70–81.

IV. THE EXILE AND THE RETURN

By now it is clear that locations are important in the OT, and also that God's presence *with* his people is a prominent theme in these Scriptures. The books of the OT that are concerned with the time of the exile and the return from exile continue to communicate God's nearness in a way that corresponds with what has been seen thus far. References to the temple and Jerusalem are by far the most common, but we also see statements that God's hand is upon people, that he is with people, that life is conducted in the presence of God, and that God is among the people. Chart 4: 'God's Presence in the Exile and the Return' below, will suffice to show that these writings are of a piece with what has been seen to this point. Rather than illustrate these themes in a manner similar to what has been done above, we will consider here whether there is evidence that God's Spirit continually indwelt each individual member of the believing remnant.

Two lines of evidence in this literature might suggest that Old Covenant believers were indwelt, but it will be seen that the indwelling of Old Covenant believers cannot be established on these passages. On the one hand, certain individuals are said to have the Spirit *in* them. On the other hand, certain statements might suggest that believers in general are indwelt. We will look first at particular individuals, and then at believers more generally.

When Yahweh commands Ezekiel to rise to his feet that he might be addressed, Ezekiel reports, 'And the Spirit entered me while he spoke to me, and he stood me on my feet' (Ezek. 2:2). Several observations are relevant here. First, Ezekiel is clearly a believer before this happens to him – the prophet has seen God's glory and responded appropriately thereto in chapter 1. Second, this same thing (the Spirit entering him) happens to Ezekiel on at least one other occasion, Ezekiel 3:24 (cf. also 11:5), which indicates that the Spirit did not *remain* within Ezekiel after he entered him the first time. Third, 1 Peter 1:11 declares that the Spirit of Christ in the prophets was bearing witness beforehand to the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow, which caused them to search into when or what kind of time he was indicating. It is therefore clear that those who prophesied had the Spirit of Christ in them.⁵³

It is not clear, however, that the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets even when they were not prophesying. Ezekiel seems to have been specially empowered each time he was to prophesy, and because the Spirit

⁵³ Cf. R. R. Wilson, 'Prophecy and Ecstasy,' in C. E. Carter and C. L. Meyers (eds) *Community, Identity, and Ideology* (Eisenbrauns, 1996), p. 409; Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 319-28.

entered him anew it does not seem that his experience of the Spirit was continual. We read of David that, 'Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers, and the Spirit rushed to David from that day forward' (1 Sam. 16:13). This could mean that the Spirit was continually upon David, or it could mean that the Spirit continued to 'rush to' him and inspire him at significant moments.⁵⁴ In any case, the Spirit comes upon David when he is anointed as king, so neither David's experience nor Ezekiel's appears to be normative for Israelites who are not prophets or anointed kings.⁵⁵

The same applies to what Daniel and Micah experienced. When Nebuchadnezzar demands that his seers not only interpret his dream but divine its contents on their own, they are exasperated and claim, 'No one can declare it before the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with flesh' (Dan. 2:11). The king's advisers are incorrect; the one true God had made a dwelling among flesh. He dwells among the nation he chose, Israel. Daniel is later referred to as one, 'in whom is a spirit of the holy gods' (Dan. 4:8). The spirit of the plurality of holy gods referred to by Belteshazzar hardly reflects the theology of the OT. Nevertheless, as a prophet, Daniel fits the description offered by Peter (1 Pet. 1:11). The same can be said for Micah (Mic. 3:8).

In response to the unfaithfulness of his people, Yahweh abandoned the temple (Ezek. 10:4, 18-19; 11:23; cf. Jer. 12:7). Read in their OT context, the promises from Yahweh to the people that he would put a new Spirit 'in the midst of you' (Ezek. 11:19; 36:26-27) look like a promise from Yahweh that his presence will once again dwell in the temple in the midst of the people.⁵⁶ In fact, he goes on to promise this very thing (37:26-28;

⁵⁴ Against D. I. Block, 'Empowered by the Spirit of God: The Holy Spirit in the Hystographic Writings of the Old Testament', *SBJT* 1 (1997), pp. 52-3. With M. Dreytza, *Der theologische Gebrauch von RUAH im Alten Testament* (Giessen: Brunnen Verlag, 1990), p. 170.

⁵⁵ Similarly Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, p. 64; Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God*, p. 61.

⁵⁶ *Beqirbechem* is synonymous with *betocham*. On *betocham* S. S. Tuell writes, 'with more than two, it means among (e.g., [Exod] 25:8, of the Lord living "among" the people Israel; the NRSV uses the more traditional reading "in the midst of them" in this context)' (*NIDOTTE*, 4:280). BDB is similar on *beqirbechem*, 'of a number of persons, in the midst, among' (p. 899, 1f.). Cf. also the ten uses of *betok* (s.v.) that are listed as synonymous with *beqerev* in A. Even-Shoshan (ed.) *A New Concordance of the Old Testament* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1997), pp. 1221-2. Cf. also *ibid.*, s.v. *qerev* for the listing of *betok* as synonymous with *beqirbo*, *beqerev* (pp.

43:7). Because the OT material that precedes Ezekiel does not indicate that the indwelling ministry of the Spirit was a known phenomenon, and because the evidence in the OT after Ezekiel does not indicate that those who followed him developed the idea,⁵⁷ the burden of proof would seem to be on those who would interpret Ezekiel 36:26-27 as a direct promise that God's Spirit would dwell in each individual believer.

It could be that Ezekiel 36:27 ('I will put my Spirit within you') has indwelling in view, while 36:26 ('I will give you a new heart') speaks of regeneration. If that is the case, my argument here is not affected because this prophecy is eschatological. It can be granted that 36:26 (new heart) was experienced by Old Covenant believers, but 36:27 (Spirit among/within) predicts an eschatological reality that will only obtain after the cross. In support of this, in John 3, where Jesus speaks of regeneration to Nicodemus, there are no temporal indicators that regeneration cannot happen until after the cross. By contrast, the reception of the (indwelling) Spirit by the disciples awaits the glorification of Jesus (John 7:39).

V. ISRAEL'S OTHER WRITINGS

It is difficult to place Israel's writings that have not been considered to this point at particular times in Israel's history. Generally speaking, these writings run parallel to the nation's experience with her God, and they reflect upon life with the almighty, free, sovereign Yahweh. In these writings (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Esther), God's presence is seen most clearly in Psalms. For various reasons the

1032-3). This point receives support from Ezekiel 37:1-14. In the vision of the dry bones the vivifying Spirit/breath does not go *into the midst* of the bones, but enters as many individual sets of skeletal remains as come to life. Thus, throughout this passage Ezekiel does not say that the Spirit will be put 'among you' or 'in your midst' (both reflecting *beqirbechem*). Instead Ezekiel says, 'Thus says the Lord Yahweh to these bones, "Behold I am about to cause breath/Spirit to go *into you (bachem)* that you may live"' (Ezek. 37:5 [emphasis mine]). Perhaps, then, when Ezekiel wants to describe the Spirit/breath entering each individual he uses *bachem* (cf. 37:5-6, 14; also *bahem* in 37:10). By contrast, when Ezekiel wants to speak of the Spirit returning to dwell among the people and re-inhabit the temple he uses *beqirbechem*.

⁵⁷ Cf. J. Day, 'Inner-biblical Interpretation in the Prophets', in *The Place Is Too Small for Us*, pp. 230-46.

other books are relatively silent on the theme.⁵⁸ Because Psalms has so much to say, only a brief sampling will be given here.⁵⁹

The Psalmist fears no evil because Yahweh, his shepherd, is *with* him (Ps. 23:4). Nor will Yahweh abandon his people (94:14). The Psalmist desires that God be near and not far off (38:21), for Yahweh is a shield for his people (3:3). The Psalmist petitions Yahweh to make him live (119:25),⁶⁰ and life is lived in the presence of God (41:12). References to Jerusalem, Mount Zion, and the temple are so prominent in the Psalter that some have spoken of a 'theology of Jerusalem'.⁶¹ Yahweh dwells in Zion (9:12 [ET 9:11]), he is in his holy temple, and his throne is in heaven (11:4). Help comes from the sanctuary, even from Zion (20:3 [ET 20:4]). Entering the sanctuary means entering God's presence, and doing so has a sanctifying effect upon Old Covenant believers (73:17). Because Yahweh dwells there, one day in the temple courts is better than thousands elsewhere (84:11 [ET 84:10]). Because Zion is the place where Yahweh dwells, members of the remnant are said to have been born there (87:1-7). Yahweh is enthroned upon the praises of Israel (22:4 [ET 22:3]) because they praise him in his sanctuary (150:1). Indeed, the Psalmist considers himself blessed because he will dwell in the house of Yahweh forever (23:6).⁶²

VI. CONCLUSION

I have argued that in these stages of Israel's history, God's presence *with* his people results in their faithfulness. This does not mean that God had no

⁵⁸ In Esther God is the unseen actor. In Proverbs the fear of Yahweh is much more prominent than his presence, though awareness of his presence causes the fear of him. The Song of Songs is a love poem, and though it does not present love apart from God, it does not overtly articulate his presence. Job is a series of discourses with God manifesting himself in glory at the end. Cf. Terrien's discussion of the wisdom literature, *Elusive Presence*, pp. 350-89.

⁵⁹ As with the previous, for more references see Chart 5 below: 'God's Presence in Israel's Other Writings'. Cf. also Terrien's discussion, 'The Psalmody of Presence', ch. 6 of *Elusive Presence*, pp. 278-349.

⁶⁰ The Piel imperative of *chaya* is often translated as 'revive' (cf. NASB), but the Piel can have causative force (cf. GKC §52g) resulting in the translation, 'Cause me to live' (cf. BDB, 311).

⁶¹ Cf. T. L. Brensinger, 'Jerusalem,' *NIDOTTE*, 4:772-6; J. T. Strong, 'Zion, Theology of', *NIDOTTE*, 4:1314-21.

⁶² See further Hermann Spieckermann, *Heilsgegenwart: Eine Theologie der Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1989).

interior ministry to his people by his Spirit; he clearly did. It does mean that the OT does not speak of the Spirit of God dwelling *in* individual believers on a permanent basis.

This study has seen that the OT has three categories for God's presence. These categories are not mutually exclusive. First, Yahweh is everywhere and cannot be limited to a particular location (1 Kgs 8:27; Ps. 139). Nevertheless, the very people who make such observations (e.g. Solomon) acknowledge that, second, Yahweh indwells the temple in Jerusalem by his Spirit (1 Kgs 8:12-13). Third, Yahweh dwells in heaven (1 Kgs 8:30). That Yahweh is everywhere is akin to his being in heaven, but his dwelling among his chosen people indicates his commitment to set them apart for himself. In the OT God dwells *with* his people corporately, but not *in* them individually.⁶³

God's presence with his people is seen in a variety of ways through the OT. It seems that the OT presents Yahweh's creation of a people for himself through his self-revelation to Israel. Further, the OT presents Yahweh maintaining his people by remaining with them. From this investigation it seems that we have warrant to speak of Old Covenant believers as having been regenerated but not indwelt. A day is prophesied when Yahweh's Spirit will be poured out on his people, and it is gently intimated that his Spirit will dwell in his people. The OT, however, does not give clear evidence that its believers were continually indwelt by the Spirit of Yahweh in the way that the NT does. The words of Jesus in John 14:17, 'He is with you, and he will be in you', seem aptly descriptive of this aspect of OT theology.

⁶³ Terrien, *Elusive Presence*, p. 408.

Chart 1: God's Presence in the Conquest—the Judges

	God with Men <i>I will be with you/Yahweh is with you/May Yahweh be with you (the contrary in italics)</i>	God in the midst of/among the people <i>(the contrary in italics)</i>	Meeting God	Before/in the Presence of God; God hears/sees	Tent of Meeting; Tabernacle#; Ark*	Temple; House of God#; Dwelling of God*
Joshua	1:5, 9, 17; 3:7; 6:27; 14:12; 7:12	3:10; 22:31	5:14–15	4:13; 7:23; 18:8, 10; 19:51; 24:1	18:1; 19:51; 22:19#, 29#	
Judges	1:19, 22; 2:18; 6:12, 13, 16; 16:20	(4:14)	2:1; 6:11–26; 7:2, 4, 9; 13:3–5, 9–22	5:5; 20:23, 26; 21:2	20:26–27*	18:31#
Ruth	2:4					
1 Samuel 1:1–7:17	3:19	<i>4:21</i>	3:4–14, 21	1:12, 15, 19, 22; 2:17, 18, 21, 28; 6:20	3:3*; 4:3–4*; 6:7*	1:7#, 9, 24#; 2:29*, 32*; 3:3, 15#

Chart 2: God's Presence in the Monarchy

	God with Men I will be with you/Yahweh is with you/May Yahweh be with you (the contrary in italics, similar statements in parentheses)	Before/in the Presence of God; God hears/sees (the contrary in italics, similar statements in parentheses)	Tent of Meeting; Tabernacle; Ark	Temple; House of God; Dwelling of God
1 Samuel 8:1-31:13	10:7; (12:22) 16:18; 17:37; 18:12, 14, 28; 20:13; <i>28:15, 16</i>	10:19, 25; 11:15; 12:3, 7, 17; 14:6; 15:19, 33; 16:7; 21:6, 7; (22:10); 23:18; (24:6); 26:20		
2 Samuel	5:10; 7:3, 7, 9; (8:6, 14); 14:17	3:28; 5:3; 6:14, 16, 17; 7:29; 11:27; 15:25; 21:1, 9	6:2, 17; 7:2, 6; 15:25	7:5-7, 13; 12:20; (24:16, 18, 25)
1 Kings	1:37; 8:57-58; 11:38; (18:46)	2:4; 3:10; 8:23, 25, 28, 62, 64, 65; 9:3-4, 25; 15:5, 11; 16:7, 25, 30; 19:11; 21:20; 22:43; 22:52	2:28-30; 3:15; 6:19; 8:1-11	3:1-2; 5:3, 5; 6:1-38; 7:12, 40-51; 8:1-61; 9:1, 3, 7, 8, 15, 25; 10:5, 11; 12:27; 14:26, 28
2 Kings	(3:12, 15); 18:7; <i>(21:14)</i>	3:2, 14, 18; 5:16; 8:18, 27; 10:30; 12:2; 13:2, 4, 23; 14:3, 26; 15:3, 9, 18, 24, 28, 34; 16:2, 14; 17:2, 17, 18, 20, 23; 18:3; 19:14; 20:3, 21-2, 20; 22:2, 19; 23:3; <i>23:27, 32, 37; 24:9, 19-20</i>		11:3-4, 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 18-19; 12:4, 5-16, 18, 14:14; 15:35; 16:8, 14, 18; 18:15-16; 19:1, 14; 20:5, 8; 21:4, 5, 7; 22:4-5, 8-9; 23:2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 27; 24:13; 25:9, 13, 16
1 Chronicles	9:20; 11:9; (15:26); 17:2, 6, 8; (18:6, 13); 22:11, 16, 18; 28:20	11:3, 19; 13:8, 10; 17:16, 27; 19:13; 23:13, 31; 28:8; 29:22	6:31-32, 48; 9:21, 23; 13:3, 5-14; 15:1-3, 12, 24, 26, 28-29; 16:1, 4, 6, 37, 39; 17:1; 21:29; 22:19; 23:26-32; 28:2	6:10, 31-32, 48; 9:2, 13, (19), 23, 26-27, (33); 17:4-5, 12, 14; 22:1-2, 5-11, 19; 23:4, 24-32; 24:5, 19; 25:6; 26:12, 20, 22, 27, 28:2-3, 6, 10-21; 29:1-3, 7-8, 16, 19
2 Chronicles	1:1; 15:2, 9; 17:3; 19:6; 19:11; 20:17; 32:7, 8; 35:21; 36:23; <i>12:5; 25:7</i>	1:6, 2:6, 7:4; 14:2; 16:9; 19:10; 20:9, 13, 18, 32; 22:4; 24:2; 25:2; 26:4; 27:2, 6; 28:1; 29:2, 11; 30:9; 31:20; 33:2, 12, 22-23; 34:2	1:3-5; 5:1-14; 6:41	2:1, 4-6, 12, 3:1-17; 4:1-22; 6:1-42, 7:1-22, 8:1, 16, 9:4; 12:9, 11, 15:18, 16:2, 20:5, 8-9, 28; 22:12, 23:3, 5, 6, 9, 12, 14, 18-20, 24:4-14, 16, 18, 21, 27; 25:24; 26:16, 18-19, 21; 27:2-3, 28:21, 24; 29:3, 5-7, 15-18, 20, 25, 35; 30:1, 8, 15, 19

Chart 3: God's Presence in the Pre-Exilic Prophets

	God with Men (similar statements in parentheses; the contrary in italics)	In the Presence of God (rejection in parentheses)	God among the People	Temple/House/Sanctuary/Dwelling	Jerusalem/Mount Zion
Isaiah	7:14; 8:8, 10; 41:10; 43:2, 5; 45:14; 57:15; (60:19-20)	1:12; 3:8; 9:3; 23:18; 48:19; 64:1-3; 65:12; 66:23	12:6; 63:11; (29:13; 58:2)	1:12; 2:2-3; 6:1, 4; 8:14; 18; 18:4; 26:21; 33:5; 37:1; 14; 38:20-21; 43:28; 44:28; 56:5, 7; 57:15; 60:13; 62:9; 63:15, 18; 64:11; 66:6	2:2; 4:3, 5; 8:18; 18:7; 24:23; 25:6, 10; 27:13; 28:16; 29:8; 30:29; 31:9; 33:20; 37:35; 38:6; 40:2, 9; 51:3; 57:13; 60:14; 65:11; 25; 66:20
Jeremiah	1:8, 19; 12:7; (15:17); 15:20; 20:11; 30:11; 42:11; 46:28	4:1; 5:22; 7:10; (7:15); 7:30; 12:11; (15:1); 15:8, 19; 17:16; 18:20; (23:39); 32:30-31; 35:19	8:19; 14:9	7:2, 4, 10-11, 14, 30; 11:15; 12:7; 17:12, 26; 19:14; 20:1-2; 24:1; 26:2, 6-7, 9-10, 18; 27:16; 18, 21; 28:1, 3, 5; 29:26; 32:34; 34:15; 35:2, 4; 36:5-6, 8, 10; 38:14; 41:5; 50:28; 51:11, 51; 52:13, 17-18, 20, 24	3:17; 8:19
Lamentations		2:19; 3:35; 4:16		1:10; 2:6-7; 2:20	(5:19)
Hosea	5:6		11:9	9:4, 15	
Amos	5:14		5:17	2:8	1:2
Joel			2:27	1:9, 13-14, 16; 2:17; 3:18	2:1, 15, 32; 3:15-18, 21
Obadiah					1:16, 17, 21
Jonah		1:3, 10		2:4, 7	
Micah			3:11	1:2-3; 3:12; 4:1-2	3:12; 4:1-2, 7
Nahum		1:5-6			
Habakkuk				2:20	
Zephaniah		1:7; (3:1)	3:5, 15, 17	1:9; 3:4	

Chart 4: God's Presence in the Exile and the Return

	God with/ Hand upon	In the Presence of God <i>(God departing in italics)</i>	God among the People	Temple/House/San ctuary/ Dwelling	Jerusalem/ Mount Zion
Ezekiel	1:3; 3:14, 22; 8:1; 34:30; 37:1; 40:1; (48:35)	<i>8:12; 9:9; 22:30; 38:20;</i> <i>(39:23); 40:46; 41:22;</i> <i>(42:13); 43:24; 44:15;</i> <i>46:9</i>	28:22 (Sidon); 37:26–28	5:11; 7:22; 8:6, 7, 16; 9:3, 6, 7; 10:3–4, 18–19; 11:1; 23:38–39; 24:21; 25:3; 37:26–28; <i>chs 40–48</i>	20:40; 28:16; 34:26
Daniel		6:10–11; 9:20		1:2; 5:1, 3, 23; 8:11; 9:17, 24, 26; 11:31	9:16–20; (11:16, 20, 41, 45)
Ezra	1:3; 7:6, 9, 28; 8:18, 22, 31	5:4		1:2–5, 7, 43, 58, 68; 3:6, 8–12; 4:1, 3, 24; 5:2–3, 8–9, 11–17; 6:3, 5, 7–8, 12, 15–17, 22; 7:7, 15–17, 19–20, 23–24, 27; 8:17, 19, 25, 29–30, 33, 36; 9:8–9, 10:1, 6, 9	1:3–4
Nehemiah	2:8, 18	1:6; 4:5; 9:8		1:9; 2:8; 3:26, 31; 6:10–11; 7:60, 73; 8:16; 10:28, 32–39; 11:11–12, 16, 20, 22; 12:40; 13:4, 7, 9, 11, 14	
Haggai	1:13; 2:4		2:5	1:2, 4, 8–9; 2:3, 7, 9, 15, 18	
Zechariah	8:23; 10:5	2:13; 3:1; 6:5; (9:14); 14:5	2:5, 10–11; 8:3	1:16; 2:13; 3:7; 4:9; 6:12–15; 7:3; 8:9; 9:8; 11:13; 14:20–21	1:17; 2:12; 3:2; 8:3; 14:16–21
Malachi				2:11; 3:1	

Chart 5: God's Presence in Israel's Other Writings

	God with Men (related statements in parentheses)	God near Men (contrary in italics; related statements in parentheses)	God a Shield (related statements in parentheses)	Before/In the Presence of God; God in midst	Temple/Mount Zion/Jerusalem (related statements in parentheses)
Job	29:5			29:4	
Psalms	14:5; 16:8; 23:4; (42:8); 46:7, 11; 73:23; (94:14); 108:11; (114:2); 139:18	(22:19); 34:18; <i>38:21; 71:12</i> ; 73:28; 75:1; 145:18; 148:14	3:3; 18:2; 28:7, (9); (34:7); (36:7); (46:1); (57:1); 59:11; (63:7); 84:9, 11; 144:2	16:11; 17:2; 21:6; 31:20; 32:7; 41:12; 42:5; 44:3; 51:4, 11; 84:7; 86:9; 88:1-2; 95:2; 96:13; 97:5; 98:9; 116:9; 139:7; 140:13	2:6; 3:4; 5:7; 9:11; 11:4; 15:1; 18:6; 20:2; (22:3); 23:6; 24:3; 26:8; 27:4-5; 28:2; 29:9; 36:8; 42:4; 43:3; 46:4; 48:1-2; 48:9; 50:2; 52:8; 55:14; (60:6); 61:4; 63:2; 65:4; 66:13; 68:5, 16, 18, 24, 29, 35; 69:9; 73:17; 74:2-4, 7-8; 76:2, 7; 78:60, 68-69; 79:1; 84:1-4, 10; 87:1-7; 92:13; 93:5; 96:6, 8; 99:1-2, 5, 9; 100:4; 102:16; 116:19; 118:26; 122:1, 9; 125:1; 128:5; 129:5; 132:5, 7, 8, 13; 134:1-2; 135:2, 21; 137:5-6; 138:2; 150:1
Proverbs		<i>15:29</i>		3:4; 15:2, 11; 24:18	
Ecclesiastes				5:2	5:1
Song of Songs					
Esther					

A FRESH EXPOSITION OF ADOPTION:

II. SOME IMPLICATIONS

TIM J. R. TRUMPER, EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Of course it had never been doubted or concealed by any worthy expositor of the ways of God in salvation, that we are children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Adoption is a Christian benefit. But much depends on the place in the mind given to a thought like this, and, especially, much depends on the dogmatic form it assumes, and the virtue allowed to it in the system.

Robert Rainy, 'Dr. Candlish as a Theologian'¹

Adoption has not come into its own in the teaching and discussion of our [Reformed] doctrines.

Samuel A. King, 'The Grace of Adoption'²

Having traced, thus far, an outline of Paul's understanding of adoption,³ we turn now to consider, as promised, its implications for Westminster Calvinism. The focus on the theology of conservative Presbyterianism is not simply tribal. It is historical. Given the rather bleak theological history of adoption, it is to the Presbyterians (and one or two of their forebears) we may turn for some of the more self-conscious discussions of adoption.⁴ Over recent centuries, however, Presbyterians have lost sight of

¹ See William Wilson's *Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish, Minister of St. George's Free Church, and Principal of the New College, Edinburgh*, (Edinburgh, 1880), p. 615.

² Samuel A. King, 'The Grace of Adoption', *Union Seminary Magazine* 22 (1910), p. 30.

³ Tim J. R. Trumper, 'A Fresh Exposition of Adoption: I. An Outline', *SBET* 23.1 (2005) pp. 60-80.

⁴ Consider especially the foundational contributions of Calvin and the Westminster Standards (Tim J. R. Trumper, 'An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption in the Calvinistic Tradition' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2001), chs 1-5.

the doctrine.⁵ Thus, the emerging renewal of interest in adoption offers us the opportunity to consider what the impact would be on Westminster Calvinism – notably its almost exclusively juridical view of the gospel⁶ – were Presbyterians to recover the familial or filial aspects of their theological heritage.

In what follows, I suggest that while the impact of the recovery of (the biblical theology of) adoption would be largely methodological, it promises to have specific relevance for Westminster Calvinism's theology, soteriology and doxology. Without a constructive-Calvinistic approach to the issues of the day,⁷ the likelihood of this renewal of Westminster Calvinism is remote.

I. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THEOLOGY

First, we consider the *principia theologiae* – the doctrines of Scripture and of God.

⁵ Elsewhere I have traced the reasons for this (*ibid.*, ch. 6).

⁶ Douglas F. Kelly writes: 'the departure within the Westminster Tradition itself from this fruitful Biblical theme of family relationship at the very heart of Christian salvation weakened... the impact that these powerful Standards could have exercised'. ('Adoption: An Underdeveloped Heritage of the Westminster Standards', *Reformed Theological Review* 52 [1993], p. 112).

⁷ Constructive Calvinism occupies a centre-right position between revisionist Calvinism (neo-orthodoxy) and orthodox Calvinism (traditional Westminster Calvinism). It refuses the disdain revisionist-Calvinists have for Westminster theology and the naively uncritical spirit of orthodox Calvinism. It opts instead for a sympathetic-critical attitude that retains a respect for the tradition without enslavement to it, and considers the kernel of truth found in neo-orthodox criticisms of Westminster Calvinism an opportunity for biblical renewal consistent with the historic Puritan belief that God has more light to shed on his Word. Those abreast of current scholarly discussions ought to note that constructive Calvinism is consistent with the Mullerite reappraisal of the interpretation of the history and theology of the Reformed tradition, and yet is not bound by it (see Richard A. Muller's latest volume, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* [Oxford, 2003]). Constructive Calvinism is also sympathetic to the protest of Stanley J. Grenz's and John R. Franke's post-Foundational theology, but is concerned for a foundationalist renewal of Westminster Calvinism (*Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* [Louisville, 2001]).

The Doctrine of Scripture

In theory, the Reformed understand Scripture to be both one and diverse, divine and human.⁸ Containing 66 books differing in content, genre and figures of speech, the Bible nevertheless maintains a 'consent of all the parts', which speaks in unison of the 'full discovery... of the only way of man's salvation' (Westminster Confession of Faith [WCF] 1:5). In practice, however, our tradition of theology has struggled to maintain the balance between the unity and the diversity of Scripture. Richard Gaffin suggests a chief reason for this when he notes 'the tendency' of the Protestant dogmaticians 'to treat Scripture as in the interests of the system, as a collection of more or less isolated proof texts (*dicta probantia*), without adequate attention to context', and 'as a manual of "timeless" first principles of static truths'.⁹

On the one hand, such systemic and dogmatic constraints afforded little opportunity to express the Christian faith in biblico-theological terms, as had Calvin, the theologian of adoption.¹⁰ By the Puritan era, interest in the *ordo salutis* – especially the inter-connectedness of adoption and regeneration, justification, and sanctification respectively – had generally overtaken the broader concerns of the *historia salutis*.¹¹ On the other hand,

⁸ This should not be understood to mean that the divineness and humanness are equally ultimate. Scripture is finally God's Word, not of human origin. Thus, we preachers announce, 'Let us hear the Word of God.'

⁹ Richard B. Gaffin Jr., 'The Vitality of Reformed Dogmatics' in J. M. Batteau, J. W. Maris, and K. Veling (eds), *The Vitality of Reformed Theology: Proceedings of the International Theological Congress June 20-24th 1994, Noordwijkerhout, The Netherlands* (Kampen, 1994), p. 23.

¹⁰ Herman N. Ridderbos points to the apologetic character of Reformation teaching in order to explain its emphasis on the forensic rather than the eschatological content of the faith (*When the Time Had Fully Come: Studies in New Testament Theology* (Jordan Station, Ontario, 1982), p. 58). This lopsided emphasis was regrettable, not least because 'the redemptive-historical [i.e. eschatological] character of the New Testament (NT) provides a more exact delineation of what Reformed theology means by 'organic' inspiration; as contrasted to 'mechanical' inspiration, which it rejects'. (Herman N. Ridderbos, *Redemptive-history and the New Testament Scriptures: A Study of Paul's Soteriology*, transl. H. De Jongste, revised by Richard B Gaffin, Jr.; second revised ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1988), pp. 49, 71).

¹¹ While notice may be taken of the interest in biblical theology of such giants as John Owen (*Biblical Theology or The Nature, Origin, Development, and Study of Theological Truth, in Six Books*, Latin, Oxford, 1661; transl. S. P. Westcott. [Pittsburgh, PA, 1994]) and, later, Jonathan Edwards (*Works*,

the Puritans missed the opportunity to transform the humanist interest in the constituent parts of Scripture into a mature expression of its authorial diversity. In continuing the tradition's predominant interest in Paul,¹² they tended either to read Paul into the other NT authors or *vice versa*. In consequence of this, Puritan dogmatics were characterised by a coalescing of the respective theologies of the NT. This explains their conflation of the Bible's rich yet distinctively structured models, as is typified by the typical inclusion of John 1:12-13 and 1 John 3:1 among the proof-texts of adoption. In effect, the Puritan tradition of systematics created from the models of new birth and adoption a single mega-model of sonship or childhood.¹³ The mega-model is the product of the neglect of Scripture's diversity – which neglect reduces its unity to a bland uniformity and creates a deficit between our conservative understanding of Scripture and our use of it.

Things, however, are changing. First, the renaissance in Calvin studies has given rise to both a reawakening of interest in Christian humanism (with its emphasis on getting back to the sources [*ad fontes*]) and to a fresh enthusiasm for the salvation-historical approach to Scripture. Secondly, the biblico-theological emphases of Princetonian Geerhardus Vos and Dutch theologian Herman Ridderbos have confirmed the worth of the redemptive-historical approach.¹⁴ Drawing on the influences of

vol. 1, reprint ed. [Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA, 1990], pp. 532-619), the WCF contains but one explicit redemptive-historical passage (7:5-6). Note, in fact, the title of Jonathan Edwards' subsequent treatment of biblical theology: 'A History of the Work of Redemption containing the Outlines of a Body of Divinity including a view of the Church *in a Method entirely New*' (italics inserted).

¹² Gaffin writes: 'Reformed theology has always thought itself to be distinctively Pauline, more sensitive than other traditions to the deeper motives and trends of the apostle's teaching and more consistent in its expression of them.' (*Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul's Soteriology*, second ed. [Phillipsburg, NJ, 1987], p. 11).

¹³ See, for instance, the language and title of Sinclair Ferguson's otherwise helpful article 'The Reformed Doctrine of Sonship', *op. cit.*, pp. 81-8.

¹⁴ Quite rightly, Gaffin describes Vos as the 'father of Reformed biblical theology'. He it was who recognised 'the substance of the "critical" charge', that Reformed orthodoxy had accorded inadequate attention to the historical character of the Bible. In seeking to rectify this, Vos opened up what is now the perennial question of the inter-relationship between biblical and systematic theology. He believed that 'by giving greater, more adequate attention to the redemptive-historical structure and content of biblical revelation, or, in other terms, by attending to the rootage of that

Calvin¹⁵ and Vos¹⁶, John Murray sought, thirdly, to infuse systematic theology with the redemptive-historical perspective.¹⁷

The coalescing of these developments has brought conservative Presbyterians to the threshold of a new and exciting era in the history of

revelation in the dynamically unfolding history of God's covenant' the tendencies of the scholastic approach to systematic theology could be offset (Gaffin, 'The Vitality of Reformed Dogmatics', p. 23).

- ¹⁵ Writing in 1964, Murray observed: 'Every careful reader of Calvin, especially of his *Institutes*, detects what may be called his biblico-theological method in contradistinction from the more scholastic method of his predecessors in the medieval tradition and of many of his successors in the Protestant tradition. This does not mean that Calvin is not systematic. He was a humanist before he was a reformer. And logic in argumentation and in the sequence and arrangements of his topics is manifest on every page.' (J. Murray, *Collected Writings*, vol. 1, reprint ed. [Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA, 1989], pp. 305-11; vol. 3 [Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA, 1982], pp. 337-9; vol. 4 [Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA, 1982], pp. 158-204 [reproduced in booklet form in *Calvin on Scripture and Divine Sovereignty* (Welwyn, Hertfordshire, 1979), pp. 302-4]). Calvin, it is fair to say, was Vosian before Vos!
- ¹⁶ 'Vos and Murray' came, says Gaffin, to 'agreement in their conception of biblical theology and its relationship to systematic theology' such that 'this aspect of their thinking constitutes a direction' ('Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology' in John H. Skilton [ed.], *The New Testament Student and Theology*, vol. 3, [Phillipsburg, NJ, 1976], pp. 42-3). Yet, of the handful of attempts to discuss the relationship of biblical to systematic theology, Gaffin notes, 'Professor Murray appears to be alone in having devoted a separate study to it.' (*ibid.*, p. 39; see also p. 32).
- ¹⁷ Yet Murray barely acknowledges the notion of authorial diversity. He comes closest to mentioning it in his article 'Systematic Theology'. There he states that, 'the various passages drawn from the whole compass of Scripture and woven into the texture of systematic theology are not cited as mere proof texts or wrested from the scriptural and historical context to which they belong, but, understood in a way appropriate to the place they occupy in this unfolding process, [and] are applied with that particular relevance to the topic under consideration' (*Collected Writings*, vol. 4, p. 21). Nonetheless, Murray so challenged the longstanding influence of Francis Turretin and Charles Hodge on Reformed systematics that he began to reshape the system of Westminster Calvinism by rejecting the tradition's rather sterile and entrenched regurgitation of the Westminster Standards. For all his esteem of them, Murray reminded Westminster Calvinists that the WCF is to be read through Scripture, not *vice versa*. Thus, he became the father of constructive Calvinism.

Westminster Calvinism. For the realisation of the recovery of a truly biblically-reflective doctrine of adoption, there needs to be further attention given to the issue of authorial diversity. Only then will we be sure that Paul's model has been understood in its own right. The need to understand adoption in the context of a holistic view of salvation and in the face of competing soteric models (I am thinking of the question of their ultimacy) suggests that perhaps the multiperspectivalism of John Frame and Vern Poythress has something relevant to say in this more localised regard.¹⁸

If the possibilities of a fresh biblical theology of adoption are anything to go by, the new era promises an improved utilisation of Scripture. By attempting to expound adoption along biblico-theological lines, I have sought to continue the push for its recovery and to illustrate the potential that its combined emphases on redemptive history and authorial diversity have for the methodological and doctrinal renewal of Westminster Calvinism.¹⁹ What has to be determined in the new era is the inter-relationship between biblical and systematic theology. As Gaffin rightly says, the 'encyclopedic nature' of the question requires 'extended, maturing, and concerted reflection'.²⁰

In considering this matter, Gaffin suggests 'the not entirely modest proposal' of discontinuing the use of the term 'systematic theology', believing the nomenclature 'biblical theology' to resolve ultimately the inter-relationship between the two disciplines. Yet, to retain the one term at the expense of the other, suggests the complete absorption of systematic theology, thereby eliminating the discipline. This is neither Gaffin's meaning nor intention. I prefer we speak of biblical dogmatics or some such term that acknowledges the validity of the historical *and* logical ordering of which the two disciplines speak. Together the adjective 'biblical' and the noun 'dogmatics', while not an ideal combination, do at least remind us that our *foci* on redemptive history and authorial diversity issue in doctrinal formulae reflective of both the content and feel of Scripture. In short, biblical dogmatics portends a better use of Scripture

¹⁸ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1987), pp. 162-3, *passim*; Vern Sheridan Poythress, *Symphonic Theology: The Validity of Multiple Perspectives in Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1987).

¹⁹ We need to be clear about this renewal. 'It would be quite misleading,' says Gaffin, 'as is often done by its more enthusiastic advocates, to create the impression that biblical theology brings something totally new into the life of the church. Rather it is largely a matter of correcting and balancing certain trends of the more recent post-Reformation past' ('Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology', p. 43).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

while retaining the esteem we have for it. If it implies the sacrifice of the accepted method of systematics, it does so in view of the promise it makes of reflecting more accurately the Bible's internal system of truth.

The Doctrine of God

In addition to suggesting corrections to Westminster Calvinism's theological method, the recovery of adoption also promises a healthy adjustment of its feel. While we may rightly protest the neo-orthodox accusation that Westminster Calvinism is legalistic, we cannot deny that the neglect of adoption lent it a legal aura. Consequently, the accusation of legalism stuck more than it had a right to.

Westminster Calvinists must take some responsibility for this. Not even Thomas Erskine's and John McLeod Campbell's early nineteenth-century revolt against the juridical tenor of Westminster Calvinism, as forceful and successful as it was, awoke Westminster Calvinists to the lopsidedness of their view of God.²¹ As James Lindsay was later to note:

Strange that nothing like full justice has yet been done in modern theology to the sovereign and absoluteness of God – so emphasised in Reformed theology – by adequately setting forth of that sovereignty, not on a monarchical basis, but as interpreted in terms of Fatherhood. I say strange because – though it seems often unknown or forgotten – Calvin had the high merit to be the first theologian for ages to give Fatherhood its rightful place in Christian experience.²²

By finally recovering adoption, and elevating thereby the profile of the Fatherhood of God, Westminster Calvinists may balance their espousal of the legal (juridical) and gracious (relational/familial) aspects of biblical teaching, and lay to rest, at last, indictments such as Lindsay's.

Yet, Reformed Christians are very sensitive about their view of God, and could resist fresh talk of his Fatherhood.²³ After all, we are not

²¹ Trumper, 'An Historical Study', ch. 7.

²² James Lindsay, 'The Development of Scotch Theology', *Princeton Theological Review*, vol. 4, no. 3 (1906), p. 343.

²³ Gaffin's warning is timely and captures the spirit of constructive-Calvinism: 'In a time, like ours, of unprecedented radicalism and profligate experimentation, both theologically and ethically, the temptation to become reactionary becomes all the stronger. For instance, we may believe, probably rightly, that present abuse of the Reformation's *semper Reformanda* has never been more flagrant. But the prostitution of that principle, no matter how glaring, does not remove its truth. We may not

accustomed to thinking of God's sovereignty in terms of his Fatherhood. Too often we have looked with suspicion on those who have made much of the Fatherhood of God, fearing such an emphasis to be a return to the universalism of the Victorian era or an expression of sentimental pietism. Such fears fail to recognise the prominence of the NT's language of divine Fatherhood, nor do they appreciate the 'de-familialisation' of the gospel that has occurred in the theology of conservative Presbyterianism over recent centuries. Only once Westminster Calvinists discern fully the discrepancy between their theology and that of the NT will they finally embrace the idea of God's Fatherhood and find a way to teach it commensurate with his justice. Such a balance is not only essential to the renewal of Westminster Calvinism, it is critical to a biblically-legitimate response to our liberal and neo-orthodox critics.

Yet, for all the reticence Westminster Calvinists have in speaking of the Fatherhood of God, the current climate should help us overcome it. Talk of God's Fatherhood is crucial to countering feminist demands that the church speak instead of God's motherhood. Believing the Scriptures to be theologically normative, there are a number of reasons why Westminster Calvinists cannot address God as 'Mother'. First, because the NT never calls us to, and neither, historically, has the church. Second, because to do so ignores the language of Scripture. For Paul, for instance, it is not God who is mother but the 'Jerusalem above' (Gal. 4:26). What governed the apostle's use of language, then, was not misogyny but theology; hence his willing reference to the daughters of God (2 Cor. 6:18) and his gender-neutral use of *tekna* (Rom. 8:16, 17, 22; 9:8).

Many today, however, do not accept the normativity of Scripture. Sallie McFague claims that Scripture is but an exemplar of how to do theology rather than a dictum for it.²⁴ Thus, she argues the legitimacy of exchanging the model of God as Father for that of Mother. While the limitations of space preclude an answer in terms of the nature of both Scripture and the Christian faith, we can offer a word about her pragmatic desire to formulate Christian terminology that is personally meaningful.

suppose that theological construction ever reaches definitive finality. Today no less than Bavinck's ... "the deadly embrace of a dead conservatism" (to use his striking turn of phrase) remains a live threat to the vitality of Calvinism, including its dogmatics.' ('The Vitality of Reformed Dogmatics', p. 18).

²⁴ Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (London, 1987), p. 30.

For every person who has suffered at the hands of a brutal father, there is another rendered a nervous wreck by a screeching mother. If talk of divine Fatherhood is inappropriate because of a minority of brutal fathers, then surely a minority of psychologically destructive mothers also precludes us from speaking of God as mother. How then do we refer to God? If we move *in perpetuum* from one model of God to another, surely, at some point, we will exhaust the models of Scripture and start constructing models of our own that have but the faintest connection to inscripturated revelation. Once we have gone this far, we will find that it is personal experience that has become the basis of our faith, but it is doubtful whether such a faith could still be called Christian.²⁵

That said, conservative Presbyterians must aver a naïvely sexist use of the language of *Abba* (as if God were male). One way to do this is to appropriate with less embarrassment Scripture's female imagery of God's love. While not overturning the divine paternity, this imagery reinforces the view that God's Fatherhood can be motherly in its expression.²⁶ Thus, we may stay within the bounds of Scripture while relating more effectively to the cultural changes around us. At the end of the day, it is sound biblical exegesis that guards us from the dictates of any 'ism', whether hyper-conservative or hyper-liberal;²⁷ and a belief in the authoritative sufficiency of Scripture that maintains a confidence in the ongoing cultural relevance of its message.

²⁵ At some point feminists will have to choose either to moderate their protest or to forsake the faith in favour of a post-Christian feminism. In orthodox Christianity 'Scripture stands, its veracity untainted by either the cultures in which it comes to us or the cultures to which it goes. God's revelation can make use of our cultures but always stands in judgment over them.' (Harvie M. Conn, 'Normativity, Relevance, and Relativism' in Harvie M. Conn (ed.), *Inerrancy and Hermeneutic: A Tradition, A Challenge, A Debate*, (Grand Rapids, MI, 1988), p. 209).

²⁶ For the biblical evidence of this see Alan E. Lewis (ed.), *The Motherhood of God: A Report by a Study Group appointed by the Woman's Guild and the Panel on Doctrine on the invitation of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1984), p. 32ff.; cf. Thomas A. Smail, *The Forgotten Father*, reprint ed. (London *et al.*, 1990), pp. 62-4. John W. Cooper addresses some of this in *Our Father in Heaven: Christian Faith and Inclusive Language for God* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1998), pp. 265ff.

²⁷ 'Whatever an individual's conclusions and decisions, the question of the "motherhood of God" can be asked and answered as an issue of biblical exegesis and interpretation, governed by the criterion of what is true to Christ and his Word, and to the exclusion of any unbiblical neo-pagan goddess religion' (*The Motherhood of God*, p. 62).

II. IMPLICATIONS FOR SOTERIOLOGY

Leaving aside the general theological implications of our exposition of adoption, we turn to those that are more especially soteriological. As we do so, we discover the same want of a redemptive-historical context. To correct this, we must admit our soteriology to a process of 'christocentrification' that impacts both its orientation and its shape.

The orientation of Soteriology

Paradoxically, the redemptive-historical contextualisation of Westminster Calvinism's soteriology challenges the rather typical preoccupation with what we were in Adam.

This preoccupation is explained, first, by the time and energy later Calvinists have spent defending their covenantal interpretation of the Edenic scenario. It needs minimal familiarity with the Calvinistic tradition to realise how contentious an issue this is – needlessly so in my opinion.²⁸ Exegetically, the evidence (e.g. Hos. 6:7 [margin], Exod. 19:5, Deut. 4:13, Rom. 3:27,²⁹ and Gal. 4:24)³⁰ is open to further discussion. Historically, Calvin's version of federal theology, and John Murray's for that matter,³¹ reminds us that one need not hold to a defined covenant of works to remain firmly within the covenantal tradition. Richard Muller has implied, furthermore, that the formulation of a covenant of works began as a pragmatic attempt to undergird the Reformation principle of salvation by grace alone.³²

²⁸ Michael S. Horton and I share this view. See his article 'Law, Gospel, and Covenant' (*Westminster Theological Journal [WTJ]* 64 (Fall 2002), pp. 285-6) and mine, 'Constructive Calvinism and Covenant Theology' (*WTJ* 64 (Fall 2002), pp. 387-404 *passim*).

²⁹ It is somewhat curious to find Herman Witsius using Romans 3:27 to assume the distinction between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace (*The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man: Comprehending a Complete Body of Divinity*, vol. 1 [transl. and revised W. Crookshank; Edinburgh, 1803], pp. 48-9).

³⁰ Muller writes more generously: 'the doctrine was a conclusion drawn from a large number of complex texts, among them, Genesis 1:26-27; Leviticus 18:4-5; Matthew 19:16-17; 22:37-39; Romans 1:17; 2:14-15; 5:12-21; 7:10; 8:3-4; 10:5; Galatians 3:11-12; 4:4-5, with Hosea 6:7 and Job 31:33 offered only as collateral arguments. It was, moreover, a conclusion largely in accord with the exegetical tradition' (*After Calvin*, p. 183).

³¹ *Collected Writings*, vol. 2, pp. 47-59.

³² Muller, *After Calvin*, p. 184.

Given these details, it is legitimate to ask why it should be thought necessary to consider a covenant of works a test of orthodoxy? Perhaps we have been mistaken to assume that the defence of the Law-Gospel antithesis requires necessarily a covenant of works. Could not Adam's probation have been established on the basis of natural law (the law written on his heart) rather than on the basis of an explicitly *covenantal* relationship to God?³³ Could not the covenantal interpretation of the Edenic scenario have resulted from the superimposing of the Bible's covenant motif on the biblical evidence of the Law-Gospel antithesis?³⁴ As Reformed biblical theology develops we may have to ask ourselves honestly whether, for all the rigour of Reformed exegesis, it was as free of dogmatic construal as is assumed,³⁵ and whether the formulation of a covenant of works was not a human rather than a divine buffer against heterodoxy. Faithfulness to Scripture and the ongoing theological task should preclude us from being pressurised by a fringe element of the Westminster community from looking afresh at the biblical data. It is sound exegesis rather than accusations of neo-orthodoxy that must confirm, or otherwise, the biblical credentials of a covenant of works.

I surmise that even if a covenant of works survives the maturation of a Reformed biblical theology, it will not continue to dominate federal theology as it does presently in the minds of some.³⁶ We may expect over

³³ I have posed this question at length in 'Covenant Theology and Constructive Calvinism', *op. cit.*

³⁴ This possibility came to mind when considering the weight Witsius places on Romans 3:27 in his consideration of a covenant of works (see fn. 29). A. T. B. McGowan's definition of covenant theology suggests likewise: 'Based... on the parallelism between Adam and Christ in Romans 5 and 1 Cor. 15 it is a complete schema of thought involving every doctrine. The covenant of works (or nature) and the covenant of grace are the main subdivisions although some... included a covenant of redemption.' (*The Federal Theology of Thomas Boston* (Carlisle and Edinburgh, 1997), p. 1).

³⁵ Horton, 'Law, Gospel, and Covenant', p. 287. Note in this regard Iain Murray's claim that, 'while it was [John] Murray's life-long practice to recommend Puritan authors, he did not generally commend their commentaries' ('Life of John Murray' in John Murray, *Collected Writings*, vol. 3, p. 29fn.). Even Muller, for all his circumspection, acknowledges that 'the language of the doctrine is certainly different from the language of the Reformers and even from that of earlier successors to the original Reformers' (*op. cit.*, p. 189).

³⁶ This was not always the case. See John L. Girardeau, *The Federal Theology: Its Import and its Regulative Influence* (J. Ligon Duncan III [ed.] with an introduction by W. Duncan Rankin. Greenville, SC, 1994) and his

the coming years a re-prioritising of our focus on Christ as is illustrated by a biblico-theological approach to adoption. Shaped by the trajectory of redemptive-history stretching from Abraham (the promise of the inheritance) to Christ (its fulfilment), a biblico-theological approach takes our eyes off Adam and helps us get them back on Christ. This is as it should be. Scripture furnishes us with considerably more data concerning his person and work than Adam's.³⁷ To gainsay this, is, in effect, to treat biblical revelation as a plateau, and to claim that the Adam-Christ parallel is completely symmetrical in its output of theological data.

The preoccupation with Adam is explained secondly, by the unsettled question of his status in Eden. Prior to the nineteenth century, it was assumed, it seems, that Adam was either God's son, his subject, or both. But when Victorian liberals claimed, in effect, that sonship is a right of nature, Robert Candlish, leader of the Free Church of Scotland after Thomas Chalmers's death (1847), used the first series of Cunningham Lectures to reject wholesale Adam's original sonship. While his stand made no impact on liberal thinking, it aroused discussion among conservatives, first in Scotland then in the deep American South.³⁸ Regrettably, the controversy absorbed what little conservative interest there was in the familial side of the faith. Thus, to this day Westminster Calvinists have made negligible progress in recovering the Fatherhood of God and adoption.

Discussions of Theological Questions, first published 1905 (Harrisonburg, VA, 1986), pp. 68-9; cf. Hugh Martin, *The Atonement in its Relation to the Covenant, the Priesthood, the Intercession of our Lord* (Edinburgh, 1976), pp. 29-30).

³⁷ Hugh Martin writes: 'it will uniformly be found that the theology which is meagre in reference to the Covenant of Grace, is still more so as to the covenant of works. The first Adam was but "the type of him that was to come", the shadow of the "last Adam". And where the "last Adam" is little recognised as a covenant head, there can be little reason or inducement to recognise the "first" in that light either. It is in Christ pre-eminently that the doctrine of covenant takes fullest shape; and apart even from express verbal affirmations of it, we find that it is continually subsumed in Holy Scripture's descriptions of His work in the days of His flesh, and of His reward in His risen glory.' (*ibid.*, p. 35).

³⁸ See John L. Girardeau's treatment of adoption in his *Discussion of Theological Questions*, G. A. Blackburn (ed.), 1905; facsimile reprint ed. (Harrisonburg, VA, 1986), pp. 428-521 and Robert A. Webb's *The Reformed Doctrine of Adoption* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1947), pp. 28-78.

I suggest in the current climate of change that only a recovery of adoption along biblico-theological lines, with its focus on Christ, can free us from our forefathers' preoccupation with Adam's original status.³⁹ Whatever we are to make of Paul's borrowed reference to God's offspring (Acts 17:28), and the correlation between adoptive sonship and Adam's original standing before God, it is evident that the issue was not the apostle's overriding concern.⁴⁰ What interested Paul was the 'now but not yetness' of what we are in Christ rather than the 'then but no moreness' of what we were in Adam.

The Shape of Soteriology

First, the recovery of adoption, with its accompanying impact on the profile of union with Christ, challenges the dangers of reductionism in the present popularist approach to Reformation teaching in some Reformed circles in North America. While the concern for its spread among the Christian masses has been admirable, its frequent and convenient summation in terms of the five solas (*sola scriptura, solus Christus, sola gratia, sola fide, soli deo gloria*) is threatening to breed a generation of Reformed Christians quasi-Lutheran in their outlook.⁴¹

While there is no doubting the need to maintain as best we can a united front with evangelical Lutherans on the essentials of classic Protestantism,⁴² traditionally Calvin is understood to have altered the shape

³⁹ The knowledge we now have of Calvin's well-rounded theology of adoption may help us in this regard (Trumper, 'An Historical Study', chs 1-4).

⁴⁰ In the broader realms of theology, acceptance of Adam's historicity seems all but gone. Conservative theologians must take some responsibility for this. We have left unchallenged the claim that there is no more to the Genesis account than the symbolization of the person, or persons collectively, and the emergence of freedom in history (Francis Schüssler Fiorenza and John P. Galvin [eds], *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, vol. 2, [Minneapolis, 1991], p. 98). Instead, we have chosen as our battlefield the valid but less urgent issue of the days of creation.

⁴¹ Michael F. Bird's recent article 'Incorporated Righteousness: A Response to Recent Evangelical Discussion concerning the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness in Justification' (*Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 47 no. 2 (June 2004), pp. 253-77), expresses well a number of the points made hereafter.

⁴² The new Finnish interpretation of Luther, with its emphasis on Luther's understanding of unification with God, suggests that differences between Luther and Calvin may have been less substantive than previously thought. For more, see Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (eds), *Union with*

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of Luther's soteriology. Instead of regarding justification as an hermeneutical category,⁴³ Calvin taught that it is a single, albeit crucial, doctrine – one of two benefits of union with Christ (*duplex gratia dei*).⁴⁴ *Unio cum Christo* Calvin understood to play an architectonic (shape-making) role in soteriology. In my opinion, it entails incarnational,⁴⁵ representational⁴⁶ and pneumatological dimensions.⁴⁷ Justification, by contrast, Calvin understood to be its central column. These differences in role mean that the two doctrines should not be understood to compete for our attention. Both are crucial.⁴⁸ Bird writes:

Justification cannot be played off against union with Christ, since justification transpires in Christ. To be sure union with Christ is not something that is entirely synonymous with justification. Yet neither is union with Christ an ancillary concept subsumed under justification or *vice versa*. Rather, union with Christ comprises Paul's prime way of talking about the reception of the believer's new status through incorporation into the risen Christ by faith.⁴⁹

Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther (Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge, UK, 1998), pp. 9ff. and 42ff.

⁴³ See Eberhard Jüngel's *Justification: The Heart of the Christian Faith*, transl. Jeffrey F. Cayzer (Edinburgh and New York, 2001) and Robert D. Preuss' opening chapter 'The Centrality of the Doctrine of Justification and Its Hermeneutical Role' in *Justification and Rome* (St. Louis, MO, 1997), pp. 15-20.

⁴⁴ It could be said that the WCF contains a *triplex gratia dei*: justification, adoption, and sanctification. Cf. Calvin's comments in *Inst.* 3:11:1 with WCF 11-13 and LC 69.

⁴⁵ Hebrews 2:14-18

⁴⁶ Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

⁴⁷ Pneumatological union includes elements that are mystical or definitive (1 Cor. 1:9, 6:7; Eph. 5:30) and spiritual or progressive (John 15:1-8; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:1).

⁴⁸ Cf. Calvin, *Inst.* 3:11:10; *CC Gal.*, 43 [CO 50 (78): 199] and the end of *Inst.* 3:16:1 [CO 2 (30): 586]. Nonetheless, the phrase 'in Christ' is much more frequent in Paul than objective references to Christ being 'for us' (see Ridderbos, *When the Time Had Fully Come*, pp. 44ff.). Paul uses profusely the formulae 'in Christ', 'with Christ', 'through Christ', 'of Jesus Christ', 'in the blood of Christ', 'in the name of Christ', 'Christ in me' (see Adolf Deissmann, *The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul: The Selby Oak Lectures, 1923 on the Communion of Jesus with God and the Communion of Paul with Christ*, second ed. [New York, 1926], pp. 162, 171-80).

⁴⁹ Bird, 'Incorporated Righteousness', p. 275.

Thus, 'the genuine opinion of the Reformed is this', to quote Witsius, 'that faith justifies, as it is the bond of our strictest union with Christ, by which all things that are Christ's become also ours'.⁵⁰

The mutual appreciation of justification and union with Christ makes both theological and apologetic sense; although few to date have realised this.⁵¹ Typically, Protestant apologists have defended justification from the accusation it is a legal fiction by simply protesting all the louder that it is not. Such an approach achieves very little, for it fails to explain why justification is not a legal fiction. What is needed is an undisputed *exegetical* justification of the notion of imputation,⁵² and an ongoing demonstration of the theological use to which union with Christ can be put. It is surely difficult to maintain the accusation that Calvary's transaction of two thousand years ago is a legal fiction when myriads of sinners have come to know the benefits of it through union with Christ! Seeking to sustain the existential awareness of the union God's people experience, Calvin writes:

We do not contemplate him [Christ] outside ourselves from afar in order that his righteousness may be imputed to us but because we put on Christ and are engrafted into his body – in short, because he deigns to make us one with him. For this reason we glory that we have fellowship of righteousness with him.⁵³

And yet, so often we have contemplated him from afar! Thus, our difficulties in defending justification have been largely self-inflicted. By focusing on justification in isolation from pneumatological union we have set Christ apart from ourselves, and thus defended justification inadequately, and endangered our assurance in the process.

⁵⁰ Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants*, vol. 1, p. 415.

⁵¹ Notwithstanding our reliance on Pauline theology, the Reformed tradition has been slow to pay more than lip service to union with Christ. Adolf Deissmann attributes the neglect of the motif to the doctrinaire approach to Pauline studies that characterised nineteenth-century scholarship. Pauline scholars focussed on the apostle's fight against the law, justification, redemption and 'almost anything else', Deissman claims, except union with Christ (*The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul*, pp. 154, 202; cf. Trumper, 'The Theological History of Adoption II: A Rationale', pp. 182-6; 'An Historical Study', introduction and ch. 6).

⁵² A rare exception is John Piper's *Counted Righteous in Christ: Should We Abandon the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness?* (Wheaton, IL, 2002).

⁵³ *Inst.* 3:11:10

But there is more. By neglecting union with Christ we inject credibility into the Roman Catholic argument that Protestants isolate justification from sanctification. The biblical way to ensure that we maintain both the distinctiveness and inseparability of these doctrines is to emphasise union with Christ. As justification and sanctification both flow from union with Christ it is impossible for those enjoying a oneness with the Saviour to be justified without also being sanctified. Calvin writes:

By partaking of [Christ] we principally receive a double grace: namely, that being reconciled [justified] to God through Christ's blamelessness, we may have in heaven instead of a judge a gracious Father; and secondly, that sanctified by Christ's spirit we may cultivate blamelessness and purity of life.⁵⁴

Union with Christ safeguards, then, both Protestant and Catholic/Orthodox concerns: the freeness of the grace of justification and the importance of renovation. The same faith that unites us to Christ also justifies us, and the union that promises us justification promises us sanctification as well. Thus, we are justified through faith alone (solafideanism),⁵⁵ yet never by a faith that remains alone. We are saved, says Benjamin Warfield, not out of works, but unto them.

Second, the heightened profile the recovery of adoption affords union with Christ – notably by its connecting of the sons (*huioi*) of God with the Son (*huios*) – challenges the soteriological layout of the Westminster Standards. While it is questionable whether the Standards contain an *ordo salutis* as such, it is clear that union with Christ receives very little explicit attention. The Standards supply some sense of its federal character, but they express inadequately its pneumatological character, which 'is the

⁵⁴ *Inst.* 3:11:1 [CO 2 (30): 533]; cf. *Inst.* 3:16:1 [CO 2 (30): 586] and Randall C. Zachman, (*The Assurance of Faith: Conscience in the Theology of Martin Luther and John Calvin* [Minneapolis, 1993], p. 189; see also pp. 11, 188 and 204).

⁵⁵ B. B. Warfield uses the term in contradistinction from Ethicism (justification by works) ('The Alien Righteousness', *Faith and Life*, first published, 1916 [Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA, 1974], p. 324). Elsewhere he states matters otherwise: 'Justification by Faith... is not to be set in contradiction to justification by Works. It is set in contradiction only to justification by our own works. It is justification by Christ's Works.' ('Justification by Faith, Out of Date' in John E. Meeter [ed.], *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield - I* [Phillipsburg, NJ, 1970], p. 283).

essence of the Christian proclamation and experience', and, without which, 'we miss the heart of the Christian message'.⁵⁶

What explicit reference there is to union with Christ, notably in 26:1, lends weight to Thomas Torrance's revisionist-Calvinistic claim that in the WCF's '*ordo salutis*' union with Christ is reached through various stages of grace.⁵⁷ The orthodox-Calvinistic refutation of this, while valid, appears hollow given the lip service often paid the doctrine in the more recent history of the tradition. Constructive Calvinists for their part understand how Torrance could criticise the Standards as he has, but are surprised he has not found the solution in the Larger Catechism (LC). Answer 66 states clearly that union with Christ occurs in effectual calling – that is, in the initiatory stages of the *applicatio salutis* – although it also has ongoing relevance for the Christian life and community (communion of the saints). Nonetheless, these organisational inconsistencies, coupled with the findings of an emergent Reformed biblical theology (such as the recovery of union with Christ and adoption), inevitably raise the question as to whether the time has come to revise the Westminster Standards. While we may doubt whether a new confession of faith could ever gain the acceptance that the WCF has enjoyed, it is clear that the ecumenical function of the 1647 Confession has undergone serious erosion. Now that the WCF has become the subject of as much division as of unity, at some point conservative Presbyterians worldwide will come to realise that the maintenance of healthy communion requires a new confession that stands in the tradition of the WCF but speaks to the understanding and needs of the present.

An improved WCF requires, among other things, that its *ordo* (or better *applicatio*) *salutis* be set within a more pervasive redemptive-historical framework. It is in this way that our soteriology may be 're-christocentred'.⁵⁸ Next, we must be more explicit about union with

⁵⁶ Richard N. Longenecker, Word Biblical Commentary 41, *Galatians* (Dallas, TX, 1990), p. 159.

⁵⁷ T. F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology: From John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh, 1996), p. 128.

⁵⁸ It is said that the *ordo salutis* tends to decentralise Christ's role in our redemption, for its focus is redemption rather than the Christ in whom we are redeemed. To quote Sinclair Ferguson, it 'distorts the basic NT (Pauline) emphasis on *historia salutis*, substituting for it a less than biblical emphasis on personal experience' (*New Dictionary of Theology* [Leicester and Downers Grove, IL, 1988], s.v. 'Ordo salutis'; cf. George S. Hendry, *The Westminster Confession of Faith for Today: A Contemporary Interpretation* [London, 1960], p. 16).

Christ. There is historical precedence for this. The Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Confession (1823), for instance, posited a valuable chapter on union with Christ between those on effectual calling (ch. 22) and justification (ch. 24). Thirdly, we must consider afresh the WCF's chapter on adoption, notwithstanding its seminal historical significance. As WCF 12 stands, it lacks Paul's redemptive-historical unfolding of adoption; it relies too heavily on extra-Pauline texts of the NT; and it leaves unanswered, more understandably, the question of whether adoption is an expression of union with Christ or a benefit flowing from it, and is of little help in determining whether adoption is an addendum to justification or a different model of soteriology intended to complement it.⁵⁹ Fourthly, the fresh awareness of union with Christ and adoption confirms the need Westminster Calvinism has for increased emphasis on the essential ministry of the Holy Spirit. While his ministry was applied widely throughout the WCF by its authors, the want of sustained attention to it has made it easier for the neo-orthodox to explain their rejection of the Standards.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Whereas the *ordo salutis* model stressed traditionally the sequential nature of the doctrinal elements of soteriology, scholars are asking nowadays whether the different facets of salvation are not better understood as multiple perspectives on the one gospel (cf. the comments of Ridderbos [*Paul*, p. 197] and Edwin H. Palmer [*Scheeben's Doctrine of Divine Adoption* (Kampen, 1953), pp. 181-3]). It is in this sense too that I wonder whether Frame's and Poythress' multiperspectivalism has something substantive to say about the shape of soteriology (cf. fn. 18).

⁶⁰ See T. F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, p. 141; 'The Substance of the Faith: A Clarification of the Concept in the Church of Scotland' in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 36 (1983), p. 329; 'From John Knox to John McLeod Campbell: A Reading of Scottish Theology' in David F. Wright and Gary D. Badcock (eds) *Disruption to Diversity: Edinburgh Divinity 1846-1996* (Edinburgh, 1996), p. 12. For a defence of the WCF's emphasis on the Spirit, see Sinclair B. Ferguson's chapter 'The Teaching of the Confession' in Alasdair I. C. Heron (ed.) *The Westminster Confession in the Church Today: Papers prepared for the Church of Scotland Panel of Doctrine*, (Edinburgh, 1982), p. 36, and Douglas Milne's article 'The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Westminster Confession' in *Reformed Theological Review* (Australia) 52 (1993), pp. 121-31. Milne calculates that the Spirit is mentioned on 48 occasions in the WCF alone.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR DOXOLOGY

We close aptly, if briefly, by noting the implications of the recovery of adoption for the doxological tempo of Westminster Calvinism.

First, the recovery should hail an enrichment of our experiential knowledge of God and increase thereby our assurance of his loving kindness.⁶¹ While the proverbial flourish of Calvinism in colder and darker climes has been explained psychoanalytically by the affinity its adherents have with the sense of doubt bred by the doctrines of election and limited atonement (a misnomer), I suggest, contrary to the belief of revisionist Calvinists, that if there is any truth to the hypothesis, the doctrines of unconditional election and definitive atonement are not to blame.⁶² What has affected the quality and tone of our piety is the lopsidedness of our emphases on the justice of God and the third use of the law.

The lopsided emphasis on divine justice, mentioned earlier, has quenched the fullness of many a Calvinist's experience of the Spirit of adoption.⁶³ What references there are to the Fatherhood of God and adoption tend to feel somewhat doctrinaire and lack the warm tenor of eighteenth-century Methodism and nineteenth-century Brethrenism.⁶⁴ Thus, today,

⁶¹ Kelly, 'Adoption', p. 120.

⁶² As one reared in the Calvinistic tradition, I do not recognise the neo-orthodox claim that Calvinists are forever asking themselves how they can know they are among the elect. They have a primary basis of assurance in the witness of the Spirit and a secondary basis in the genuineness of their obedience.

⁶³ Rare are the specifically *filial* expressions of worship and piety found, for instance, in George Whitefield's testimony (cited by John Stoughton in *History of England from the Opening of the Long Parliament to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 6: *The Church in the Georgian Era* [London, 1881], pp. 125-6). Elsewhere I have written of the second chance that World Harvest Mission's *Sonship* program has afforded the Calvinistic tradition to recover the Fatherhood of God. The first chance fell to our forefathers when faced with the protest of John McLeod Campbell and Thomas Erskine of Linlathen. See 'An Historical Study', Conclusion; and *When 'History Teaches us Nothing': The Sonship Debate in Context – A Case of Déjà vu* (unpublished at the time of writing).

⁶⁴ Cf. Trumper, 'The Theological History of Adoption. I.', pp. 24-6, and 'The Theological History of Adoption. II.', pp. 190-2. Of the Reformed hymnals presently in widespread use – *Christian Hymns and Praise!* in the UK and *Trinity Hymnal* in the US – none compares to the quality or quantity of hymns on adoption found in *Gadsby's Hymns* (Sand Springs, OK), 2003, which alone compares to Brethren hymnody such as is found in *Hymns of the Little Flock* (1881). In its preface and the contents *Hymns of the Little*

expressions of the familial side of the faith sound alien to many Reformed ears – an attempt to dumb-down the faith into something quasi-liberal or quasi-charismatic – when in point of fact a sound appreciation of the familial aspects of the gospel help us recover the more biblical feel of earlier Calvinism.

Likewise, the lopsided emphasis on the third use of the law has overshadowed the relevance of Christ's example, and robbed many in our tradition of the balanced view of Christian living found, for instance, in Calvin.⁶⁵ By understanding sanctification very much in the context of the relationship between the sons of God and their heavenly Father, he was able to describe the Christian's obedience to the law as a gladsome and a loving response, rather than as something dutiful and potentially, if not actually, legalistic. Calvin realised more than do many of his followers the importance of looking to Christ's impeccable obedience of the law for our supreme example. Our elder brother, the firstborn (Rom. 8:29), demonstrated perfectly what it means to please the Father (cf. John 8:29). To ignore this is to render the law achristocentric, its obedience open to a self-righteous and arid legalism, and our defence of its third use ineffective.

Secondly, the historical and exegetical work required to recover adoption should resurrect familial aspects of our tradition's theology of the sacraments, and refresh thereby our community's appreciation of them. The loss of the Father-son dynamic in the relationship between God and his people faded the colour of our theology of the sacraments. This led, I suggest, to a general decline in our tradition's esteem of the sacraments, which in turn has encouraged a new sympathy, among a minority, for Anglo-Catholicism, Roman Catholicism and Eastern orthodoxy.

It is worth remembering that Calvin understood baptism to signify, among other things, the initiation of union with Christ, and described it as the *symbolum adoptionis*. Similarly, the LC states that baptism is, 'a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself, of remission of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit; of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life' (Ans. 165 [italics inserted]). The Lord's Supper, by contrast, Calvin understood to depict the continuation of union with Christ.⁶⁶ He pictured it

Flock explains its paternal flavour by stating its adherence to 'the great principle in selecting and correcting', namely, 'that there should be nothing in the hymns for the assembly but what was the expression of, or at least consistent with the Christian's conscious place in Christ before the Father'.

⁶⁵ Trumper, 'An Historical Study', chs 4–5.

⁶⁶ John Calvin, 'Catechism of the Church in Geneva' (1545), in *Calvin's Selected Works*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI, 1983), pp. 86, 92-3 [CO 6:116-

as a lavish banquet laid on by the Father for his children. By eating in faith, God's sons remember the Lord, are raised to heaven to eat of Christ's flesh and drink of his blood, and receive thereby the grace that sustains their union with the Saviour. Likewise, in the WCF the Supper is said, among other things, to be for our 'spiritual nourishment and growth' in [Christ]' (29:1; cf. LC 168). There, however, the cannibalistic overtones of Calvin's imagery have been toned down: 'Worthy receivers', it is said, eat both outwardly and inwardly, 'really and indeed, yet not carnally nor corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death' (29:7).

Thirdly, the recovery of adoption must surely impact our view of the church. The doctrine challenges that individualistic preoccupation with salvation born of an isolated consideration of justification ('How can a man be righteous before God?' [Job 9:2]). The remedy for individualism lies, however, not in a redefining of justification (God's declaration that sinners are members of his covenant family) – as 'new perspective' scholars would have us believe⁶⁷ – but in the reintroduction to Protestant soteriology of (a renewed perspective on) adoption. The communal orientation of adoption ought always, then, to supplement the individual focus of justification. Not only does such an implementation negate the need to redefine justification, it better equips us to address a dysfunctional world 'of broken families and disrupted relationships, where masses seek for a sense of belonging and intimate, personal and family relations'.⁶⁸

Fourthly, the recovery of (a biblical theology) of adoption lends weight to the contemporary emphasis on the eschatological nature of redemption. Whereas, in earlier times, theologians such as John Gill and Abraham Kuyper located the gospel (specifically justification) in eternity past,⁶⁹

17, 132]; Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Edinburgh, 1995), p. 150.

⁶⁷ Seyoon Kim writes: 'With its radical reinterpretation of Paul's gospel, especially his doctrine of justification, ... the New Perspective School is in many respects overturning the Reformation interpretation of Paul's gospel. The potential significance of the school for the whole Christian faith can hardly be exaggerated.' (*Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge, UK, 2002), p. xiv).

⁶⁸ Kelly, 'Adoption', p. 114; Erroll Hulse, 'Recovering the Doctrine of Adoption', *Reformation Today* 105 (Sept.–Oct. 1988), p. 14.

⁶⁹ For the details on Gill see Trumper, 'The Theological History of Adoption. II', p. 191. On Abraham Kuyper see his *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, transl.

present-day proponents of the new perspective on Paul locate the gospel ultimately in eternity future. We may sympathise with this, but just as we have spoken out against the 'then' but 'no moreness' of those preoccupied with Adam, so we must warn against the 'then' but 'not now' outlook of scholars of the new perspective. Their location of the gospel in eternity future promises to undermine the possibility of a present assurance. A redemptive-historical approach to adoption typifies, by contrast, the mediating position occupied by Reformed biblical theologians who express the gospel's eschatological tension in terms of its 'now' but 'not yetness'. The adopted were chosen in Christ in eternity past, receive their adoption *in transitu*, and shall go on to experience its consummation in eternity future (Rom. 8:18-23). This consummation we may call the adoption *simpliciter*, so long as we understand that it publicly ratifies the adoption received in principle the moment there occurs union with Christ in his Sonship.

CONCLUSION

The issues dealt with throughout this two-part article warrant a monograph. Nonetheless, in the space available I have sought to provide a fresh exposition of adoption, drawing from it those implications portending the renewal of Westminster Calvinism. While some readers may prefer the *status quo*, ongoing developments in biblical and historical theology suggest God may not. We are surely witnessing in our day the reality of the Puritan belief that God continues to shed light on his Word. This light sanctions, I believe, neither the revisionist-Calvinist rejection of Westminster Calvinism, nor its orthodox-Calvinistic mummification, but a biblically-based renewal that offers to revitalise the theology of conservative Presbyterianism for generations to come. The constructive Calvinist sees this potential and works towards its fulfilment.

REVIEWS

The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church. Vol. 5. Moderatism, Pietism and Awakening

Hughes Oliphant Old

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2004; xviii+620 pp., £29.99; ISBN 0 8028 2232 0

Old's first volume in this multi-volume large paperback series issued from the press in 1998 when he was a member of the Centre of Theological Inquiry at Princeton. A Presbyterian pastor, he had already made a name for himself by well-received studies on worship. He is now Dean of the Institute for the Study of Reformed Worship at Erskine Theological Seminary in Due West, South Carolina. This well-produced volume maintains the standard set in the earlier ones, and will be of particular interest to Presbyterians, although it is by no means limited to them.

The main focus of the book is the eighteenth century but coverage in some areas is much wider. Old divides the material into nine chapters and within each chapter has distinct sections on notable preachers. He begins with Moderatism. No doubt to the initial consternation of those who associate this term too narrowly with the worldly preachers of eighteenth-century Scotland, he considers John Howe, John Tillotson and Matthew Henry from Britain, and Jean-Frederic Ostervald of Neuchatel, the eloquent Huguenot, Jacques Saurin, and the Zuricher, Johann Lavater. We have a geographical spread, and also a very helpful entrée into the Enlightenment period and the approach of orthodox preachers.

Old moves through Pietism, with sections on Spener, Francke, Wesley and Whitfield, among others. New England comes next with some 130 pages of coverage on leading preachers such as Thomas Shepard, Samuel Willard and, of course, Jonathan Edwards. Chapters 4-6 respectively cover preaching in the Austro-Hungarian Empire (particularly Hungary), in Spanish California (by the Franciscans) and in Romanian Orthodoxy under the Turks. A further 40 pages are devoted to the evangelisation of Russia in which both eleventh-century background and eighteenth-century developments are covered.

The chapter on Scotland (pp. 429-540) focuses on Thomas Boston, John Willison, Robert Walker, Hugh Blair, together with Andrew Thomson and Thomas Chalmers. An all-too-brief section (pp. 541-78) on Evangelical Anglicanism concludes the volume, the featured preachers being Samuel Walker of Truro, William Romaine, John Newton, Robert Hawker and Charles Simeon.

This survey of the book's contents indicates the wide range and ecumenical interest of Old's work. The page layout makes it easy to read, and it is not overly academic in style or overburdened with footnotes. It includes an excellent bibliography and detailed index. It is quite fascinating in its depiction of preaching methods, styles and content, and is edifying in the best sense. As a preacher himself Old is concerned at the lack of good preaching. Of his own nation he writes in Volume 1 that it was created by preaching, yet today there are plenty of pulpits but few preachers who are up to filling them. The same could be said more generally. Old does not profess to have written the definitive book on the history of preaching. Nevertheless, where else can you find anything of such breadth and authority on the subject? The selections will not always please everyone but they have been made with a view to helping understand the importance of the reading and preaching of the Scriptures in worship, and the set will undoubtedly further that end. This is a splendid book, well informed, and spiritually sensitive, by a preacher for preachers and for those aspire to be better preachers.

*Rowland S. Ward, Knox Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia,
Melbourne*

Martin Luther's Tabletalk: Luther's Comments on Life, the Church and the Bible

Christian Heritage Imprint, Christian Focus Publications, Fearn, 2003; 482 pp., £15.99; ISBN 1 85792 415 0

Tabletalk is as good an introduction to the personality of Martin Luther as any of his writings but to know his towering intellect one must read his *Bondage of the Will*. From the time of his marriage to Katherine von Bora in 1525 until his death 21 years later Luther lived in the Black Cloister in Wittenberg with his family of six children. A spacious building, it was overrun by all sorts of people. A friend wrote, 'A miscellaneous and promiscuous crowd inhabits Dr. Luther's home, and on this account there is a great and constant disturbance.' A maiden aunt of Katherine, several orphaned nephews and nieces of the Reformer, poor students rooming there in return for clerical and other services, a constant

flow of guests and a few servants all made the Black Cloister bustle. The main meal of the day was served at ten o'clock in the morning and at five in the afternoon supper was served. The meals were often shared with exiled clergymen, former nuns, government officials, visitors from abroad, colleagues of Luther from the university, and men like Philip Melancthon. In the relaxed atmosphere of the home there was spirited conversation, and some of the men who listened to the talk began to take notes, with the encouragement of Luther. The conversation was bilingual in German and Latin. We know that Katherine von Bora understood Latin quite well.

The first edition of *Tabletalk* was published in 1566 by John Aurifaber. He was an indefatigable collector of the sayings of Luther and an editor of Luther's Works. A century ago more collections of Luther's sayings were brought to light, altogether more than thirty manuscripts having been discovered. All the writers had expanded their skeletal notes taken at the table, smoothing out the style and writing fair copies back in their rooms. There are copies, and copies made of copies, and attempted improvements. Yet these manuscripts are judged today to have taken us closer to the actual conversations at Luther's table than the text presented to us in this book which is a selection of those sayings which were collected by John Aurifaber. Work on the more definitive edition was done over many years by Ernst Kroker in his six volumes of the *Tabletalk* in the Weimar edition of the works of Luther a century ago.

In 1652 Captain Henry Bell published an abridged English translation with his curious introduction (which has been preserved in this Christian Heritage Imprint). Then in London in 1848 William Hazlitt made a new translation containing a quarter of Aurifaber's text. This is the edition before us which has been frequently reprinted. An abridgement of this work last appeared in Philadelphia in 1952. Then in 1967 Theodore G. Tappert brought out the most up-to-date selection of Luther's *Tabletalk*, in the 54th volume of Luther's Works published by Concordia Publishing House.

John Aurifaber, judges Tappert, was guilty of 'expanding his sources by inserting material of an edifying nature' (Theodore G. Tappert, *Luther's Works*, Volume 54, p. xvii). 'One must concede that Aurifaber showed some skill and imagination in expanding the notes of earlier reporters' (*op. cit.* p. xviii). The impact of Luther's own spirit and vitality must be a little muted by such treatment, but it is still mightier than any editorial tamperings of Aurifaber. We are grateful that an edition of *Tabletalk* is back in print. This is a bedside book, to dip into and savour. Luther's freely offered observations are on everything under the

sun. Calvin was a more guarded personality, but there could have been no Reformation without Luther. We have groaned when our own garrulous tongues have been quoted to our shame. We appreciate Melancthon's annoyance at one report he read of his own contribution at a table conversation with Luther. Unable to retrieve the words, he finally wrote to the copyist,

Everything don't try to tell,
Silence would at times be well.

Geoffrey Thomas, Alfred Place Baptist Church, Aberystwyth, Wales

Rescue: Jesus and Salvation Today

Peter Selby

SPCK, London, 1995; 114 pp., £8.99; ISBN 0 281 04897 5

Bishop Peter Selby is perhaps best-known nationally for prophetically critical comment on government shortcomings some years ago. He is, however, a far cry from the turbulent priest. His work breathes a pastoral, humble and incisive spirit, addressed to Christians and their failings as much as to society and its. This is not a conventional writing on the doctrine of the atonement. It asks about the *impact* of salvation more than the theory of it. The author laces the book with gentle but powerful truths, such as: 'It is easy enough to reflect that "we do not live by bread alone" when we are not in the midst of a famine.' Or again: 'And most of us do not readily remember, when we feel someone is indebted to us, the size of our own debts.'

There are many wise thoughts here on what salvation ought to achieve. According to Selby, rescue is not so much passive reception as a call to freedom and responsibility (though could it not be both, if we take 'justification by faith' seriously?). Consequently, salvation must mean that things change. The status quo loses its privileged position. Links with the powerful cease to be important. Solidarity with the disabled and deprived is one of the signs that a change has taken place. Moreover, the gospel does not just bring bread to the needy, for that on its own was of the essence of the temptation of Jesus. It means also 'the opening of the ears of an unhearing society so that the mouths of the voiceless can be unstopped'.

The author's themes can be summed up in three motifs which result from the church not so much turning the world upside down as 'turning it inside out': transformation, inclusion and reconciliation. So there is some

doctrine in it too, for we are told that the root of this viewpoint is the death of Jesus which brings a total reorientation of priesthood, sacrifice and messiahship. Most of the trenchant and perceptive thoughts in the book stem from this reorientation.

A book from the heart, where the truths are occasionally sounder than their immediate exegetical basis. Easily read – a lifetime to live out.

Roy Kearsley, South Wales Baptist College, Cardiff

Active Evangelism

Derek Prime

Christian Focus Publications, Fearn, 2003; 183 pp., £5.99; ISBN 1 85792 880 6

Derek Prime claims in the introduction to *Active Evangelism* that the book of Acts is 'not a manual on evangelism'. Having read his book, one can only conclude that he has succeeded in proving that Acts would make a significant contribution if one was to draw up a manual for evangelism. The book provides a wealth of practical instructions for evangelism, all based on biblical truth as it is found in the Acts of the Apostles.

The author draws the 'ingredients of the message' from Peter's sermon at Pentecost. He emphasises that the focus of the message is the death of Jesus as 'the most important thing he did for us', whilst at the same time emphasising that the 'cross was not the end'. The author repeats in a variety of ways that nothing must be allowed to compromise the core message. In this context, his handling of the issue of the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to miracles and healing is sensitive and instructive as he draws from other parts of the New Testament to support his interpretation of the issue in Acts. As he rightly states, God is not limited, and we should always be 'open to His doing the unexpected'. But, in jealously guarding the centrality of the cross, he reminds us that 'healing is not the norm', and warns us that 'to say or to imply that proclaiming the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ *demands* signs and wonders may well be a subtle denial of the unique power of the cross'.

In moving from his focus on the message to his focus on the people, the objective is clear: 'our chief task is for people to see the meaning of Jesus' death'. The goal is clear and there are specific steps to achieving it. He reminds us that 'it is not enough to ask if someone wants to ask Jesus Christ into his life'. There must be a basic understanding of the doctrine of God and the doctrine of man. As far as the author is concerned this means that we must understand our sinnership. 'People', he says, 'will not understand why Jesus had to die unless, with the Spirit's help,

we show them how much our sin offends our holy and good Creator.' He reflects upon death as that which 'all human beings fear'. And in a subtle reference to the doctrine of hell, he reminds us that we have to convince people that the salvation offered in Jesus Christ is a salvation that will save us from 'being ushered into a worse, *undead* existence'. The author insists that these truths must be presented to the people. We must not 'play down the cost', perhaps because we are 'afraid we might put them off becoming Christians'.

When it comes to discussing who should be involved in evangelism, his inclusivistic approach draws attention to a fact that we are too often apt to overlook. Preaching, he says, 'is not limited to pulpits or platforms'. From the story of Stephen he shows us that 'the leadership of the early church saw that they were in danger of losing sight of their spiritual priorities through being bogged down with other tasks'. The author makes it abundantly clear that 'all of us are called to witness, whether we *feel* specially gifted or not'. Our approach to evangelism is illustrated from Paul's strategy as an evangelist. The lessons are clear. We must 'start where people are'. Like Paul, we must be able to adjust to different situations. Paul was a 'market place' evangelist and a 'synagogue' evangelist and 'like Paul we must express the gospel in terms that are intelligible to the hearer without altering at all the message'. Personal prejudices are often a stumbling block to evangelism. The author gives an instructive illustration of this difficulty in the story of Peter and Cornelius.

We all have our duty to evangelise the world, but the author reminds us that the key to *effective* evangelism is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the 'director of evangelism'. The Holy Spirit is the one who always 'works behind the scenes, directing the outworking of God's plan of salvation in the lives of countless individuals'. The author draws attention to the fact that we must be 'sensitive' to the promptings of the Holy Spirit by studying the story of Philip and the Ethiopian. In his illustrative description of Philip's part in the conversion of the Ethiopian, the author sums up the role of the evangelist well: the evangelist is 'at most, a spiritual midwife' in bringing an unbeliever to faith in Christ.

There is one other key aspect to effective evangelism on which the author lays great emphasis. He emphasises the need for personal holiness. The person who evangelises must seek to have a living, growing, fresh relationship with Jesus Christ. We need to have what he calls an 'up to date' testimony in the sense that we 'must first shine like stars in the universe by our blamelessness and purity'. Without this 'up to date'

Christian experience our 'testimony lacks freshness and spontaneity' and render our efforts fruitless. This 'up to date' testimony is also what the author claims will give us strength to persevere in the midst of difficulties. It will be, as it was for Paul, 'the secret of our staying power' when we are tempted to 'throw in the towel'.

Derek Prime states in his introduction: 'I hope that finding out about evangelism from Acts will fire you with fresh enthusiasm for sharing the good news of Jesus, the Son of God, the only Saviour.' It certainly did this for me. The questions for discussion at the end of each chapter help to make this a valuable, practical handbook for all those who are serious about giving obedience to the command of our Lord to 'go and make disciples of all nations' (Matt. 28:19).

Malcolm Macleod, Free Church Manse, Shawbost

Jesus Remembered. Christianity in the Making. Vol. 1.

James D. G. Dunn

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2003; xvii+1019 pp., £39.95; ISBN 0 8028 3931 2

Professor Dunn has embarked on a major project which can be seen as a summary of a long and distinguished career in New Testament scholarship: a three-volume work entitled *Christianity in the Making*. Volume One is devoted to Jesus. The title signals the main thesis of the work: Jesus is portrayed in the writings of the NT as he was remembered by the early Christians.

The work is aimed at two types of readership (just as most of Dunn's works are): mainly teachers and students of the NT, but also at an interested lay readership in the church. The book is both scholarly and readable. Words of the biblical languages are transliterated, and the details of the secondary literature are provided in footnotes. The book is clearly structured. The five main parts cover the following themes: I. Faith and the Historical Jesus; II. From the Gospels to Jesus; III. The Mission of Jesus; IV. The Question of Jesus' Self-understanding; V. The Climax of Jesus' Mission.

In Part One, Dunn provides a good and detailed survey of the history of the research of the 'historical Jesus'. This part especially, but also the book as a whole, will be a useful guide for students. Dunn always gives his own view as well, but in most cases in a reserved way, acknowledging that scholarship has to be cautious in claiming conclusive results. On occasion this leads to overcautious, weak conclusions, indicating that the traditional view on a certain matter cannot be held

conclusive either. This could be regarded as the only weakness in an otherwise positive, helpful and informative book. We shall focus on some of the positive results in this review.

Dunn maintains the view that in searching for the meaning of historical texts like those of the NT, the text as 'historical text' should provide the 'parameters for the meanings to be read out from it' (p. 134). The faith of the early Christians should not be excluded from the historical study of NT texts: 'All we have in the NT Gospels is Jesus seen with the eye of faith' (p. 127). Dunn calls for 'critical realism' in scholarship (p. 110).

One of the most important emphases in Dunn's work is that Jesus must have made an impact on the disciples; the effect of Jesus' activity was that he was remembered by his followers. Most of the NT material goes back to this earliest layer (the memories of the disciples, see for example p. 131), even in works usually dated to the later decades of the first century.

Dunn devotes a detailed analysis to the sources (Part Two, ch. 7). He maintains Markan priority (p. 146); he makes use also of the Q hypothesis, but in a very cautious way. Dunn does not assume a stratified Q (p. 158), and he does not make an attempt to describe a distinct community behind Q (p. 152). Dunn's strength is in pointing to the significance of the oral tradition (see ch. 8). He rightly ascribes differences in the Synoptic Gospels to variations in the oral transmission, rather than to the usual solution by scholars who argue that the evangelists changed their sources.

Dunn exegetes many key texts in his book, and he offers useful tables for seeing the 'synoptic' parallels. He uses the example of the story of Paul's conversion, narrated in Acts three times with minor variations (p. 211). He shows that the key message is the same, but there are minor differences at the periphery of the narrative. In the same way, oral tradition can be responsible for minor variations even in texts usually assigned to Q (p. 213), and in texts where other scholars argue for literary connection (i.e. one evangelist changing the text of the other, e.g. pp. 217-21). Variant liturgical practices may lie behind the differences in the versions of the Lord's Prayer and of the Last Supper.

Chapter 9 discusses the context of Jesus' activity; section 9.9 offers a good outline (p. 312) which is worked out in the remaining chapters of the book. For example, ch. 12 (in Part Three) on the Kingdom offers a good survey of the secondary literature, but sadly the conclusion in many cases is that the historian cannot claim high probability. One example of the too cautious dealing with the sources is the discussion of the birth

narrative. Dunn leaves open the possibility (with many liberal scholars today) that Jesus was born in Nazareth rather than in Bethlehem (p. 344). However, readers will find much good exegesis in this compendium-like summary of what we can know as historians about Jesus (e.g. texts concerning the Son of Man in Part Four, ch. 16, pp. 737ff., and resurrection traditions in Part Five, ch. 18, pp. 828ff.).

Peter Balla, Károli Gáspár Reformed University, Budapest, Hungary

The Confessional Presbyterian: A Journal for Discussion of Presbyterian Doctrine and Practice. Volume 1.

Chris Coldwell (ed.)

Naphtali Press, Dallas, 2005; 184 pp., \$25 per annual issue; ISBN 0 9704638 1 2

This new journal is a substantial publication, in more than one sense. It is physically a remarkably large volume, containing enough material for a sizeable book. Approximately two thirds of the journal contain major articles on a variety of topics, with the remainder taken up with an eclectic mix of reviews and items of interest.

More importantly, it is a substantial volume as a call to (mainly American) Presbyterianism to recover its confessional roots. The large charcoal drawing of Samuel Miller of Princeton which dominates the front cover is a deliberate – and fairly successful – pointer to where the journal really wants to go: to a modern application of the principles of Old Princeton.

The editor of the Journal is Chris Coldwell of Naphtali Press, and the Journal's publication 'is under the oversight of the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Rowlett, Texas', although the contributing editors represent a wide range of denominations, including the PCA, the OPC and the ARPC. Information on the Journal is available at www.cpjjournal.com.

The first article is a sermon by Miller on James 2:18, followed by a bibliography of Miller's writings. This is followed by a set of major articles: Chris Coldwell on Carruthers' work on the text of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Gary Crampton on Jonathan Edwards on Scripture and Salvation, C. N. Willborn on the 'Ministerial and Declarative powers of the Church', J. V. Fesko on N. T. Wright's doctrine of Justification, and F. Smith and D. Lachman on the worship views of John Frame and R. Gore.

One can see the American interest immediately, but that is not to say that the Journal does not address issues relevant to Presbyterians

everywhere. The articles represent a judicious mix of historical theology, systematics and practical theology, and usefully bridge the gap between academy and church.

Thirteen pages of review follow, then a piece entitled *Psallo*, an introduction to and new metrical rendering of Psalm 109. While the Journal is not coming out of an exclusive psalm-singing context, it does recognise the importance of the Psalter, and introduces metrical psalm-singing to us, although quite why Psalm 109 was chosen first is not clear. *In Translatione* is an attempt to resurrect some older documentation of interest to confessional Presbyterians, and *Antiquary* is a forum for bibliographical discussion.

The appearance of the first volume has set a high standard, which we trust the editors will be able to maintain. Their aims are laudable ones, and we trust that the journal will serve as a useful means of recovering the confessional foundations of Presbyterianism everywhere.

Iain D. Campbell, Back, Isle of Lewis

Asylum and Immigration: A Christian Perspective on a Polarised Debate

Nick Spencer

Paternoster/The Jubilee Centre, Carlisle/Cambridge, 2004; 182 pp., £7.99; ISBN 1 84227 271 3

The author begins by pointing out many misconceptions regarding this polarised and emotive debate. There is a great deal of misinformation and paranoia about asylum seekers. Figures are whipped around by the media and politicians, each using the panic in the public to their own advantage. However, what is the truth about the asylum seeker? This isn't easy to answer; as the author says, 'One of the most contentious elements in the whole debate, the number of illegal immigrants present in a nation is, almost by definition, completely unknown' (p. 12). The author has sought to both highlight and correct the extent of ignorance, e.g. 'when MORI asked people in June 2002 what percentage of the world's refugees they thought the UK hosted, the average answer was 23 percent, several times higher than the correct figure'. Also, when it comes to the amount they might be getting each week to live on, most people thought it was £113 when the actual figure was around £37 (p. 11).

The book deals with the motive behind the majority of applications for asylum. It is fear that has driven most people from their homes to flee to countries like the UK. The vast majority come from countries where

there has been conflict, e.g. Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan, and more recently from Iraq (p. 17).

The book also discusses the issue of immigration. This is very different, as 'Immigrants are not the same as asylum applicants.' They are not all Muslims and do not generally have poor English. They are often people with many qualifications, like nurses, dentists and lawyers. The author points out how attitudes in the UK have changed since the 1950s when the race riots began in 1958 (p. 38). Worth noting is that successive governments have tightened up the legislation to reduce the flow of immigration into the country. There was a period in the UK when emigration was higher than immigration. Immigration has not brought economic hardship to anyone in the UK. Most of these people work hard to earn a living and have contributed to the GNP.

Christian leaders and policy makers would benefit greatly from reading this book. It deals with the challenge that the situation presents to the church. The author focuses on guidelines given to the nation of Israel in the OT on the way in which they were to treat aliens and foreigners, making extensive reference to the Hebrew text. It would have been helpful if he had included the equivalent for the Hebrew in English for the sake of clarity.

It is well spaced out with seven chapters and plenty of notes and information at the back of the book for those who wish to research further, especially from the internet.

I heartily recommend the reading of this book because of its thoroughly biblical stance. Sadly, too many Christians have allowed the world to influence and dictate attitudes towards those who are in great need. In the final chapter the author states that the debate for the Christian should move away from the benefits, or otherwise, that the asylum seeker brings. The focus should rather be on the moral case for asylum.

The book concludes with a reminder for us all, 'As aliens and strangers in the world, God's call to us to love the alien as ourselves is challenging, sometimes difficult to work out and ultimately uncompromising. There are, however, fewer higher calls to which we can respond.'

Gurnam Singh, Melbourne Hall, Leicester

Beyond the Bounds: Open Theism and the Undermining of Biblical Christianity

John Piper, Justin Taylor, Paul Kjoss Helseth (eds)

Crossway, Wheaton (Ill.), 2003; 416 pp., £13.99; ISBN 1 58134 462 7

The title of this volume encapsulates its thesis: open theism undermines biblical Christianity and must be considered beyond the bounds of what Christian churches can legitimately permit. Justin Taylor contributes an introduction and bibliography and eleven authors set out their case under five rubrics: 'Historical Influences', 'Philosophical Presuppositions and Cultural Context', 'Anthropomorphisms, Revelation, and Interpretation', 'What is at Stake in the Openness Debate?' and 'Drawing Boundaries and Conclusions'. The overall tone of the volume is certainly polemical and not irenic, but the authors hold that this is necessary because open theism is dangerous as well as mistaken and that while love is always in order, peacemaking sometimes is not.

Multi-essay collections are often uneven and it is the case here. On the one hand, the principal difficulties with the claim that God does not exhaustively foreknow the future are well summarised by Bruce Ware in his contribution on 'The Gospel of Christ'. His book-length study of *God's Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism* also makes the case well and, despite room for demurral at aspects of his approach to the question of evil in both the longer volume and the present essay, this latter presents about as compelling a case against some of the main tenets of open theism as we are likely to find in a short piece. On the other hand, those of us who seriously disagree with open theism might be forgiven for being drawn to a favourable attitude to the open theists themselves after reading Wayne Grudem's treatment of 'When, Why, And For What Should We Draw New Boundaries?' After listing biblical warnings against false teachers or teachers of false doctrine, Grudem includes in their number annihilationists (so out goes John Stott); those who believe it is possible to be saved without actually hearing the gospel (so out goes Martyn Lloyd-Jones); and those who deny inerrancy (so out goes one of the distinguished authors of *The Fundamentals*, James Orr). Grudem does not name these names and concedes that someone who resists inerrancy, while not being a genuine evangelical, might be a genuine believer, but his work exemplifies a narrow sectarianism that finds it hard to distinguish between the teaching of Scripture and its own interpretation of that teaching and to include in the circle of worthies those who differ on interpretation, except over a narrow range of issues.

The most rewarding section of this volume is the third part, featuring essays by A. B. Caneday and Michael Horton that are helpful, persuasive and useful beyond the bounds of the question of open theism in particular. They respectively boil down to an exposition and defence of the anthropomorphic character of all biblical language about God and of the way of analogy. Undoubtedly, fellow-travellers on the theological road will take philosophical issue with them, but they arguably lay bare the hermeneutical heart of the debate with open theism. Both contributions are warmly recommended.

The politics of the debate in the United States, whose shadow engulfs the volume, has significantly moved on since the publication of these essays. 'Politics' can be taken as a pejorative term, but it also loosely signifies an entirely appropriate dimension of ecclesial concern, for the issues treated in this volume are not academic. It is important that the kind of discussion we find here should continue, provided that it is carried out in the right spirit. Here we should certainly agree with the principle sustained by the authors of *Beyond the Bounds*.

Stephen N. Williams, Union Theological College, Belfast

At Variance: The Church's Argument against Homosexual Conduct

Kevin Scott

Dunedin Academic Press, Edinburgh, 2004; 88 pp., £5.95; ISBN 1 903765 37 4

I have to confess that, having read so many books defending traditional teaching on homosexuality, I wondered what I would get out of this slim volume published with the support of The Scottish Order for Christian Unity. However, I knew its author – Kevin Scott – when he was curate at St Ebbes, Oxford and I was an undergraduate, almost 20 years ago. Among his fellow local clergy then was Richard Holloway, who subsequently was Kevin's bishop for many years in Edinburgh, and became increasingly strident against the traditional viewpoint. The book was short and I knew it would be readable and that's not true of all books on the subject.

It is, in fact, a masterly piece of polemic 'in that it takes a definite stance against homosexual conduct and hopes and expects to win the argument or, at the very least, aims to present to the reader points which will have to be answered before homosexual practice could be thought of as permissible' (p. 3). There is plenty of bad polemic in this debate and certainly many in the church will not like much of what is said here –

Kevin knows it may 'rise ire'. However, those who do not like it will need to address its central arguments if the church is to have any serious theological debate.

The book's focus is clear from its title – homosexual conduct not orientation or relationships or people. That in itself will frustrate some. Certainly its rigorous, detached, analytical and solid approach to its specific subject matter (you don't need the back cover to realise Kevin Scott's doctorate is in science) makes it open to the criticism of lacking pastoral sensitivity and I would be very cautious about recommending it to someone struggling in this area. Its treatment throughout is 'big picture' rather than the sort of detail one finds in something like Robert Gagnon's study. Although there is limited reference to such studies, there is obviously knowledge of these micro-debates and the book is clear and reasoned and not slapdash in its more broad-brush macro-approach.

Chapters 2–4 cover the biblical material in less than 40 pages. Rather than detailed studies of Sodom (which is not even mentioned) or Leviticus we see how Israel came to know God as the One who in creation establishes order in the face of chaos and then redeems a people from the disorder of sin and reorders their life by his law. The thinking is clear: among the chaos and disorder is sexual immorality and among sexual immorality is homosexual conduct: 'Sexual relationships that have neither sacramental coherence nor procreational function are, by Jewish and Christian standards, ruled out on the grounds of their disorder. Can there be any justification for acts which have no biological logic, no reproductive value, no sacramental significance, or which are incoherent with the orders of creation?' (p. 18).

Turning to Jesus and the Gospels, Scott shows how Jesus' ministry seeks to remove from Israel all that would keep her in exile and that sexual immorality was included within this. Again he is short and sharp in his discussion of Jesus' alleged silence on homosexuality and the relevance of his clear teaching on immorality (*porneia*): 'We cannot say that homosexual conduct is admissible while incest is to be deplored. Conversely, if we want to exclude incest, then homosexual conduct must go with it' (p. 29). He concludes with a helpful discussion of Jesus confronting us with the infinite demand of God, his infinite acceptance of us as sinners, and the sufficiency of Christ's reigning power (illustrated with reference to John chs 5 and 8) and the issue of defining our identity: 'We cannot define ourselves as gentile Christians, or Jewish Christians, far less as 'gay' Christians. We can only define ourselves as Christians, followers of Jesus Christ' (p. 35).

The discussion of Paul draws heavily on Richard Hays to see homosexual conduct as an 'anti-sacrament' – an outward sign of an inward rebellion – and rightly stresses this rebellion is not specific to individuals tempted to homosexual conduct but general to fallen humanity. After brief responses to attempts to silence or disregard Paul in this area, the stark challenge is put – with a powerful quotation from John Keble – that the church doesn't like being unpopular and that 'the effort to make homosexual conduct acceptable is driven, not by some new discovery that our understanding of Scripture has been faulty up till now, but simply by a desire not to offend, nor to be afflicted by, those who clamour for the change' (p. 47).

The fifth chapter looks at the views of the Early Church which are clear: 'there is a general verdict that homosexual conduct is not only depraved, but both diabolically and incomprehensibly so... it is self-evident to the Ancient Church that these practices are vile, degenerate and absolutely inconsistent with the teaching of Scripture and the logic of the Judaeo-Christian tradition in which they stand'. He particularly focuses on the 4th century and St John Chrysostom's Homily on Romans 1 which is reproduced as an appendix. The argument from nature is starkly and shockingly put to equate homosexual conduct (and approval of it) as a form of madness equivalent to a man who puts food into his ears, revealing perhaps the book's (largely implicit) focus on male homosexual conduct and particularly anal sex.

These chapters articulate in a short, sharp manner much that can be found in more detail (and sometimes more gently expressed) elsewhere. For me, the last two chapters are the particular value of the polemic. In chapter six, 'The Church's Plight', it is claimed that the church has experienced its own form of degeneracy similar to Romans 1; having abandoned orthodox faith and bought into a liberal reductionism that includes suspicion of Scripture and a quest for self-fulfillment (for all of which Feuerbach is particularly blamed), we should not be surprised if we are given over to acceptance of homosexual practice. Although the argument is sketchy (seven pages), its force is powerful and challenging.

This suggests why this issue is so significant and suggests – again rather colourfully – an internal logic: 'We could have predicted this more than a century ago if we had been sufficiently astute. Once the inevitable connection is made between failing to give God credit and the discredited mentality which follows from it, the inward part of the anti-sacrament is in place. It is only a matter of time before the hideous logic of unbelief manifests itself in the outward visible sign of perversion' (p. 62). It shows the need for more serious repentance: 'Repudiating the outward

visible sign of this anti-sacrament will not be enough. The repudiation of the inward unbelief, which is its counterpart, is much more important and involves the whole Church, not just a few individuals' (p. 63). And it clarifies that although part of the issue is the unwillingness of the church to be 'at variance' with the world, the deeper problem is that 'the Church has long since ceased to think as the Church should'. The good news though is that 'if through penitence, the Church reverses the inward sign of unbelief, then the outward sign of sexual disorder will retreat from it and the anti-sacrament will be dissolved' (p. 63).

But what if there is not such penitence? The last chapter addresses where we find ourselves now in the Anglican Communion and is clear: 'there can be no easy fixing of the plight into which the Church has fallen, and certainly there can be no compromise, no 'third way' by which both sides of the argument can co-exist in one communion' (p. 64). Here Kevin Scott's insight and his skill at sound-bites (with all the strengths and weaknesses that skill brings) reaches its height as he points out the seriousness of what is involved: 'If we were to accept homosexual conduct as right and valid, we would necessarily break our fellowship with all the saints and Christians of history' (p. 67). The Cross itself is at stake 'if we were to make any sin not a sin any longer'. Furthermore, 'all Christians in the past who confessed that sin were wrong to do so, were not absolved, and wasted their spiritual energies in penitence and in striving against the temptation' (p. 69). Practically, to change the church's teaching here means that for many the church 'will cease to be a safe haven and become a moral snare. The effect would be exactly the same as on married people if adultery were to be legitimated.' The church would be dissolved and 'any right-thinking person would have the duty to avoid it' (p. 70).

Finally, Scott shows that hard though this sounds, this is the truly pastoral approach. The language of being 'pastoral' relates to Christ the Shepherd and 'the pastoral ministry is not established by some consensus with the flock, adjusted appropriately here and there according to the preference of the sheep, but it takes its bearings from Jesus and the Apostles. In this way, the good of the flock is guaranteed, their safety procured and their needs met' (p. 74). If the church ceases to proclaim and live out the good it has learned from Christ, it would mean, in the book's closing words, 'the flock would inevitably become scattered and prey to the wolf' (p. 74).

Polemical essays are a particular genre of theological work. As a genre they are poor at sympathetic engagement with one's opponents and can slip into attacking caricatures and making statements with minimal

justification. They are therefore not generally conducive to facilitating listening and dialogue. All those features can be found in this work and many will therefore strongly dislike it. However, good polemic – and this is good polemic – also strengthens people to stick to their beliefs and oppose error, and challenges those who disagree to respond to the gauntlet thrown down. As yet, revisionists have consistently failed to do that when challenged, relying on social and political pressure and ‘pastoral concern’ rather than serious theological argument to advance their cause. Let’s hope that Kevin Scott’s ‘no-holds-barred’ approach to them provokes such a response, whether in a return polemic or a more careful rebuttal of his serious charges.

Andrew Goddard, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford

(This review first appeared on the internet at <http://www.anglican-mainstream.net/news182.asp>, and is republished with permission.)

20 Controversies That Almost Killed a Church: Paul’s Counsel to the Corinthians and the Church Today

Richard L. Ganz

P&R Publishing, Phillipsburg, NJ, 2003; 259 pp., £7.95; ISBN 0 87552 790 6

20 Controversies That Almost Killed a Church is a popular study of problems faced by the church in Corinth, and which continue to be of relevance to the church today. The homiletic style of the book suggests that it originated in a series of sermons preached by Dr Ganz, who is the senior pastor of the Ottawa Reformed Presbyterian Church in Canada and President of the Ottawa Theological Hall within the RPCNA.

The book consists of twenty chapters each of which focuses on a specific theme of 1 Corinthians, and include themes such as ‘Divisions in the Church’, ‘Lawsuits against the Church’, ‘True Spiritual Behaviour’ and ‘Is There Meaning to Life?’. Most chapters include highlighted portions of the text to be expounded. There are series of study questions and a Scripture index – but no introductory material or even a basic bibliography or suggestions for further reading.

Ganz’s exposition contains some acute observations on issues which continue to concern the church. With respect to divisions in the church he notes, ‘So often... the church is run down most by the people who should be building it up’ (p. 19). In commenting on marriage he remarks, ‘[Paul] crushed the idea of sexual promiscuity, the idea of having as many sexual partners as you please. But he also crushed the idea of a lacklustre sex life within marriage, because the Scriptures, in condemning immoral

sex, never condemn marital sex! In fact... Paul argues *for it*' (emphasis original, pp. 100-01). In a chapter on 'Christian Liberty' he helpfully observes that 'Christ's interest in the weaker brother is greater than his interest in you exercising your freedom' (p. 132). And with regard to spiritual gifts he wisely affirms that they are given 'for the edification of the church, not for private pleasure or a for a demonstration of the supposed highest level of spirituality' (p. 166).

Ganz's traditional understanding of headship in the church will not be universally agreed with, whilst his understanding of the obscure practice of baptism for the dead (that by such baptism Corinthian believers were participating more in 'a memorial service for the martyrs of the faith than a baptismal service', and so identified with Christian martyrs [p. 230-31]) is less than convincing.

His style is popular and dynamic – though it is perhaps sometimes too dynamic, as when he suggests that Paul 'crushed' Corinthian ideas of sexual morality (p. 100), or that a meaningless life is 'smashed' in Christ (p. 244)!

This book will be of help to the Christian who is concerned about the life and witness of the church in many parts of the West today.

Ian D. Glover, Livingston Free Church of Scotland

When Should We Divide?

Michael B. Thompson

Grove Books, Cambridge, 2004; 28 pp., £2.75; ISBN 1 85174 572 6

Subtitled 'Schism and Discipline in the New Testament' this booklet is part of the Grove Biblical Series booklets tackling issues of interest in the modern church. Michael Thompson is an American Anglican, Vice-Principal of Ridley Hall, and therefore the possibility of schism is very much on his mind.

The booklet is divided into seven chapters. There is a short introduction, in which Thompson quotes the lament in *2 Clement* that Christians were not loving one another as they ought. Thompson's aim, he says, is to encourage those have not yet left the church (and he has the worldwide Anglican communion in mind) to consider whether it might not be better to stay. Immediately, we realize that this is going to be a plea for the disenchanteds to remain where they are.

He then considers why Christians divide: doctrine, the authority of Scripture, a desire for holiness, anger at being sidelined, fear of compromise.

Next there follows a fairly exhaustive tour of New Testament texts in which schism is condemned and false prophets are criticised. To end with, Thompson gives some practical ideas as to how angry and frustrated evangelicals within mainstream denominations should respond and argues for the supremacy of unity.

Everything Thompson says is good up to a point. Yes, New Testament schismatics were trouble-makers; yes, the root of today's troubles lie in an unwillingness to discipline the unorthodox in the past; yes, this generation ought to apply discipline more readily.

The weakness in the argument is that Thompson fails to address the situation where a 'church' ceases to be the Church; where the doctrine and practice of the church has wandered so far from biblical standards that it is difficult to recognize the Body of Christ. What are Christian pastors to do when their leadership requires them to subscribe to articles of religion which flatly contradict historic, orthodox, biblical Christianity? Unlike New Testament times, the schismatics tend to be loyal to Scripture. As for discipline, the problem is that evangelicals aren't the ones holding the strap!

Thompson wants us to play the long-game. He says, 'Although serious error may flare up and affect a generation or two, schism can last for millennia.' Applying Thompson's logic one doubts there would have been a Reformation. There would be no Baptists, no Puritans, no Congregationalists, no Free Church (Scottish or English).

He says (p. 27): 'But I would rather be part of a group that risks erring on the side of tolerance than one that 'safely' errs on the side of separation.' I wonder how Chinese Christians, who separate themselves from the state-sponsored Three Self Church, would respond to such thinking. Biblical principles should be applicable to the church universal.

Thompson has provided us with a good place to start the discussion, but because he views the church through Anglican spectacles he will only be of limited use to those of us in other denominations.

Ian Watson, Kirkmuirhill

The Westminster Confession of Faith Study Book: A Study Guide for Churches

Joseph A. Pipa, Jr

Christian Focus, Fearn, Scotland, 2005; 416 pp., £9.99; ISBN 1 84550 030 X

The Westminster Confession of Faith continues to have a formative theological influence on new generations of Christians, and Christian

Focus Publications continues to play a part in encouraging and developing that influence. First reprinting Robert Shaw's exposition of the Confession and then Alexander Whyte's treatment of the Shorter Catechism, CFP has now launched a new book for the confessionally minded: Joseph Pipa's *The Westminster Confession of Faith Study Book: A Study Guide for Churches*.

Pipa's book has three parts. The first is a student guide, containing 26 lessons. Each lesson is introduced with references to required reading in the Westminster Standards and the Three Forms of Unity. Pipa then proceeds to pepper the student with a series of thematic questions based on biblical passages or, in some cases, confessional texts. The questions vary in length and depth, some are personal, most theological. Occasionally the inductive method is replaced by a couple of paragraphs of instruction (e.g. Lesson 1, question 22) or with a personal to-do list (keep a prayer journal, write a sermon journal).

The second part (pp. 119-294) is alternately referred to as the 'teacher's guide' (in the subtitle) or the 'teacher's edition' (in the running title), perhaps indicating that at one time two separate editions of the work were envisioned. Two editions, one for students and the other for teachers, would certainly make sense. The teacher's guide not only provides answers to the questions, but it also repeats every word found in the first 117 pages of the book. This burdens both types of readers with the cost of the other's material.

Finally, the book concludes with 117 pages of appendices, two of which are mis-numbered on p. 412. The appendices contain the easily available texts of the Westminster Standards and Three Forms of Unity, debatable inclusions in what could have been two slim volumes.

Pipa's book aims to make Christians think biblically, theologically and practically. Certainly Christ's church needs members and leaders who reflect on the same truths that occupy Pipa's attention throughout these twenty-six lessons. But Pipa presupposes a serious commitment on the part of his readers: as the title's repetition of the word 'study' indicates, this is a book that requires considerable work – Pipa recommends a minimum of one hour per lesson.

What the title does not communicate clearly is the subject matter studied. *The Westminster Confession of Faith Study Book* is not a guide to the Confession: confessional material is rearranged and omitted. Rather, as is the case with many guides and some commentaries on the Westminster Standards, confessional passages and ideas are used as launching points for theological instruction. Pipa's instruction is terse and pithy, and insights of theologians past and present are found

throughout the text. The author's discussion of definitive sanctification brings back memories of the best of John Murray (pp. 216-20) and a redemptive-historically sensitive comment on the eschatological implications of the penal sanctions in the Mosaic economy echo some of the insights of Meredith Kline that have become mainstream (p. 232).

There are a few typographical errors (e.g. pp. 9, 67), some inconsistent use of italic type (e.g. p. 145-6) and some compressed sections of text that are unpleasant to read (e.g. pp. 13-14). But as a theological and spiritual guide, *The Westminster Confession of Faith Study Book* is sufficiently thoughtful and clear to be recommended to studious Christians with a good group leader.

Chad van Dixhoorn, Wolfson College, Cambridge

Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary

Harold W. Hoehner

Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2002; xxix+930 pp., £41.99 (h/b); ISBN 0 8010 2614 8

This commentary is a massive and detailed exposition of the Greek text of Ephesians. Originally scheduled to be part of a series, changes in publishing plans have led to Baker's publishing it as a stand-alone volume. The author, who has taught New Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary for over thirty years, has provided a benchmark work on Ephesians which will hold a primary position in New Testament studies.

The layout of the commentary is clear, and is in three parts. The Introduction deals with issues of authorship, structure and genre, historical setting, purpose, theology and bibliography regarding authorship. The question of authorship is given wide discussion, as Hoehner lists the commentators who have accepted and those who have rejected Pauline authorship, further tabulating them in terms of dates and percentage. It is a detailed exercise to demonstrate that 'acceptance of the Pauline authorship of Ephesians has had a long tradition' (p. 20).

However, in dealing with the arguments on either side of the authorship question it is refreshing to find a scholar stating that 'it is extremely difficult to determine authorship on the basis of language and style' (pp. 28-9). Such assessments are extremely subjective, and Hoehner's discussion is exemplary in terms of how one should approach the vexed question of authorship. His preferred approach is to examine points of comparison with other letters (most notably Colossians), where

literary comparisons furnish more evidence for common authorship than questions relating to style.

Hoehner recognises that the question of the purpose of Ephesians, in the absence of any apparent 'problem' in the church, is complex. On the basis of the prominence given to the themes of love and unity, Hoehner suggests that 'the purpose of Ephesians is to promote a love for one another that has the love of God and Christ as its basis' (p. 106). Hoehner takes an interesting approach to this by looking at it in the light of the letter of Revelation 2:1-7, where the deviation from Christ's love marked the main point of declension in Ephesus.

Under 'theology', Hoehner looks at the doctrines of the Trinity, the Fatherhood of God, Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, ecclesiology and reconciliation. This is a useful summary of the doctrine of the epistle. The footnotes and bibliography are breathtaking in their range and extent, and show the author's mastery of his subject.

The commentary itself follows a simple and clear outline, in which the Greek text of Ephesians is given, followed by the author's translation and comment. The outline looks at the calling of the church in chapters 1-3, and the conduct of the church in chapters 4-6. In the second part of the epistle, Hoehner notes the frequency of Paul's use of the verb to 'walk', and he deals with walking in unity, in holiness, in love, in light and in wisdom, followed by the injunction to 'stand' in warfare.

Hoehner gives a thorough and exhaustive treatment of the issues raised throughout the epistle. On 1:12, he correctly notes that 'the indwelling, baptizing and sealing ministries of the Spirit are bestowed on every believer at the moment of conversion... they are an integral part of the gift of salvation' (p. 240). His dismissal of the notion of a covenant of grace is disappointing (p. 358 on 2:12). No commentator can satisfy on every point, but a good commentary, as this is, consistently raises issues which are not immediately apparent.

The third element of the commentary are excurses, on textual problems in 1:1, views and structures of 1:3-14, the meaning of 'in Christ', election, the meaning of *pleroma*, mystery, household code and slavery in Paul's time. These enhance what is a magisterial piece of work; Hoehner will prove to be a reference-point in consideration of Ephesians for many years to come.

Iain D. Campbell, Back, Isle of Lewis

When Will These Things Happen? A Study of Jesus as Judge in Matthew 21–25

Alistair I. Wilson

Paternoster Biblical Monographs, Milton Keynes, 2004; 272 pp., £16.99; ISBN 1 84227 146 6

When Will These Things Happen? is the published version of Alastair I. Wilson's doctoral thesis and addresses itself to the question of Matthew's depiction of Jesus as the eschatological judge in Matthew 21–25. While such a study, in and of itself, fills a significant gap in Matthean scholarship, the work is further intended to contribute to the area of Historical Jesus research, challenging the idea of a non-eschatological Jesus, particularly as it is found in the writings of Marcus Borg. The core of Wilson's argument is that the evidence of Matthew, a faithful transmitter of traditions associated with the historical Jesus, clearly presents the latter as the coming judge of all mankind, and that this Matthean evidence may not be disregarded in the way that Borg does.

Having established this as being his intention, Wilson begins by providing a thorough overview of the various understandings of the eschatological dimension of Jesus' teaching in Historical Jesus research. This is followed by an overview of scholarly opinion on Matthew's views on Jesus and judgement. Together, these surveys justify the need for a study that allows Matthew's distinctive preservation of the teaching of Jesus to inform our understanding of Jesus' own eschatological convictions.

The next two chapters set out the methodology to be followed in the study of the gospel, and justify the treatment of Matthew 21–25 as a unit. The methodology followed in the study is 'composition criticism', essentially a variant of 'redaction criticism' that is less concerned with source-critical issues and more with how editorial decisions function within the context of the final form of the narrative.

With all of this in place, Wilson turns to examine the text of Matthew 21–25 and the evangelist's presentation of Jesus as the eschatological judge. The material is divided into two sections, treated in separate chapters. Chapter 5 is entitled 'Jesus the Judge in Matthew: as Prophet'. This chapter is principally concerned with the prophetic material of Matthew 24 and includes an important discussion of the use of 'apocalyptic' language and metaphor as well as a useful study of the 'coming Son of Man' sayings. Chapter 6 is entitled 'Jesus the Judge in Matthew: as Sage'. This chapter examines the judgement motif as it occurs within the context of Jesus' parables in Matthew 21–25. Chapter

7 then draws the study to a conclusion, summarising the results of the Matthean study and employing them to criticise Borg's portrayal of Jesus as non-eschatological.

This is an important study for two reasons. First, it fills an obvious lacuna in Matthean scholarship by studying the presentation of Jesus as judge. Second, and in many ways more significantly, it breaks down the problematic separation of Historical Jesus research from the witnesses of the Gospels *as finished compositions*. Almost universally, the attempt to identify the Historical Jesus is founded upon a source-critical approaches that pays only lip-service to the actual witnesses we possess (the canonical Gospels). By critiquing such an approach by means of the final form of the Matthean text, Wilson has provided an important counter to this, and it is to be hoped that his study will encourage a greater respect for the actual Gospel witnesses in their final form within Historical Jesus research.

As far as criticisms go, only one substantial criticism may be levelled at the scholarship (one which was made known to me when it was levelled at my own doctoral thesis): in his treatment of Matthew 24:30, Wilson does not discuss the important study by John Collins of Daniel 7, the OT text that lies behind the Son of Man imagery (the study is found in Collins' 1993 commentary on Daniel, published by Fortress Press). Collins' work would suggest that the metaphorical/literal dichotomy in discussions of apocalyptic language requires to be nuanced further, a point that has some implications for Wilson's interpretation of Matthew 24:29-31. Such a criticism is relatively minor, however, and should not detract from the value of this important contribution to New Testament research.

Grant Macaskill, University of St Andrews

The Wages of Spin: Critical Writings on Historic and Contemporary Evangelicalism

Carl R. Trueman

CFP Mentor, Fearn, 2004; 190 pp., £10.99; ISBN 1 85792 994 2

Carl R. Trueman is a Professor of Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. He is a man to watch for the future! This latest book is a compilation of numerous articles and talks which he has given in a variety of contexts in the UK and Europe.

The first section of the book comprises six 'evangelical essays'. The subject matter ranges from a critique of the Helsinki Circle, a group of Finnish theologians who have recently revisited the theology of Martin

Luther, to an analysis and appreciation of the ‘Princeton Trajectory on Scripture’, as seen through the eyes of B. B. Warfield. In this section there is also a wonderful essay entitled ‘The undoing of the Reformation’ where he argues that image and spin, rather than the plain use of words, have been the vehicles of communication for the church. This whole section is obviously the work of a renewed mind which has a passion to see Christians engage their minds and to reject the pietistic anti-intellectualism which has become a cancer on our spiritual landscape.

The second section, entitled ‘Short, sharp shocks’, is pertinent, prophetic and at times simply hilarious as he comments on various aspects of contemporary evangelicalism. The book is worth the price just for the following titles: ‘The Marcions have landed!’, ‘What can miserable Christians sing?’ and ‘Why you shouldn’t buy the big issue’. In the chapter on the Marcions he argues that Marcion is probably ‘one of the most influential thinkers in the modern church’. He unpacks this thesis by showing how the church of today has *de facto* ditched the concept of the wrath of God and has practically excised the Old Testament from its thinking. His article entitled ‘What can miserable Christians sing?’ puts Trueman right up there with Bono as one of the most articulate advocates of Psalm-singing writing in our present times. The following quotation gives us a flavour of the entire book: ‘A diet of unremittingly jolly choruses and hymns inevitably creates an unrealistic horizon of expectation which sees the normative Christian life as one long triumphalism street party – a theologically incorrect and a pastorally disastrous scenario in the world of broken individuals.’

I cannot recommend this book too highly. I have quoted from this book, given it away, used entire chapters as study material. It argues that the Reformed faith should be proclaimed and applied to the bench kids, the Starbucks set and the praise song junkies of our time. It engages with the pseudo-prophets of postmodernism, people like Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault. It argues that God should be seen as God.

And by the way, the big issue is not what you think it is.

David C. Meredith, Culloden, Inverness

City on a Hill: Reclaiming the Biblical Pattern for the Church in the 21st Century

Philip Graham Ryken

Moody Publishers, Chicago, 2003; 209 pp., £6.99; ISBN 0 8024 4199 8

City on a Hill looks from a biblical perspective on how we should ‘do church’ in the 21st century. Its target audience is primarily pastors or

church leaders. It has been written with the USA in mind but I found very little which did not sit comfortably with the British church scene.

Ryken takes the view that there are two prevalent mindsets in society today of which we need to take serious note because they are unbiblical attitudes which can so easily infiltrate the church and affect our way of doing things. They are 'relativism' – the attitude that there are no absolutes today – and of 'narcissism' – the attitude that everything revolves around me and what I want. Taking these then as the prevalent outlooks in our world today, he then examines how they affect what we do by way of 'church' and takes the reader back to the Bible to examine how we need to redress the balance.

The book has nine chapters, eight of which focus on one of the central aspects of church life: preaching, worship, fellowship, pastoral care, discipleship, missions and evangelism, mercy ministry, repentance and renewal. The book concludes with a most helpful section called 'Action Guide'. It has two sections. In the first the reader is asked to evaluate his own ministry in each of the above categories. In the second the reader is given a series of practical suggestions. Each section concludes with a list of helpful resources if the reader would wish to study further on the subject. It is all laid out in a clear and easy-to-follow manner.

Ryken begins by taking his readers back to the first century church where he sees four essentials as a foundation from which any church should work: the teaching church, the worshipping church, the caring church and the growing church. In the section on preaching he argues strongly for the centrality of preaching – particularly expository preaching – arguing that preaching is still the best method to counteract some of the prevalent myths of our time and to undergird some of the doctrines that are under attack.

In the section on worship, he strongly underlines the need for us to worship God, arguing that in so much contemporary worship the focus is on the worshipper rather than the One who is to be worshipped. In the section on fellowship he argues that, in view of the current 'cult of aloneness', people searching for the ideal community will only find it in the fellowship of God's people. Ryken takes his readers through each section in a similar manner.

I had wondered before I began to read the book if it would just be a negative attack on all that is contemporary in the church today, but I found this not to be the case. The book gives many helpful insights into modern culture, and as a preacher myself always on the look out for anecdotes and quotations, I certainly found an abundance of these.

I would recommend this book for any who want to sit down and give their church a thorough review as to where they stand and where they are going in their current ministry. It is an easy but thought-provoking read, and seeks to be relevant to all we do today in our churches.

William B. Black, Stornoway High Church, Isle of Lewis

Wesley and the Wesleys: Religion in Eighteenth-Century Britain

John Kent

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002; 229 pp., £14.99; ISBN 0 521 45555 3

Professor Kent believes that the key to Wesley and the ‘Evangelical Revival’ lies in an understanding of ‘primary religion’. By that much-repeated phrase he means the constant propensity in human nature to look for divine intervention, and to identify it with such things as visions, healings, dreams and ecstasies of emotion. Roman Catholicism accommodated its presentation of religion to this propensity, and the main theme of this book is that Wesley and his men did the same. Far from leading ‘a revival of primitive Christianity’, they simply met the needs of ‘primary religion’ in their hearers by preaching that could produce excitement, the ‘miraculous’ and ‘communal ecstasy’. Wesley’s message first prompted ‘the damnation trauma’, then induced ‘release’ – a process in which women suffered the most, sometimes ‘the virtual destruction of human personality’ (p. 106). Wesley was sincere, no doubt, but it was his misfortune that he did not question the biblical authority on which his education had relied and, not possessing the benefits of modern psychiatry, he was incapable of analysing what happened. On the basis of such arguments the author wants to convince us that the traditional idea of a ‘Revival’ in the eighteenth century is only a myth: it was not ‘an evangelical revival ... but a rediscovery of primitive religious energies’ (p. 118).

In essence this line of reasoning differs little from the writers and clergy who were the opponents of Whitefield and Wesley. Bypassing such questions as whether the rebirth is a reality, and whether a saving relation to God depends upon our works or the justifying work of Christ, the first opponents of the Methodists seized upon any faults they could find, and so magnified them that any idea of a work of God verged on the ridiculous. John Kent follows the same line. In his 207 pages of text I recall only one that might be called sympathetic. For the Wesleys, he tells us, ‘The goal was not holiness but respectability’ (p. 201), and the

best that can be said for them is that they achieved 'moralism' 'for a large number of men and women' (p. 207).

For his thesis Kent draws, in places, on some less-known sources but the extent of his grasp of eighteenth-century evangelical history has to be questioned when he can talk about Whitefield's 'independent history in America', and treat the evangelical movement in the Church of England as though it began with Wilberforce and the Clapham sect.

Iain H. Murray, Edinburgh

The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880-1914

Andrew Porter (ed.)

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2003; xiii+250 pp., £32.99; ISBN 0 8028 6087 7

Edited by Andrew Porter, Rhodes Professor of Imperial History at King's College, London, *The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880-1914* is a product of what started life as the North Atlantic Missiology Project, now The Currents in World Christianity Project. This thoroughly researched and well-documented collection of nine essays elucidates the complex relationships between missionary theory and experience in an imperial setting over thirty-four years. The essays, although professional and thorough, are, nevertheless, for the non-specialist, a somewhat tedious trawl through the complicated and perplexing interface between Empire and Christianity. The book, as indeed the whole series of which it is part, has been well received and complimented by reviewers.

The nine chapters are: 'Atonement, Sin and Empire, 1880-1914' by D.W. Bebbington; 'Imperial Christianity? Bishop Montgomery and the Foreign Missions of the Church of England, 1895-1915' by Steven Maugham; 'Church, State and the Hierarchy of "Civilisation": The Making of the "Missions and Governments" Report at the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910' by Brian Stanley; 'Christian Missions and Mid-Nineteenth-Century Change in Attitudes to Race: the African Experience' by Andrew Ross; 'Missionaries, Science, and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century Africa' by John MacKenzie; 'Rethinking Gender Roles: The Field Experience of Woman Missionaries in South Africa' by Deborah Gaitskell; 'British Missions and Indian Nationalism, 1880-1908: Imitation and Autonomy in Calcutta and Madras' by Chandra Mallampalli; 'Rethinking Mission in China: James Hudson Taylor and Timothy Richard' by Lauren F. Pfister; "Who Did

Some might conclude that a book like this has limited value because 'diversity means superficiality'. That is not true in this case. The value of this collection is several-fold. Firstly it is relevant to the modern world and is a skilled reminder that theology is not and should not be divorced from such. Reymond's chapter on 'Angels' is not only a thorough study of the Bible's teaching on their being and function but an engagement with modern perceptions as exemplified by the TV series *Touched by an Angel*.

Secondly, it is the kind of muscle-flexing, academic compendium of individual 'refresher courses' which gives the busy minister who does not have the time to re-embark on full-length, comprehensive, theological study the opportunity to maintain his theological references and keep abreast of current thought. Furthermore, whilst each chapter is substantial in content, they are all self-contained and require no prior knowledge of the precise subjects being discussed. This means that the reader can either pick and choose his subject or simply dip into something briefly, yet come away having been exercised and edified.

On a negative note, the volume is, in the main, hard going. Perhaps that is a reflection of this reviewer but then again perhaps the author and even the publisher is also at fault in not taking enough care to present this good material in a form that is more readable and accessible to a wider audience. Theology must become more user-friendly if it is to be of wide benefit to the Christian public. Otherwise important issues will be lost to the very audience which needs most to have a good understanding of them.

Otherwise a meaty buy which will yield benefits to the serious reader.

Iver Martin, Stornoway Free Church, Isle of Lewis

Deconstructing Evangelicalism

D. G. Hart

Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2004; 224 pp., £21.99; ISBN 0 8010 2728 4

This book is essentially regarding the definition of the term 'evangelicalism' as it has been used in American Protestantism over the last few decades. It is therefore a very contemporary study of the church scene in the USA. There are, of course, implications and applications for us in the UK.

The author, D. G. Hart, confesses to being a strong reformed Presbyterian with a high view of the church, and this comes out in his book. In the preface, he states: 'For academics, this book poses a

question about accuracy in describing the American Protestant landscape. For religious leaders, it raises the issue of whether evangelicalism is a Christian identity sufficient to sustain serious faith.' His basic argument is that the term 'evangelicalism' would be better abandoned altogether, rather than redefined, not because it is theologically wrong or ineffective, but simply because it does not exist as a religious identity, maintaining that the term obscures as much as it reveals. Hart would agree that it has had its uses, but not because of its depth, only because of its width. He maintains the term has been hijacked by those who do not want to be labelled as 'fundamentalists' yet have a grudge against mainline churches.

The book is about the way neo-evangelicals built the evangelical edifice and how academics have maintained the façade of the building commonly known as conservative Protestantism. The first part examines the construction of evangelicalism during the last 25 years, looking at religious history, social scientific studies of religion and student public opinion in the USA. The last part of the book looks at how it has fragmented examining topics such as church polity; creeds and worship. Hart's thesis is that without a strong coherent understanding of worship, ministry and theology, evangelicalism has effectively deconstructed.

Some may argue that the themes he has chosen to examine the movement (creeds, church membership, theological agreement) are an imposition and will question their validity as effective tools for evaluating 'evangelicalism', but Hart is adamant that these issues are most relevant to the larger argument, and he makes a good job of convincing us that Christianity is serious business. A large part of the book is devoted to the *process* of constructing and deconstructing the term, and it could be said that his whole argument is based on these processes.

The book, obviously, consists of many quotations from, and references to, different authors, and surveys the Christian scene mainly in the USA. There are some very interesting reflections and notes on the various debates over the years regarding dispensationalism, the need for creeds, ecclesiology and fundamentalism.

Hart exposes his liking for 'high prebyterianism' but has pinpointed a very real issue which needs to be faced today, and has made a serious attempt at addressing the problem. In effect, Hart says that true Christianity cannot be reduced to the lowest set of common denominators with respect to convictions and practices. Hart's book will comfort and encourage many of his supporters, but, of course, the real question is will it win over his opponents? His book concludes by reminding us that

Christianity is more than, to quote from the very last paragraph of the book, 'the prefabricated items offered by low-church Protestantism'.

The book is beautifully produced and would make excellent reading for theological students and those who are interested in the doctrine of 'the church'. While the book is academic and deals with serious issues, it is not heavy going, and even Hart's wit comes through as he rebukes contemporary Christians for their cavalier attitude to Christian terminology.

George Macaskill, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis

Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education

Michael J. Anthony (ed.)

Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2001; 747 pp., £39.99; ISBN 0 8010 2184 7

This is a book by Americans for American readers but still useful for people in the UK. The defined goal of Christian education is, in brief, justification, sanctification and maturity leading to glorification. In the USA Christian education is a distinct profession with university faculties dedicated specifically to it, so the subject is attacked with a commendable transatlantic thoroughness by academic specialists. There are biographical entries for eminent figures like Robert Raikes, John Wesley and D. L. Moody; the psychologists are well represented with William James, Piaget, Freud, Jung et al., and there is full treatment of psychological and faith development in children and young people. There are entries on Christian youth and student movements like Inter-Varsity, but as I worked my way through the book from A–Z, I had a growing uneasiness. It gradually struck me that there is more than a whiff of the Evangelical ghetto about the whole book. Let me explain what I mean.

The separation of state and church in the USA means that Christian education happens in churches or in Christian schools and colleges – in the ghetto. In Britain, where churches are generally smaller and there are few Christian schools, the teaching of Christianity is still mandatory as part of Religious and Moral Education classes in every school. Moreover there is opportunity for Christian groups, like Scripture Union, to meet on school premises and in the school day. This puts Christian Education in the secular market place where it has to justify its place, and where Christians have to stand up and be counted. Seen from this perspective, this dictionary is directed to Christians in a more sheltered environment. For example there is a serious lack of topics relating broadly to Apologetics and indeed there is no entry for that topic or, extraordinarily,

for Evolution, Darwin, Creation, Science, Politics, Environment and many other topics which relate Christian belief to a secular society. That, in short, is my major objection to this book. It does not help to engage Evangelical Christians with many of the major issues of society, apart from sexual ones, which are thoroughly dealt with, starting with abortion and abstinence.

It is extraordinary that there are no articles specifically addressing such topics in a country where Creation Science and its relation to Evolution is such a hot subject in education. The nearest I could find was on Integration of Faith and Science and I quote: 'The inclusion of this article in this dictionary implies that science, *particularly the social sciences*, [my italics] is useful to and compatible with our goals in Christian education', but it does little to explain how this happens. So there are many references to developmental psychology and the work of secular sociologists yet a total absence of thought about the physical sciences. The USA more than any other society is based on science and its application in technology. Surely it must be relevant to Christian education that Christians, and particularly young ones, should be equipped to think critically about how this affects their faith. Surely, when we live in a decaying environment with a very real threat of destroying the world which God saw was very good, Christian education should have something to say on the matter. Surely, in a country which claims to lead the world in developing democracy, Christian education must help Christians to form political decisions based on biblical principles.

This dictionary has helpful articles on such topics as Maslow's Theory of Needs, Identity Moratorium and Role Reversal but nothing on Cosmology, Genetic Modification, Capitalism or Global Warming. I think that speaks for itself.

Peter Kimber, Dirleton, East Lothian

The Church Struggle in South Africa: 25th Anniversary Edition

John W. de Gruchy with Steve de Gruchy

SCM Press, London, 2004; xxx+286 pp., £19.99; ISBN 0 334 02970 8

When the first edition of *The Church Struggle in South Africa* was published in 1979, it was not simply an academic project but a risky contribution to the struggle it described. A second edition was published in 1986, while South Africa was still under the *apartheid* regime. Now, 25 years after its initial publication and in a very different political

situation in South Africa, this new edition seeks to bring the story up to the point of the democratic elections of 1994.

There are six main chapters in this edition. The first provides some historical context, tracing the roots of the church in South Africa. Chapter two specifically addresses the role of the churches in the face of the growing crisis. In particular, de Gruchy devotes considerable space to discussion of the Dutch Reformed Church, or the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk* (NGK), as it is now described in this edition. The third chapter is entitled 'The growing conflict' and reflects on the development of a 'confessing movement', with particular reference to the role of Beyers Naudé and the South African Council of Churches' statement entitled, 'Message to the People of South Africa'. The fourth chapter considers the church's involvement in the protest of black South Africans, including discussion of the 'Black Consciousness' movement and 'Black Theology'. The fifth chapter charts key moments in the final years of the *apartheid* regime, including the declaration of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches that *apartheid* is a 'heresy', the *Kairos* document and the final move towards democracy.

John de Gruchy's son, Steve, provides two significant contributions to the book. Firstly, he writes a postscript to the third edition of the book, providing a short response to criticisms of the first two editions. Secondly, he writes the sixth main chapter of the book, in which he reflects on the diverse 'struggles' which the church now faces under the new political regime since free elections took place in 1994.

I found this book very interesting. De Gruchy acknowledges that his treatment is selective, but his selections seem reasonable. He keeps his focus on the church, with the result that some matters which would require discussion in a comprehensive history of South Africa receive little discussion. Yet such choices enable the reader to cut through the many complexities of the recent history of South Africa to gain a greater appreciation for the role of the church in these remarkable events, and, as Steve de Gruchy notes in his 'Postscript', 'It is not just history. But neither is it just theology. It does not end with explaining "how and why", it wants to invite the reader to make a choice and to take a stand' (p. xxx).

One of the most striking features of de Gruchy's account is the emphatic claim that there were strong voices of protest against *apartheid* from the earliest signs of a growing problem. Even within the NGK, people like Beyers Naudé stood firmly against the *apartheid* regime. De Gruchy carefully avoids simplistic judgements which would affirm some churches and demonise others.

A weakness, from my perspective, is that de Gruchy limits his discussion to the contribution of the so-called 'ecumenical' churches. I would have liked to have heard more of how evangelicals contributed (either positively or negatively) to the struggle. There are a couple of brief references to African Enterprise (pp. 190, 196), but nothing of substance.

The third edition of de Gruchy's book is to be welcomed, not only as a valuable and interesting analysis of the church struggle which takes the story on into more recent times, but also as a means of marking the significance of this book, in its various forms, and the contribution of this notable South African theologian.

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A Study of Scottish Hermeneutical Method from John Knox to the Early Twentieth Century: From Christian to Secular

Marc A. Clauson

Toronto Studies in Theology, Volume 94. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston NY, 2005; 416 pp., £79; ISBN 0 7734 6416 6

The aim of Clauson's substantial work is to examine the contribution of Scottish churchmen to the field of hermeneutics, not only as an end in itself but in order to determine their influence beyond Scotland, particularly in North America. He presents his case by covering the extensive topic in eleven chapters, the first two setting out his methodology and the historical context of the Scottish Reformation, the remainder covering each successive century to the present day. His selection of Scottish churchmen vary from the obvious such as John Knox, Thomas Boston and William Robertson Smith, but also lesser known contributors to the field of hermeneutics such as Robert Traill and R. Lachlan MacKenzie.

The book's appeal will be mainly to those studying the field of hermeneutics or Scottish church history, but the fact that each theologian or minister presented for consideration by Clauson is contained in the index will make it attractive to the informed lay reader. Clauson has presented his material in such a way that it is easy to dip in and out of different chapters thus making it a useful reference book.

Clauson writes in a clear, comfortable style which is helpful when considering some of the more technical passages that are inevitable in a

work of this specialist subject. The fact that the book is the outcome of a Ph.D. dissertation is clear from its layout and, unfortunately, the typological errors that appear somewhat too frequently, the worst two being at p. 262 when 'Thomas Chalmers' as a subject heading is 'orphaned' at the bottom of the page and at p. 347 'Primitivist' in the chapter heading is mis-spelled. Other inaccuracies were his comment that Andrew Bonar was not a Presbyterian on p. 279, even though on p. 275 he correctly described him as originally ordained into the Church of Scotland ministry and later taking part in the Disruption, thus joining the Free Church. His comment on Alexander MacLean being a 'Scottish Baptist' (p. 374) was slightly inaccurate. MacLean was a 'Scotch Baptist' as the early founders of the Baptist movement in Scotland were known. A more important weakness was the dated nature of his reference material on the Scottish Enlightenment (footnotes, p. 143) with no reference that I could see to Arthur Herman's *The Scottish Enlightenment: The Scots' Invention of the Modern World* – a significant omission, though probably not published at the time of his original Ph.D. thesis.

The substance of his thesis is not essentially marred by these inaccuracies, however. He gives a clear and detailed description of the issues surrounding hermeneutics in each historical period, with substantial footnotes. In my view he tended to underplay his overall case for a clear connection between the pre-critical method of Scottish hermeneutics and the uptake of such a method in the United States; e.g. on p. 388 we read 'When we have found that a particular American interpreter has read a pre-critical Scottish work, we have also found that this person's biblical works have been very similar.' He goes on to argue, somewhat weakly, that this fact would be probable evidence of a co-dependence on Scottish works. Similarly, Clauson reveals his bias in somewhat dismissing those Scottish theologians who adopted the Higher Critical method as having no substantial place or influence in the United States, or anywhere for that matter, as 'the critical method could never deliver what the people in churches wanted – simplicity and relevance, combined with accuracy and reverence' (p. 392). Overall, however this book is an important work and will be a useful tool for those engaged in the study of the history of Scottish hermeneutics.

Jack Quinn, Adelaide Place Baptist Church, Glasgow

Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World

Richard Bauckham

Paternoster/Baker Academic, 2003; xiv+112 pp., £5.99; ISBN 1 84227 242 X

This is a remarkable little book. It deals ably and lucidly with hermeneutics, missiology, biblical theology and apologetics within the space of a mere 112 pages. It bridges biblical text and contemporary context with academic competence and in popular style. And it does all this with a sense of enthusiasm, relevance and urgency that reflects a passion for Christian mission.

The book sets the mission of the church in the post 9/11 context. How can the church effectively communicate the Good News in a world confronted and threatened by the competing universal claims of McWorld and Jihad? Bauckham believes the answer lies in rediscovering the hermeneutic of God's mission to the world as the key to understanding, appropriating and telling the biblical story. The author traces through Scripture a recurring missiological movement from the particular to the universal, from the one to the many. He highlights three thematic trajectories in the Old Testament narrative that enable us to understand the global missional direction that suffuses the New Testament. These three major trends are (a) from Abraham to all the families of the earth; (b) from Israel to all the nations; and (c) from the king who rules in Zion to the ends of the earth. All three together anticipate the particularity and the universality of Jesus, and are reflected in the mission strategy of Paul.

Bauckham defends the biblical story against postmodern suspicions of master stories. It is, he claims, a 'non-modern' metanarrative; its storyline is written from a plurality of angles, little stories proliferate within the larger ones and are often ambiguous with open rather than closed meanings: 'The biblical story refuses to be summed up in a finally adequate interpretation that would never need to be revised or replaced.'

The author suggests five ways in which Christians may appropriately affirm the truth claims of their faith in face of the postmodern preference for diversity over truth. First, such claims ought not to be advanced as settled and closed, for we live short of eschatological finality. Second, any claims to truth may not be coerced. Third, biblical truth is to be claimed by way of witness. Fourth, we witness by telling again and again the biblical stories – especially that of Jesus – for such telling mediates the narrative identity God gives himself in the Bible. Fifth, our witness

is to live in conformity to the cross of Christ; only thus will we avert being subverted by the human will to power.

In Bauckham's view postmodernism can offer no cogent or effective resistance to the spectre of economic globalization. He firmly believes that it is the Christian metanarrative that can successfully counter the current dominance of the profit-motive and the culture of consumption. But only if the carriers and communicators of this Story resist its becoming a tool of today's forces of domination. They can do this, the author asserts, by demonstrating solidarity with the world's poor and by developing alternative lifestyles to the consumerist and selfist paradigms of modernity.

If Bauckham's thesis is valid, then Christian witness in today's world demands of us a prior and total submission to Jesus as Lord and Saviour, a boldness to share his Good News in multiple ways, a holistic commitment to develop Christian worldviews and lifestyles that will transform local churches into subversive counter-cultural cells of kingdom values, and a prophetic fearlessness to enter the public square and confront the powers of Mammon in industry, politics, and media. An awesome prospect? Undoubtedly! But what a privilege and opportunity!

Fergus Macdonald, New College, Edinburgh

Princeton and Preaching: Archibald Alexander and the Christian Ministry

James M. Garretson

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 2005; 304 pp., £16.75; ISBN 0 85151 893 1

This highly readable and edifying book is based on the lecture notes in Pastoral Theology by Dr Archibald Alexander (1772-1851) of Princeton Theological Seminary, and his views on the work and office of the ministry from other sources. Dr Garretson's personal sympathy with the subject of his work is evident as he attempts to help readers 'to better understand the significant role that ministerial training played in shaping the ethos of American church history'. He draws a picture of a man with few character flaws, of gigantic abilities and eminent in piety, leaving the reader with a sense that they are also being instructed by a true master – a saint who in the highest sense 'walked with God'. Containing much biographical material concerning his subject from various sources, and many useful references to further reading material together with a full list of works by Alexander, this study also aims to 'assist pastors and preachers in their ministry and care of the people of God'. Dr Garretson,

an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in America, is generally successful in both these important objectives.

The first chapter is a profitable biographical study of Alexander's spiritual experience and preparation for his role at Princeton Seminary as its first professor. The emphasis placed on piety in learning by the early Princeton educators, who doubtless emulated their godly predecessors, is thoroughly handled in the next two chapters. These deal informatively with the call to, and qualifications for, the Christian ministry. The link between Alexander and the earlier generation is not as clearly demonstrated as Alexander himself might have deemed necessary. Another important area only briefly alluded to is the place given to missions in Old Princeton's outlook. Alexander's contribution to ecclesiastical controversy and the demise of Princeton as a bastion of Calvinism within a generation of his death are unfortunately not touched upon in this study.

More fully handled is how Alexander addressed issues in his own day relating to the subjective experience of the Spirit and how it must be authenticated and interpreted by the objective revelation of divine truth. This subject continues to press for the attention of evangelicals with the emergence of the charismatic movement. The last and longest chapter, entitled 'A Scribe well instructed' summarises fully the contribution made by this excellent man of whom Charles Hodge spoke somewhat prophetically on hearing of his death, 'It is all past, the glory of our Seminary has departed.'

Building on the fundamental necessity for personal piety, Princeton demanded that all future ministers receive a liberal education. This book refers frequently to Alexander's use of Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric* and considerable attention is given to the preaching model advocated by Alexander. Chapters on 'Pulpit Preparation', 'The Matter of Preaching' and 'The Manner of Preaching' contain many useful and interesting points. Besides the necessity that preaching be Christ-centred and biblical, what is called 'characteristical preaching' is explained. This should be of interest to modern evangelicals when truly discriminating preaching is perhaps not given the prominence it deserves or once had.

Living at a time when revivals of true religion were common, Alexander does not come across as one who would support modern revivalism. Garretson's work highlights the importance he placed on the spiritual qualifications of preachers and on traditional preaching in a Presbyterian context. One aspect which does appear to this reviewer to be missing is the necessary emphasis on the Spirit's work in relation to the ministry and its effectiveness. It would be instructive to learn Alexander's

thoughts on this centrally important subject. This excellent book should find a wide readership and if it encourages the kind of piety and learning which characterised 'Old Princeton', today's church will be advantaged.

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