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Get Out There With Some Godly Passion!
2003 Commencement Address

Karl L. Barth

Each time one steps on this campus, memories are stirred. Concordia Theological Seminary, as you know, was a gift from Wilhelm Löhe, who was so instrumental in the founding of our beloved Synod. Indeed, it was of him that Dr. Walther, our first president, said: "Next to God, it is Pastor Löhe to whom our Synod is indebted for its happy beginning.... It may well honor him as its spiritual father."[1]

I am also reminded again today of the close ties that bind both Father Löhe and this seminary to the Barth family. My grandfather was one of Löhe's *Sendlinge,* who came to this country in 1864 to complete his theological studies, and grandmother was a deaconess under Löhe at Neuendettelsau in Bavaria. My father, G. Christian Barth, in turn, served as president of this institution in the years following the end of World War II (1945-1952). Needless to say, I am grateful to be here with you today and to share the joy of you graduates and your loved ones. Congratulations!

The word "commencement" reminds that the focus here is on the future. Yet it would hardly be appropriate this evening to ignore your long years of training and the many people who have touched your lives during those years. They are not only your pastors and your professors, but your fathers and mothers, your wives and sweethearts. They prayed. They worked. Many of them sacrificed so that both you and they might experience the happiness of this day. And their tears of joy tonight are, I am sure, all the reward they seek. We thank God for them.

Now then, in an issue of the *Atlantic* magazine there is an article by Jonathan Rauch, who describes himself as "an unrepentantly atheistic Jewish homosexual." Today he prefers to call himself an "apatheist," and he defines apatheism this way: "a disinclination to care all that much about one's own religion, and an even stronger disinclination to care about other people's." He rejoices that apatheism seems to be flowering in this country, and he hopes for "a world generously leavened with ... people who feel at ease with religion even if they are irreligious; people who may themselves

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[1]Quoted in Erich Heintzen, *Love Leaves Home* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973), 73.

The Rev. Dr. Karl L. Barth is Pastor Emeritus and former member of the Board of Directors for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

be members of religious communities, but who are neither controlled by godly passions nor concerned about the ... religious beliefs of others."

Graduates, behold your world! Yes, the postmodern world is flowering, a world in which, as George Barna reminds us, almost eighty percent no longer believe in anything called absolute truth. And the message to you today is GET OUT THERE WITH SOME GODLY PASSION. The word "passion" is often used to describe sexual appetite. Here I use it, as Rauch does in his article, as an antonymn for apapthy—intense excitement, absolute commitment even unto death for your labors as "ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor.4:1).

I.

Get out there with godly passion for people and for their salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ! You have many models in Holy Scripture: Ezra, Isaiah, and Jeremiah all weep because of the rebellion of God's people. Paul is so distraught about his fellow Jews who "are ignorant of God's righteousness" (Rom. 10:3), *anathema,* separated from the Savior for them. Observe our Lord, who sheds tears over the city of Jerusalem for its refusal to take refuge under the shadow of his wings (Matt. 23:37).

However, it is not people in general who are to arouse godly passions in us. More than that, it is individual souls who are to be our concern as undershepherds of the Master. Yes, our Lord preached to the multitude in the sermon on the mount. And yes, he fed 4,000 at a time and 5,000 at a time. But see his passion for one grieving widow in Nain, one blind Bartimaeus on the road near Jericho. He tells the story of the one lost sheep, the one lost coin, the one lost son.

Indeed, one of the delightful features of the Gospel of Luke is that we have several episodes found only there in which our Lord turns his attention from the crowds to minister to just one sinner. His lecture in the synagogue is interrupted because there is a woman stooped over for eighteen years who needs healing. He is thronged along the highway; and who receives his attention but the little tax collector fellow who shinnied up the sycamore tree to see him. Salvation must come to his house. At Golgotha there is the criminal who will be with him in Paradise. And on the day of resurrection we do not find him announcing his victory on Israeli television. He walks the dusty road to Emmaus with Cleopas and his friend and "beginning at Moses and all the prophets [expounds] to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).

As good Lutherans you ask, "What does this mean?" It means that it is all good and well to think big. To make big plans and to pray big prayers for the lost and dying billions. But it is also important to think small. Think one family at a time, one person at a time. Get out and visit that grandma who is lonely and despairing because her children never call. Take time to help that Christian teenager who wants to be faithful but is having such a hard time understanding what's going on inside of him. Give your computer a rest and exercise your fingers instead by pushing some doorbells in the community.

And when you think small, there is no room for a big ego. President Ronald Reagan used his mother Nelle's Bible for his oath of office. On the inside cover of that Bible are these words: "You can be too big for God to use, but you cannot be too small."[2] John the Baptist had it right, also for each of us, when he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

II.

And doesn't it make sense—if you get out there with godly passion for people, you will have a godly passion to proclaim to them God's message of law and gospel.

How important is that? Why such passion to preach? In Melville's *Moby Dick* Ishmael describes the pulpit in the chapel of the town of Bedford with these words: "Its paneled front was in the likeness of a ship's bluff bows.... What could be more full of meaning?—for the pulpit is ever this earth's foremost part, all the rest comes in its rear; the pulpit leads the world.... Yes, the world's a ship on its passage out, and not a voyage complete; and the pulpit is its prow."[3]

Walther is less poetic but no less definite. In his lectures to the seminary students he said: "Among the various functions and official acts of a servant of the Church the most important of all, my friends, is preaching.... A minister who accomplishes little or nothing in preaching will accomplish little or nothing in anything else that he may do."

Walther continues: "Here is where the papists differ from us. They call their ministers priests and assert that the most important of all functions of a priest is to baptize, hear confession and pronounce absolution,

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[2]Quoted in *My Turn: The Memoirs of Nancy Reagan* (New York: Random House, 1989).
[3]Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 51.

administer communion.... We are forced to say that all baptizing, pronouncing absolution and administering communion is useless if these matters have not previously been made the subjects of preaching to the people."[4]

Melanchthon, in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, says it all in one sentence: "The chief worship of God is the preaching of the Gospel."[5]

And what is to be preached we know—not the gospel of "liberal Christianity" as described by H. Richard Niebuhr, namely, "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a Cross."[6]

Indeed, God is not without wrath, and we are not without sin. He declares, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), and "cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3:10). No escape here on our part! Away with the insipid moralism that urges the hearers to try a little harder, love a little deeper, pray and give a little more.

The law must be preached. Dante explained through Beatrice that fallen man "could never make amends; he could not go as low in his humility as once. Rebellious, he had sought to rise in pride."[7] And God, as Luther reminds, "saves no one but sinners. He instructs none but paupers, and he makes alive only the dead."[8]

Yes, he does, and yes, he did. "You [and I] he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). He "made us alive together with Christ" (v.5). How? "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.... He made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:19, 21). "All things have become new" (v.17).

Dr. Walther goes on at length to his seminarians about the glory of this gospel ministry and says, in part: "You are not to prolong this poor,

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[4]C.F.W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1929), 247.

[5]Apology of the Augsburg Confession, XV, 42.

[6]Quoted by Richard John Neuhaus, "Can Atheists be Good Citizens?" *First Things* (August/September 1991): 18.

[7]Dante, *The Divine Comedy.* The full quote appears in canto 7, lines 85-120.

[8]Martin Luther, "Lectures on Romans," vol. 25 of *Luther's Works,* trans. Jacob A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), 418.

temporal life of those entrusted to your care, but you are to bring to them the life that is the sum of all bliss, the life that is eternal, without end. You are not to raise those entrusted to your care from temporal death to live once more this poor temporal life, but you are to pluck them out of their spiritual and eternal death and usher them into heaven."[9]

No room for apatheism when you preach that sweet gospel, for, as the old salvation song shouts robustly, "The old devil's crown has got to come down, and that with a hullabaloo!" For "hullabaloo" read "godly passion."

III.

Let me say it one more time—get out there with a godly passion to be a pious, faithful leader. There are two passages from the letters of St. Paul to his friends in Corinth that seem especially relevant. The first is in 1 Corinthians 4, where the apostle, in the very first verse, reminds them to consider him and other Christian pastors as "servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." And because Paul knows he is first and foremost a servant of Christ he thinks it a small matter that they should judge him and/or compare him with Apollos, Peter, or anyone else. In verse 4 he asserts: "He who judges me is the Lord."

How appropriate these words are for pastors today in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Because the postmodern man is more concerned with how he believes than what he believes, we are tempted in our evangelistic outreach to tickle people's ears, and there are many who think they therefore should be evaluated on the basis of how good they make people feel. One journalist responds: "Those entrusted with the care of souls ... need not be grim-faced doom-criers. But at least they ought not to be like railway signalmen who, in order not to 'upset' the passengers by giving them bad news, smile and wave as the train goes by, hurtling toward a washed-out bridge."[10] And Margaret Thatcher, in her autobiography, reminds all leaders: "You cannot lead from the crowd."[11]

If that temptation is there when we seek to build God's church, it is there also when we are called upon to make decisions in the area of church fellowship. Here too our decisions dare not be made on the basis of how the world will judge us and/or our church. If the world is harsh in its judgment, we need remember that "the offense of the cross" (Gal. 5:11) has

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[9]Walther, *Law and Gospel*, 37.

[10]James Hitchcock in *St. Louis Review*, January 31, 1986.

[11]Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (New York: Harper Collin, 1993), 23.

not ceased. Indeed, our Lord reminds us: "If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18). And he does not call us to "damage control," "only to faithfulness." "Blessed are you when they shall revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven" (Matt. 5:11-12).

Almost 150 years ago Charles Porterfield Krauth spoke these words:

> The Lutheran Church can never have real dignity, real self-respect, a real claim on the reverence and loyalty of her children, while she allows the fear of denominations around her, or the desire for their approval, in any respect to shape her principles or control her actions. It is a fatal thing to ask, not, What is right? What is consistent? But, what will be thought of us? Better to die than to prolong a miserable life by such a compromise of all that gives life its value.

Yes, leaders, but mark it well, not tyrants for as strongly as Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 4 about being responsible first and foremost to the Savior, so kindly does he speak in 2 Corinthians 4 where he writes: "We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (v.5). Servant leaders, as Paul explains in 1 Thessalonians 2 (v.7,11) where he talks about how gentle he was among them, "just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children" and comforted and exhorted them "as a father does his own children." Indeed! Those whom you will serve are more than clients to be serviced, surely not enemies to be overcome for the control of the church. They are those called to be saints, washed in the blood, beloved of the Lord.

How blessed we are to have our Lord Jesus Christ as the model of such leadership. See how patient he is with the ignorance, doubt, and even unbelief of the twelve. He, their Lord and Master, washes their feet. And even when he warns, there is love in his voice: "Simon, Simon.... I have prayed for you...." (Luke 22:31f.) He "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

High expectations? Yes, certainly! And many will be the time when you, like the rest of us, will have to confess that we have fallen short of the mark. How wonderful that we can again turn to Jesus, whose godly passion for us led him to his bloody Passion for our sins and his glorious Easter triumph.

SOLI DEO GLORIA!

The Real Presence of the Son Before Christ: Revisiting an Old Approach to Old Testament Christology

Charles A. Gieschen

Martin Luther once wrote: "All of Scripture is pure Christ."[1] Many Lutheran pastors learned the hermeneutical principle of christocentricity in their training and regularly teach it; namely, all of the Holy Scriptures proclaim the reality of Christ. Putting that principle into practice, especially in the exegesis of the Old Testament, is where some difficulty emerges. In practice many pastors tend to view the christological content of the Old Testament as those isolated messianic prophecies or broader typological patterns of the coming Messiah. The primary understanding of Christ in the Old Testament is one of *prophecy*, not *presence*. Some interpreters do show some boldness by asserting the presence of the Son in some Old Testament events. For example, some state that that the use of the plural in the creation narrative– "Let *us* make man in *our* own image" (נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ in Gen. 1:26)–indicates the presence of the Son in creation and that the appearances of the Angel of the Lord are appearances of the pre-incarnate Christ. This "prophecy-with-a-little-presence" approach to the reality of the Son in the Old Testament has been enshrined by the nineteenth-century defender of orthodoxy, Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg, in his *Christology of the Old Testament*.[2] Beyond the messianic prophecy and Angel of the Lord theophanies, however, the exegetical practice of pastors sometimes has difficulty supporting the christocentricity principle they espouse, much less Luther's broad pronouncement: "All of Scripture is pure Christ."

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[1]Martin Luther, "Treatise on the Last Words of David" (1543), vol. 15 of *Luther's Works* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), 339.

[2]*Christology of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1970). This popular edition is an abridgement done by Thomas Kerchever Arnold of the 1847 English translation by Reuel Keith; the abridgement excludes Hengstenberg's discussion of the Angel of the Lord texts. For the second edition of the original 1835 German publication, see *Christologie des Alten Testaments und commentar über die Messianischen Weissangungen*, 3 vols. (Berlin: L. Oehmigke, 1854-1857). For an English version of the entire work, see the 1872-1878 translation by Theodore Meyer and James Martin reprinted in three volumes by Kregel (1956).

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Nor can Lutheran pastors look to most biblical scholars for help, be they practitioners of traditional historical criticism or conservative evangelical exegesis.[3] The former *condemns* and the latter *cautions against* christocentric exegesis of the Old Testament as unwarranted or undue "Christianizing" of the Old Testament. These unlikely bedfellows both see such christocentric exegesis as spiritual eisegesis that reads Christ *into* the Old Testament with uncritical lenses ground and colored by the study of Jesus in the New Testament. Many critical scholars are cautious about understanding any Old Testament text, even so-called messianic prophecies, as actually speaking about Christ. Joseph Webb, for example, calls upon Christian preachers to rid themselves of notions that the Old Testament—which he prefers to call "the Hebrew Bible"—is about Christ or even God:

> In Christian preaching, then, there is so much to draw on in the Hebrew Bible.... But it is not because the Hebrew Bible is about Christ—which it isn't. Nor is it even because it is about God and what we can "learn about God." It is because it is about the human condition, about richly textured mythic stories of naming "god," of naming one another, of coping with good and evil, and of struggling to live together and embrace one another.[4]

Webb dismisses both christocentric and theocentric interpretations of the Old Testament and advocates an *anthropocentric* reading as the preferred alternative (i.e., "its is about the human condition").

A second example of polemics against a christological reading of the Old Testament is found in a hermeneutics textbook from conservative evangelical circles that issues this strong warning:

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[3]"Most" obviously implies exceptions; see Anthony Tyrell Hanson, *Jesus Christ in the Old Testament* (London: S.P.C.K., 1965), James A. Borland, *Christ in the Old Testament: A Comprehensive Study of Old Testament Appearances of Christ in Human Form* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), and Ron Rhodes, *Christ Before the Manger: The Life and Times of the Preincarnate Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992). For a fine discussion of the christological interpretation of the Old Testament in the Gospels, see Richard B. Hays, "Can the Gospels Teach Us How to Read the Old Testament?" *Pro Ecclesia* 11 (2002): 402-418. For a more extensive discussion of my understanding of this aspect of Christology, see Charles A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence*, AGJU 42 (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

[4]"A Revolution in Christian Preaching: From the 'Old Testament' to the 'Hebrew Bible,'" *Quarterly Review* 20 (2000): 257. Cited in Hays, "Can the Gospels Teach Us How to Read the Old Testament?" 403.

> At the same time, interpreters must exercise extreme caution to avoid an undue Christianizing of the OT. Parallel NT passages should not be used to make OT passages teach NT truth. The early church had the tendency—one continued by Protestants after the Reformation—to read NT theological concepts into OT passages. We must avoid this error; our first task is always to understand each text on its own terms—as its writer and readers would have understood it.[5]

There is something useful in this warning. Interpreters should begin with the Old Testament text and its historical context rather than interpreting a text simplistically in light of later revelation. We must, however, not ignore the fact that later revelation—especially in Jesus Christ—can indeed help us to understand the meaning of Old Testament texts in a fuller manner than that of the original author or readers.[6] David Steinmetz has noted that "medieval theologians defended the proposition, so alien to modern biblical studies, that the meaning of Scripture in the mind of the prophet who first uttered it is only one of the its possible meanings and may not, in certain circumstances, even be its primary or most important meaning."[7] The problem in understanding each text "as its writer and readers would have understood it" becomes very apparent in the illustration that immediately follows the warning quoted above:

> Early in our careers one of the authors became embarrassingly aware of how prevalent this practice [i.e., "undue Christianizing"] continues to be among Christians. After preaching a sermon on Jeremiah's call, in which he stressed insights for responding to God's leading today, a parishioner bluntly admonished him at the door, "Young man, preach Christ!" The confident "But I did, sir!" did not reassure the indignant parishioner who felt that every OT passage has to serve as a springboard for a Christ-centered gospel message. Unfortunately, he, and many others like him, have failed to realize that God's message in the OT for the Church today must grow out of the intended meaning of the text itself.[8]

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[5]William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard Jr., eds., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1993), 171.

[6]The understanding that the "the most primitive meaning of the text is its only valid meaning" is an assumption furthered by historical criticism and was not a characteristic of "pre-critical exegesis"; see David C. Steinmetz, "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis," *Theology Today* 37 (1980-81): 27-38.

[7]Steinmetz, "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis", 33.

[8]*Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 171.

Many Lutheran pastors would respond: "How can any Old Testament passage *not* be preached as 'a Christ-centered gospel message'?" After all, is not the basis for God's gracious word and deeds throughout history found in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus? The authors, however, carefully speak about "God's message in the OT" in distinction from "a Christ-centered gospel message"; they obviously do not want their readers to understand the *theology* of the Old Testament as *Christology*.

How, then, can pastors *practice* more of what they *confess* concerning the christocentricity of the Holy Scriptures in their exegesis of the Old Testament? First, certainly the christocentricity of the Old Testament can and should be expressed when interpreting prophecy concerning the coming Christ, both more specific rectilinear prophecy, as well as broader typological prophecy. Due to the consistency of God, we can truly say that all of the Old Testament is in some sense prophetic and reveals to us the reality of God that we see in Jesus Christ. Second, christological content should also be expressed when interpreting divine words and deeds of grace and judgment in the Old Testament because there is an organic relationship between God's grace and judgment throughout history and the Christ event; even though the Christ event is later in time, it is the source for divine grace and judgment shown throughout time. Third, *this study will demonstrate that the christocentricity of the Old Testament should also be expressed by emphasizing the real presence of the Son in the B.C. events of the Scriptures.* The adjective "real" is used intentionally, as most Lutherans will recognize. Some nebulous ubiquity of the Son by virtue of his divinity is not being asserted, but a tangible and local presence. A.T. Hanson calls the real presence of the pre-existent Christ in Old Testament history "the most important clue to the understanding of the NT exegesis of the OT."[9]

The "presence" of God with his people is a significant theme woven throughout the Scriptures.[10] The "God" present in the Old Testament,

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[9]Hanson, *Jesus Christ in the Old Testament*, 7.

[10]For a discussion of "presence" as a central Old Testament theme, see Horace D. Hummel, *The Word Becoming Flesh: An Introduction to the Origin, Purpose, and Meaning of the Old Testament* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 78-79, and especially David L. Adams, "The Present God: A Framework for Biblical Theology," *Concordia Journal* 22 (1996): 279-94. Adams draws upon the earlier work of W. J. Phythian-Adams, *The People and the Presence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), Yves Congar, *The Mystery of the Temple*, trans. Reginald F. Trevett (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1962), R. E. Clements, *God and Temple* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), and Samuel Terrien, *The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978).

however, is not always understood in light of New Testament revelation. The approach to God's presence in the Old Testament in this study takes seriously the blunt statement at the end of John's prologue: "No one has ever seen God at any time, the Only Begotten God, from the position alongside the Father, made him known" (John 1:18). How could anyone who has read the Old Testament write this statement? God is seen repeatedly, but it is "the Only Begotten God"—the Son—who is seen and has revealed the mystery of YHWH, not only *after* the incarnation but also in the *before Christ* (B.C.) events reflected in the Old Testament. This statement by John appears to be founded upon the teaching of Jesus recorded later in his Gospel: "Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; this one has seen the Father" (John 6:46). The God, therefore, who is heard and seen in the Old Testament after the fall in Eden is the Son, who is the visible "image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15).

I. Theology, Christology, or Theology of the Son?

It is proper to begin by briefly acknowledging two significant problems that interpreters face in tackling this topic. The first is one of nomenclature that is alluded to in the title of this article: "The Real Presence of the Son *Before Christ.*" Although theologians use the label "Christology" for discussing biblical teaching about the Son, exegetes encounter challenges in using this designation for the Son in the Old Testament because it is an anachronistic title: the Son really is not "the Christ" until he becomes incarnate. "Christ," similar to the personal name "Jesus," is a title used primarily for the *incarnate* Son.[11] It could also be used as a title for teaching about the coming Messiah but usually is not used as a title for the pre-incarnate Son. A solution, even if it is unrealistic and never gains acceptance, would be to rename this dogmatic category with a label that would lend itself to a wider usage when dealing with the Old Testament or "Before Christ" testimony of the Son's existence.[12] The anachronistic use of

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[11]Although the Old Testament uses this title (מָשִׁיחַ in Hebrew and Χριστός in Greek) for kings or priests, especially the one who would come and deliver Israel in the future, it is not used for the reality of YHWH present in Old Testament events.

[12]"Huiosology," from the Greek term for "son" (υἱός) is one possibility. It is noteworthy that systematic theologians often use the theology species "Christology" (teaching about Christ) and "Pneumatology" (teaching about the Spirit), but not "Patrology" (teaching about the Father). There is a non-biblical assumption that one can understand the doctrine of the Father in the doctrine of God and quite apart from teaching about the Son. "Patrology," instead, is used as a title for discussing the early church fathers.

the name "Jesus" or the title "Christ" for the pre-incarnate Son was not, however, a problem for New Testament writers as it is for modern exegetes.[13]

The second problem, which is closely related to the first, is the perennial emphasis that the Old Testament contains *theology* (not Christology) and is *theocentric* (not christocentric).[14] A wedge, however, should not be driven between theology and Christology. This distinction is like arguing that the category "apple" should be compared with the category "fruit." To use the language of taxonomy: "fruit" is the *genus* and "apple" is a *species* within the "fruit" *genus*. "Christology" is a *species* within the *genus* "theology" and even—if the Son's testimony in John is taken seriously—the primary *species* of theology. The Son has told us: "No one comes to the Father but by me" (John 14:6). The doctrine of the Father, according to Jesus, is a very slim subcategory or *species* of theology since the Son is the one who reveals the Father. There is a strong wave of scholarship that reacts vehemently against reading the Old Testament with such a trinitarian understanding of God. The real problem here is that the New Testament is not seen as a hermeneutical guide to the Old Testament. Many modern scholars even conclude that New Testament writers often misinterpret the Old Testament.[15] For example, Sidney Greidanus understands the importance of the New Testament in interpreting the Old, yet cautions against using it as a hemeneutical guide:

> [T]he New Testament writers did not set out to produce a textbook on biblical hermeneutics. Simply to copy their methods of interpretation in preaching on specific Old Testament passages is to go beyond their intent. Their concern clearly was to preach Christ from the Old Testament, and they did so in ways that were current at the time. Many of these ways still work today, but others do not.[16]

If biblical interpreters, however, take the New Testament as an authoritative guide in order to understand the doctrine of God in light of the revelation of YHWH as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then the Old

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[13]This point is made by Hanson, *Jesus in the Old Testament*, 7; see 1 Cor. 10:4 and John 12:37-41.

[14]See discussion in Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 53.

[15]See the critical comments in Hanson, *Jesus Christ in the Old Testament*, 1-9.

[16]Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 189-190. He even prefers to call it "use" rather than "exegesis" of the Old Testament by New Testament writers; see 191, n.44.

Testament is not teaching generic "theology," but theology based upon the revelation of the Son.[17]

II. The Christocentricity of the Old Testament in the History of Interpretation

This exegetical approach to the Old Testament is by no means new, but actually quite *old*, generously illustrated in several exegetes of the early Church.[18] Justin Martyr, who wrote in the middle of the second century, makes extensive use of a christological approach to Old Testament theophanies.[19] Two brief examples are included here.

> Therefore, neither Abraham, nor Isaac, nor Jacob, nor any man saw the Father and ineffable Lord of absolutely all things and of Christ himself, but [saw] only him who, according to his [the Father's] will, is both God, his Son, and Angel, from the fact that he ministers to his purpose. Whom he also has willed to be born through the Virgin, and who once became fire for that conversation with Moses in the bush (*Dial.* 127.4).

> God begat before all creatures a Beginning, [who was] a certain rational Power [proceeding] from himself, who is called by the Holy Spirit, now the Glory of the Lord, now the Son, again Wisdom, again an Angel, then God, and then Lord, and Word; and on another occasion he calls himself Captain, when he appears in human form to Joshua son of Nave (*Dial.* 61.1).

Justin's understanding of Christ in the Old Testament in these excerpts is based not on the prophetic promises or types regarding the coming Christ or on an allegorical interpretation, but on the understanding that the Son was *present* in the lives of God's people throughout the events of the Old Testament. When God is seen or heard in the Old Testament, Justin and several other Ante-Nicene fathers identified this divine form as the Son. As will be shown below, this presence of the Son in the events of the Old Testament was also expressed earlier by New Testament writers: Jude says

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[17]When the Son is not integrated into a Christian understanding of YHWH in the Old Testament, it becomes easier to hold an understanding of God that is functionally modalistic (e.g., Modalism or Sabellianism in the early trinitarian controversies).

[18]See representative examples from Justin to Eusebius in Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 187-200.

[19]See D. C. Trakatellis, *The Pre-existence of Christ in the Writings of Justin Martyr*, HDR 6 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1976), and B. Kominiak, *The Theophanies of the Old Testament in the Writing of St. Justin* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1948).

the Lord (Jesus) led Israel out of Egypt and punished their disobedience (Jude 5); Paul says Christ was with Israel in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:1-10); John says Isaiah saw the Son in his call vision (John 12:41); and Jesus himself acknowledges that as the Son he interacted with Abraham (John 8:56-59). It is this kind of christocentric reading of the Old Testament that will be advocated and illustrated below. This *christocentric* exegesis stands in sharp contrast to the *theocentric* exegesis that characterizes much modern exegesis of the Old Testament, including many of those interpreting for the church.

Resistance to emphasizing the real presence of Christ in events of the Old Testament is not a recent phenomenon; it appears regularly throughout the history of Christian interpretation. Marcion, to cite a radical early example, sought to distance Christ totally from the events of the Old Testament by advocating a sharp separation between YHWH and Christ as distinct Gods. The Arian controversy led the post-Nicene church to back away from identifying the Son with any Old Testament angel traditions because it could lead to confusion that Christ is an angel not only according to function (i.e., a messenger) but also according to nature (i.e., a created angel).[20] Furthermore, one reaction of the ancient Antiochene exegetical "school" to Alexandrian exegesis included limiting the understanding of Christ in the Old Testament to prophecy.[21]

It was Augustine who solidified the position *against* seeing the Son, or any other person of the Trinity, as visibly present in the theophanies of the Old Testament. He argued that the manifestations of God in Old Testament events were mediated by angels:

> The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, since it is in no way changeable, can in no way in its proper self be visible. It is manifest, accordingly, that all those appearances to the fathers, when God was presented to them according to his own dispensation, suitable to the times, were wrought through the creature. And if we cannot discern in

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[20]See the discussion of R. Lorenz, *Arius judaizans? Untersuchungen zur dogmengechlichtlichen Einordnung des Arius* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 141-180.

[21]See the history of interpretation in Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 69-98. Greidanus, however, gives very little attention to the ante-Nicene fathers' emphasis on the real presence of Christ in Old Testament events.

what manner he wrought them by ministry of angels, yet we say that they were wrought by angels.[22]

Augustine, writing between A.D. 400-420, is obviously reacting against those who were using the theophanies to prove the created nature of the Son or the difference of his essence from the Father. Unlike the Formula of Sirmium in the mid-fourth century, which included anathemas against anyone who denied that it was the Son who appeared to Abraham and Jacob, Augustine called for a much more moderate understanding:

> We should not be dogmatic in deciding which person of the three appeared in any bodily form or likeness to this or that patriarch or prophet, unless the whole context of the narrative provides us with probable indications. In any case, that nature or substance, or essence, or whatever else you may call that which God is, whatever it may be, cannot physically be seen; but on the other hand we must believe that by creature control the Father, as well as the Son and the Holy Spirit, could offer the senses of mortal men a token representation of himself in bodily guise or likeness.[23]

The contrast between a christocentric and theocentric interpretation of the Old Testament is also apparent in the exegetical approaches of Reformation leaders Martin Luther and John Calvin.[24] Luther certainly interpreted Christ from the prophecy and gospel content of the Old Testament. But like several early interpreters he also explicitly identified the God present in Old Testament events as the pre-incarnate Son, even "Jesus of Nazareth":

> Thus it follows powerfully and irrefutably that the God who led the people of Israel out of Egypt and through the Red Sea, who guided them in the wilderness through the pillars of cloud and fire, who nourished them with heavenly bread, and who performed all the

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[22]*On the Trinity* 3.21-22; see also 2.23, 25, 27

[23]*On the Trinity* 3.25. William Graham MacDonald, in arguing against an Angel of the Lord Christology in the Old Testament, mentions anathemas 15 and 16 of the Formula of Sirmium and cites Augustine as bringing about the proper understanding of these theophanies; see "Christology and 'The Angel of the Lord,'" *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpetation: Studies in Honor of Merrill C. Tenney Presented by His Former Students*, ed. G. Hawthorne (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 324-335, esp. 327.

[24]Greidanus notes this contrast between Luther and Calvin, but favors the latter; see *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 111-151. For the focus on the Son in Lutheran Reformation exegesis of the Old Testament, see David P. Scaer, "God the Son and Hermeneutics," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 59 (January-April 1995): 49-66.

> miracles Moses describes in his book, who also brought them into the land of Canaan and then gave them kings and priests and everything, is therefore God and none other than Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of the Virgin Mary, whom we call Christ our God and Lord.... And, again, it is he who gave Moses the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, saying, "I am the Lord your God who led you out of Egypt; you shall have no other gods." Yes, Jesus of Nazareth, who died for us on the cross, is the God who says in the First Commandment, "I, the Lord, am your God."[25]

Although Calvin does acknowledge the Angel of the Lord theophanies were the pre-incarnate Son, he does not follow Luther's lead in keeping the Son as central in his interpretation of God in the Old Testament.[26] Calvin's "theocentric" approach established an exegetical path through the Old Testament that many within the church have followed. Although remnants of a christological interpretation of the Old Testament theophanies certainly continue to be found in the church, the historical criticism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has severely curtailed such exegesis of the Old Testament by judging it to be illegitimate and anachronistic.

III. The Presence of the Son in Theophanies of the Old Testament

As stated above, this study will demonstrate that the numerous theophanies within the Old Testament after the creation narratives of Genesis 1-2 are manifestations of the Son.[27] The theological foundation for this understanding is the tension within the Old Testament between the theophanies of YHWH and the testimony that one cannot see YHWH and live. The latter point is most clearly stated by YHWH in a conversation with Moses recorded in Exodus 33:20: "You cannot see my face; for man shall not see me and live."[28] This point is made in several of the

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[25] Luther, "Last Words of David," *LW* 15:313-314.

[26] Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 127-148.

[27] Borland attempts to make clear distinctions between christophanies, theophanies, and the ongoing presence of God; see *Christ in the Old Testament*, 5-33. Christophanies are limited, for Borland, to manifestations of God in the form of a man. Such a narrow understanding of the Son's presence in the Old Testament appears to be largely driven by the Son's later incarnation as a male.

[28] "My face" (אֵת־פָּנַי) should be understood here as signifying the complete unveiled presence of God (i.e., an example of synedoche, the part for the whole). This understanding is confirmed in the second half of the sentence which gives the rationale for the assertion in the first half: "You cannot see *my face*; for man shall not see *me* and live" (my emphasis). Notice that "my face" and "me" are in apposition.

theophanies; those who see YHWH's presence are surprised to remain alive. For example, this surprise is reflected in Hagar's reaction to the theophany she had just experienced: "Have I really seen him [God] and remained alive after seeing him?" (Gen. 16:13).

A legitimate question arises: If one cannot see YHWH and live, and yet people are seeing YHWH and not dying, then who is this visible image of YHWH that is being seen? The Old Testament texts provide some assistance to our understanding of this phenomenon by often using a distinct title for the form of YHWH that people see: they often see him who is labeled variously as the Angel of YHWH, the Name of YHWH, the Glory of YHWH, or the *Word of YHWH*.[29] There is some distinction between this visible form of YHWH and YHWH's unveiled presence, even though this form of YHWH is certainly not separate from YHWH. Although some interpreters are quite willing to understand the figure "the Angel of YHWH" as the pre-incarnate Son, most concept-oriented Western thinkers understand Name, Glory, and Word as abstract, non-personal attributes of God rather than as visible and personal realities. Careful study of the these theophanies leads to the conclusion that it is best to understand each as a hypostasis of YHWH, namely an aspect of YHWH that is depicted with independent personhood.[30] These theophanic traditions testify to both the immanence and transcendence of YHWH as well as the complexity of the oneness of the God of Israel.

The New Testament helps in understanding this enigma because it functions as a hermeneutical guide to Old Testament. It will be used as such in this study by interpreting these ancient theophanies in light of New Testament evidence. The legitimacy of using later revelation as a guide to the Old Testament is set forth in the teaching of Jesus:

> You search the Scriptures;... it is *they that bear witness to me*.... Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; it is Moses who accuses you, on whom you set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, *for he wrote of me*. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words? (John 5:39, 45-47).

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[29]For evidence, see below and especially Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 51-123. The evidence presented below is representative—not exhaustive—of traditions that help us in understanding the real presence of the Son in the Old Testament.

[30]For defense of using this "hypostasis" nomenclature, see Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 36-45. Most critical scholars view these labels as attempts to "spiritualize" earlier beliefs about YHWH's appearances; see Walther Eichrodt, *The Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. J. A. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminister, 1967), 2:23-45.

> And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, *he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself* (Luke 24:17).

Paul states that the Son is "the image of the *invisible* God" (Col. 1:15). This understanding of the son as the image of God does not apply only to his incarnate state but also his pre-incarnate state; he has been the image of God seen by sinful man since the fall in Eden. Does this mean that since the Father is unseen, he is somehow unknown in the Old Testament? Absolutely not. What Jesus said about his incarnate state also applies to the Old Testament: "The one who has seen me, has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

A. The Angel of YHWH

The first group of Old Testament theophanies that are to be considered the real presence of the Son are those that identify YHWH's visible presence מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה סא ("Angel of YHWH") or those closely related to this figure.[31] This group of theophanies is by far the one most widely identified with the Son.[32] The seventeenth-century Lutheran dogmatician, Abraham Calov, even stated that anyone who denied that the Angel of the LORD in the Old Testament was the preincarnate Christ was not orthodox.[33] The Angel of YHWH is especially prominent in the theophanies of the Pentateuch. The distinction, yet inseparability, between YHWH and this "angel" is especially clear in these words of YHWH to Moses after the Exodus:

> Behold, I send *an angel* in front of you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. Be attentive to him and listen to his voice; do not rebel against for he will not pardon your transgression; for *my Name is in him*. But if you listen to *his voice* and do all that *I say*, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries (Exod. 23:20-22).

Notice that this angel possesses the Name of YHWH. One cannot separate the name YHWH from the reality of YHWH; thus, he is also YHWH. This is also shown in the fact that this angel has the power to absolve and retain sin as well as the ability to speak as YHWH.

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[31]For further discussion, see Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 51-69.

[32]For example, see Rhodes, *Christ Before the Manger*, 79-102.

[33]A. Calovius, *Consensus repetitus fidei vere Lutherae* (1664); see discussion in MacDonald, "Christology and 'The Angel of the Lord,'" 327.

There are New Testament texts that identify theophanies related to this angel as manifestations of the Son. The most substantive testimony is found in 1 Corinthians 10, where Paul speaks of the presence of Christ with Israel as they traveled through the wilderness after the exodus from Egypt. Discussion of this christological presence has tended to focus on Christ as "the spiritual Rock" who followed Israel: "... and they all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them and the Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4).[34] This christological identification of the Rock as Christ may have some background in first century Jewish exegesis that identified this Rock with Wisdom, a divine hypostasis that is closely related to other angelomorphic traditions in Philo.[35] Paul clearly understood Christ to the pre-existent Wisdom of God (esp. 1 Cor. 1:24 and 2:7).

Even more significant for this study is the mention that "Christ" was the one whom Israel put to the test with their disobedience: "We must not put *Christ*[36] to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by *the Destroyer*" (1 Cor. 10:9-10).

The fact that this testimony to the real presence of Christ with ancient Israel was problematic to some Christian transmitters of the Greek text is visible in textual emendations that substitute τὸν κυρίον ("the Lord") or τὸν θέον ("God") for τὸν Χριστόν ("Christ") in verse 9. The scribes obviously understood that it was the Lord or God active in the life of Israel, not Christ. But Paul understood Christ to be the agent of punishment against Israel's disobedience who, like the angel of Exodus 23, did not pardon their

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[34]Old Testament evidence for this tradition is found in: Exod. 17:1-7; Num. 20:7-13, 21:17; Ps. 77:20, 104:41, 113:8; and Isa. 26:4, 48:21. For Paul's use of this tradition, see E. E. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, WUNT I.18 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1978), 209-212.

[35]Philo identifies this Rock as Wisdom in *Quod Det* 115, *Leg All* 2.86, *Ebr* 112, and *Somn* 2.270. Wisdom is another title for Philo's Word, the most common title used by Philo for the theophanies of YHWH in the Old Testament. Paul's exegesis may also have been directed at rabbinic identification of this Rock as Torah following Israel; see Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, 209-212.

[36]Some manuscripts have τὸν κυρίον or τὸν θέον here. The editors of Nestle-Aland 26th and 27th editions opted for τὸν Χριστόν as the more difficult reading that still has significant manuscript support. For a text critical analysis supporting this reading, see C. D. Osburn, "The Text of 1 Corinthians 10:9," *New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis. Essays in Honor of Bruce M. Metzger*, ed. E. J. Epp and G. D. Fee (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 201-212.

transgressions. It is possible that Paul also understood the Destroyer in 10:10 to be designation for the pre-incarnate Christ.[37] Paul asserts that the Corinthians could be certain of Christ's judgment of their disobedience by looking at how he punished Israel of old. Therefore, the Son is the one who both sent serpents and had Moses fashion a bronze serpent on a pole in order to heal the Israelites who were dying.

Paul is not alone in this understanding. The presence of Christ with Ancient Israel as the delivering and destroying angel is a tradition that also influenced Jude. Based upon the variant reading that is more difficult and has some significant textual attestation, this short letter maintains that *Jesus* is the Angel of YHWH who detained the fallen angels, destroyed Sodom and Gommorah, and *also struck the unfaithful Israelites in the wilderness,* "Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that *Jesus delivered* his people out of Egypt, but later *destroyed* those who did not believe" (Jude 5).[38]

Although we, as well as the transmitters of the text, may think it odd that the author would identify the Son in these ancient events as Jesus, the confession "Jesus is Lord" (1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11) and the widespread use of this personal name in worship makes this reading understandable.

B. The Name of YHWH

Much less frequently recognized theophanies in the Old Testament, which should be understood as a manifestations of the Son, are those that are identified as שֵׁם ("Name") or שֵׁם יְהוָה ("Name of YHWH").[39] There are several texts—mainly in Deuteronomy, later historical books, and Jeremiah—that speak about the presence of YHWH as the Name dwelling in the midst of Israel or later in the temple. Here are two representative examples of these texts:

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[37]For more extensive discussion, see Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology,* 325-329. Paul also appears to identify Christ as "God's Angel" in Gal. 4:14; see Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology,* 315-325.

[38]Some manuscripts have κύριος ("the Lord") or θεός ("God") in place of Ἰησοῦς ("Jesus") in this verse. This translation follows Ἰησοῦς as the more difficult reading, not κύριος as did the editors of Nestle-Aland 27th edition. For a discussion of this text that includes a text critical analysis, see Jarl E. Fossum, "Kyrios Jesus as the Angel of the Lord in Jude 5-7," *New Testament Studies* 33 (1987): 226-243, and Hanson, *Jesus in the Old Testament,* 136-138.

[39]See also the more extensive discussion in Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology,* 70-78.

> Then you shall bring everything that I command you to the place that YHWH your Elohim will choose, to make his *Name to dwell there* (Deut. 12:11).
>
> So I [Solomon] intend to build a house for *the Name of YHWH my Elohim*, as *YHWH* said to my father David, "Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place shall build the house for *my Name*" (1 Kgs. 5:5).

Although these two texts do not record the actual theophany, they witness to the real and accessible presence of YHWH with Israel. Too often exegetes think of the designation "the Name" or "the Name of YHWH" as a concept, some words or sounds, rather than as a designation for the personal and tangible form of YHWH. We should remember that the Angel of YHWH possessed the unique "name" YHWH. The fact that the visible image of YHWH bore the Divine Name is the probable reason that some of the theophanies in the Old Testament came to be labeled "the Name" or "the Name of YHWH."[40]

There is testimony in the New Testament that Jesus was identified as the possessor the Divine Name and was even called "the Name" at times.[41] It is especially prominent theme in the Christology of John. The Name is mentioned already in the Prologue: "But to all who received him, who believe in his Name...." (John 1:12). That this is a reference to the Divine Name that belongs to the Father, and not the name "Jesus," can be deduced from Jesus' words elsewhere in the Gospel: "I have come in my Father's Name" (John 5:43). This is especially clear in the farewell prayer: "Holy Father, protect them in your Name that you have given me, in order that they be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your Name that you have given me" (John 17:11b).

Jesus is also identified in John as the one who possesses this honoric designation or title: "Father, glorify your Name" (John 12:28). This is not simply a pious prayer about the Divine Name; it is Jesus' self-identification as the hypostasized Divine Name. This conclusion is based upon the announcement Jesus makes shortly before this prayer: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (John 12:23). "The Son of Man" is,

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[40]For evidence supporting this conclusion, see Jarl E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origin of Gnosticism*, WUNT I.36 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989).

[41]For more evidence in the New Testament, see Charles A. Gieschen, "The Divine Name in Ante-Nicene Christology," *Vigiliae Christianae* 57 (2003): 115-158.

therefore, equated with the designation "Your Name"; they are both designations for Jesus who will be glorified when he is lifted up on the cross (John 12:32). The Name as a title for Jesus is also found elsewhere in the Johannine corpus: "For they [the brethern] have set out for the Name and have accepted nothing from the heathen" (3 John 7).

Other New Testament writers understand Jesus as the possessor of the Divine Name. Two examples will suffice here.[42] The opening of Hebrews states: "Because he became as much superior to the angels *as a Name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs*" (Heb. 1:4). In the Philippians hymn, Paul states that Christ "has been given *the Name that is above every name*" (Phil. 2:9). In both cases, the Divine Name is the only name that exceeds all others.

C. The Glory of YHWH

Exodus offers us a third way in which the theophanies are designated: the cloud, fire, or man-like presence of YHWH is labeled כְּבוֹד־יְהוָה ("Glory of YHWH").[43] In a pattern similar to the Angel of the Lord theophany at Moses' commissioning in Exodus 3, YHWH manifests himself in a fire and cloud atop Sinai:

> Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. *The Glory of YHWH* settled on Mount Sinai, and *the cloud* covered it six days; and on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of *the cloud*. Now the appearance of *the Glory of YHWH* was like a *devouring fire* on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. And Moses entered *the cloud* and went up on the mountain (Exod. 24:15-18).

This theophanic designation is very prominent in other Old Testament texts, especially in Ezekiel where the prophet beholds the man-like image of YHWH on the throne (Ezek. 1:26-28). This theophanic tradition is the basis for New Testament claims that in Christ one beholds the Glory of God. This claim does not mean that Christ resembles YHWH, but that the same visible form of YHWH that Moses and Ezekiel saw is now visible in the flesh and blood Jesus. For example, this theme is reflected in both the prologue and farewell prayer in John: "And the Word became flesh and *tabernacled* among us, and we beheld his *Glory, Glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father*, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14), and "So now, Father,

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[42]For more, see Gieschen, "The Divine Name in Ante-Nicene Christology," 127-148.

[43]See Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 78-88.

glorify me in your presence with *the Glory* that I had in your presence before the world began" (John 17:5).

Furthermore, John even states that the image of YHWH that Isaiah saw was the Son:

> For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: "It has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them" [Isa. 6:10]. Isaiah said these things because he saw his *Glory* [the Son's] and he spoke concerning him [the Son] (John 12:39-41).

Paul shows a similar interpretation of the Sinai theophany as he compares what Moses saw to the fact that in Christ we now behold this same Glory of God:

> Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of *the Glory of Christ*, who is the Image of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of *the Glory of God* in the face of Christ (2 Cor. 4:3-6).

D. The Word of YHWH

It has already been noted that the Angel of YHWH possesses the Divine Name (Exod. 23:21). This unique "word" that he possessed, the Tetragrammaton, is probably the basis for the fact that some of the theophanies, especially those found later in the canon, identify the visible image of YHWH as דְּבַר־יְהוָה ("the Word of YHWH").[44] This is especially clear in the call narratives of Samuel and Jeremiah, where YHWH's real presence is identified as "the Word of YHWH." The latter reads as follows:

> Now *the Word of YHWH* came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." Then I said, "Ah, *Adonai Elohim*! Behold I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." But *YHWH* said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I sent you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.

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[44]See Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 103-114

> Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says *YHWH*." Then *YHWH put forth his hand and touched my mouth*; and *YHWH* said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth" (Jer. 1:4-9).

Too often this designation is understood as an abstraction rather than as a title for YHWH's visible image that is much like Angel, Glory, or Name. As most exegetes are aware, this theophanic designation is used in the New Testament for Christ in the opening verse of John: "In the beginning was *the Word*, and *the Word* was with God, and *the Word* was God" (John 1:1). It is also used as a title for Christ in Hebrews and Revelation:

> For *the Word of God* is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Namely, no creature is hidden before him, but all creatures are bare and laid open to his eyes, who for us is *the Word* (Heb. 12-13).

> His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. *He has a name written on him that no one but he himself knows*. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood and *the name* by which he is called is *the Word of God* (Rev. 19:12-13).

It is quite probable that use of the designation "Word of YHWH" in the Old Testament theophanies was founded upon the realization that this visible image possessed the most important "word": the Divine Name. Furthermore, in spite of the popularity of the *Logos* tradition within the Greco-Roman world of the first century, it is this Old Testament theophanic background that is the primary reason for its usage in New Testament Christology.[45]

IV. YHWH's Speaking in the Old Testament as Speech of the Son

Luther understood that the real presence of the Son in the Old Testament meant the Son actually spoke Old Testament prophecies about himself. For example, he was convinced that the Son spoke the first Gospel promise to Adam and Eve recorded in Genesis 3:15.[46] He even gives the exegete the following basic guidance for interpreting the referent of divine speech: "But where the Person does not clearly identify himself by speaking and apparently only one Person is involved, you may follow the rule given

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[45]See discussion in Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 103-114.

[46]Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther and the Old Testament*, 2nd Eng. ed., trans Eric W. and Ruth C. Gritsch (Mifflintown, Penn.: Sigler Press, 1997 [1969]), 201.

above and be assured that you are not going wrong when you interpret the name YHWH to refer to our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son."[47] Luther did not invent this understanding; it is found in the New Testament. There are Old Testament texts where YHWH is speaking that are applied to the Son by New Testament writers.[48] This shows that New Testament authors identified the Son within the mystery of YHWH who spoke to and through the prophets. Three examples will illustrate this identification.

First, in Isaiah 45, which is a very monotheistic portion of Isaiah, YHWH declares:

> To me *every knee will bow*, and *every tongue will swear.*
> "Only in YHWH," it shall be said of me,
> "are righteousness and strength" (45:23b-24a).

Paul applies this text to Christ, both in the Philippians hymn and in Romans 14:11.[49] Note how Isaiah 45 has been incorporated into Philippians 2 in a manner that understands every knee will bow to Jesus and every tongue will confess the identity of Jesus: "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, in order that at the name of Jesus *every knee should bow*, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and *every tongue confess* that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

The unmistakable reference to the Divine Name in this hymn is widely recognized by interpreters: "the name that is above every other name" (2:9). The genitive relationship in τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ ("the name of Jesus") is best understood as expressing simple possession: "the name that Jesus possesses." The conclusion that the "name that Jesus possesses" is the Divine Name is collaborated by the resulting universal worship that climaxes in the confession: "Jesus is Lord" (2:11). The parallel structure and logic of 2:10-11a is clear:

> *Every knee should bow* at the name of Jesus, because Jesus' name is YHWH.

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[47]Luther, "Last Words of David," *LW* 15:336.

[48]See esp. David Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts in Paul's Christology*, WUNT II.47 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992).

[49]See Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts*, 157-160, and Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 56-61.

> *Every tongue should confess* that Jesus is Lord, because Jesus is truly YHWH.

This text demonstrates that Paul identified YHWH who is speaking in Isaiah 45 with the exalted Son.

A second example of this appropriation of an Old Testament YHWH text is found in Paul's use of Jeremiah 9:24, "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord," in both of his Corinthian epistles (1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17). The prophet Jeremiah records YHWH saying the following: "Let him who boasts, boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that *I am YHWH* who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, *says YHWH*" (Jer. 9:24).

Paul applies this text, where YHWH speaks of boasting in knowing him, to boasting in Christ in these two texts:

> God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that do not exist, to nullify the things that exist, in order that no fleshly being boast before God. On account of him you are in Christ Jesus, whom God made our Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption, with the result that, as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:28-31).

> If anyone is confident that he is of Christ, let him remind himself that as he is of Christ, so are we. For even if I boast a little too much of our authority, that the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame.... "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord." For it not the one who commends himself that is accepted, but the one whom the Lord commends (2 Cor. 10:7, 17).

Although one may possibly conclude that the referent of "Lord" in 1 Corinthians 1:31 is "God" and not "Christ," it must be noted that Paul regularly uses the designation "Lord" for Christ and "God" for Father (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:3). The referent of "Lord" in the Jeremiah quotation as Christ is especially clear in Paul's use of this text in 2 Corinthians. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that 1 Corinthians 1:30 identifies Christ with "righteousness," one of characteristics of YHWH given in Jeremiah 9:24 (see also Jer. 23:5-6). Paul, therefore, identified the YHWH who spoke in Jeremiah as the Son.

A third example is found in the use of Zechariah 12:10 in the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation. The prophet Zechariah records this first person speech of YHWH:

> And it will come about in that day that I [YHWH] will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that *they will look on me whom they have pierced;* and they will mourn for him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born. In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo (Zech. 12:9-11).

In this quotation there is the use of both the first and third person ("they will look upon *me* ... they will mourn for *him*"). Two New Testament texts clearly understand the one who will be looked upon as Christ:

> But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also believe. For these things came to pass, that the Scripture be fulfilled, "Not a bone of him will be broken." And again another Scripture says, "*They will look on him whom they pierced*" (John 19:34-37).

> To him who loves us, and released us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom, priests to his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, he is coming with clouds, and *every eye will see him, even those who pierced him;* and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over him. Even so, Amen (Rev. 1:5b-7).

Although John applies the Zechariah text to looking upon Jesus on the cross and Revelation applies this text to seeing him at his parousia, both interpret the piercing of YHWH spoken of in Zechariah as what happened at the crucifixion of Jesus.[50] The YHWH who says "they will look upon *me* whom they have pierced" is, therefore, understood to be the pre-incarnate Son.

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[50]That John understood the Son as speaking this prophecy is also confirmed by the mention of the "pouring out" of the Spirit (Zech. 12:10) and the opening of "a fountain" that cleanses from sin (Zech. 13:1), which John understands as fulfilled in the flowing of the blood and water from the side of Jesus; see Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John,* Sacra Pagina 4 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 504-506.

V. Conclusion

After having looked at some of the evidence, the exegetical approach of reading these Old Testament theophanies as the real presence of the Son such as we heard in Justin rings true. This understanding of the real presence of the Son of the Old Testament is found in much early exegesis. The Son is YHWH present, visible, active, and speaking in the history of the patriarchs and Israel. He is also the visible image of YHWH seated upon throne who was seen by prophets.

If we are convinced that the Son is central to the identity of YHWH as he speaks and acts throughout the Old Testament, we can and should show forth the pre-incarnate Son when preaching from the Old Testament. To do this we do not need to have a messianic or typological prophecy in the text, nor do we need to set up elaborate comparisons between God in the Old Testament and then fast-forward to Christ in the New Testament. We can also let those to whom we preach see Christ by showing them the real presence of the Son in Old Testament events and speech. Such an understanding of the christocentricity of the Old Testament will help demonstrate the truth of Jesus' words: "For Moses wrote of me" (John 5:46). Obviously, we should not stop with Moses, for just as the New Testament helps to interpret the Old Testament, pastors must lead people forward to see that the Son's words and deeds in the Old Testament climax in the incarnate Son, who was crucified, died, and rose again on the third day. Jesus not only revealed YHWH to be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but he gave the ultimate revelation of who YHWH truly is by mounting the cross and giving his life for the life of the world. Moreover, it is vital to help others see that this Son is still present with his church, bringing the salvation won at the cross to us through his washing, speaking, and feeding in the church today.

If Jesus and the apostolic interpreters found in the New Testament serve as our guide to the Old Testament, then our exegesis will demonstrate the truth of Luther's dictum: "All Scripture is pure Christ."

Does God "Repent" or Change His Mind?

Walter A. Maier III

A question that has frequently arisen in the minds of those studying the Bible, both laity and clergy, is: Does God repent, or change his mind? Such an inquiry is the result of the translation of passages in Scripture that describe God's thinking with the words "repented," "regretted," or "changed his mind."

This question is part of the general subject of God's foreknowledge. That subject has been the focus of much discussion the past several years by the members of a (relatively) conservative theological organization, the Evangelical Theological Society.[1] The discussion was prompted by the fact that some members of the society had adopted the position known as "Open Theism," which in essence asserts that God does not know everything that will take place in the future.[2]

Specifically with regard to the question mentioned above, if God "repents" or "regrets," that seems to imply that God at an earlier point in time engaged in an activity with one result in mind. However, another result, which God did not anticipate and does not like, is the reality, and thus God is sorry that he carried out that earlier activity. If God "changes his mind," the average Bible reader could understand this to mean that God's final decision on an issue was unknown even to God himself; that God initially had one plan in mind, but then adopted another. Both the translations "repent" or "regret," and "change the mind," can lead to the

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[1]The basis for membership in the Evangelical Theological Society is agreeing with and subscribing to these statements: "The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written, and therefore inerrant in the autographs. God is Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each an uncreated person, one in essence, equal in power and glory."

[2]During its November, 2001 Annual Meeting the society voted, by a large majority, to reject "Open Theism." In November, 2002, challenges were brought to the membership credentials of certain society members who had written as advocates of Open Theism. Those challenges are being reviewed by the society's Executive Committee, which reported, and referred the case for action, to the society at the November, 2003, Annual Meeting. Discussion, debate, and reading of prepared statements followed. The final result was that neither of the men whose membership credentials were challenged were removed from membership, a two-thirds vote being required for dismissal. For more information, see James A. Borland, "Reports Relating to the Fifty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the Society," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47 (2004): 170-173.

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same conclusion: God does not know everything that will take place in the future. That is exactly the conclusion reached by open theists.

This article will give a brief overview of Open Theism, followed by a short summary of the orthodox position, and then present considerations concerning translation and interpretation of biblical passages. In particular, two key passages will be examined in greater depth: Genesis 6:6 and Exodus 32:14.

I. Open Theism

Gregory A. Boyd has given an articulate presentation of this theological position in his book *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God.*[3] In the introduction he mentions questions that led him eventually to embrace this view.

> The most serious questions about the classical view of [God's] foreknowledge ... relate to the Bible. If the future is indeed exhaustively settled in God's mind, as the classical view holds, why does the Bible repeatedly describe God changing his mind? Why does the Bible say that God frequently alters his plans, cancels prophecies in the light of changing circumstances, and speaks about the future as a "maybe," a "perhaps," or a "possibility"? Why does it describe God as expressing uncertainty about the future, being disappointed in the way things turn out, and even occasionally regretting the outcome of his own decisions? If the Bible is always true—and I, for one, assume that it is - how can we reconcile this way of talking about God ... with the notion that the future is exhaustively settled in his mind?[4]

As a result, Boyd writes: "I came to believe that the future was, indeed, *partly* determined [or "settled"] and foreknown by God, but also partly *open* and known by God as such. In short, I embraced what has come to be labeled the 'open view' of God."[5]

Boyd goes on to explain further the "open view of God," or to use the phrase he prefers, the "open view of the future." To some extent, he

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[3]Gregory A. Boyd, *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000). Also see, for example, Clark H. Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), and John Sanders, *The God Who Risks* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1998).

[4]Boyd, *God of the Possible*, 11.

[5]Boyd, *God of the Possible*, 11. In all Boyd references, emphasis is in the original.

believes God know the future as "*definitely* this way and *definitely* not that way." On the other hand, to some extent God knows the future as "*possibly* this way and *possibly* not that way." Boyd moreover writes that this open view

> ... does not hold that the future is wide open. Much of it, open theists concede, is settled ahead of time, either by God's predestining will or by existing earthly causes, but it is not *exhaustively* settled ahead of time. To whatever degree the future is yet open to be decided by free agents, it is unsettled. To this extent, God knows it as a realm of possibilities, not certainties.[6]

Boyd vigorously protests the accusation that he, and other open theists, are denying God's omniscience. However, in attempting to refute this charge, Boyd engages in semantic shifts and a subtle reworking of the definition of "omniscience." Notice how he moves from the idea of total knowledge to "perfect" knowledge: "Open theists affirm God's omniscience as emphatically as anybody does. The issue is not whether God's knowledge is perfect. It is. The issue is about the nature of the reality that God perfectly knows." With their understanding of reality, Boyd and other open theists hold that God's "perfect" knowledge means that he knows "the future as consisting of both unsettled possibilities and settled certainties."[7]

Boyd does move back to the concept of God's *complete* foreknowledge, but against the background, again, of a new definition of omniscience. He writes: "If God does not foreknow future free actions, it is not because his knowledge of the future is in any sense incomplete. It's because there is, in this view, *nothing definite there for God to know*!" According to Boyd, "free actions do not exist to be known until free agents create them."[8]

Despite what Boyd and other open theists claim, in the final analysis they indeed believe that God's knowledge of the future is incomplete. In their view, God does not know everything that will take place, or

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[6]Boyd, *God of the Possible*, 15.

[7]Boyd, *God of the Possible*, 16.

[8]Boyd, *God of the Possible*, 16, 17. Thus Boyd can conclude that the "debate between the open and classical understandings of divine foreknowledge is completely a debate over the nature of the future: Is it exhaustively settled from all eternity, or is it partly open?" (17). This article is not so much concerned with the nature of the future, as with God's foreknowledge, and, precisely speaking, whether or not it can be said that God "repents" or "changes his mind."

everything that will be done or said by people. By implication, God does not even know everything that he will do or say in the future.

II. The Orthodox Position

With regard to the knowledge of God, Scripture teaches that God does know *all things*, whether in the past, present, *or* future. A few representative passages are: 1 John 3:20: "For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything" (NIV); 1 Samuel 15:29: "He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind" (NIV); and Isaiah 46:9-10, "I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come" (NIV). In Isaiah 41:22-23, Yahweh, by revealing what idols *cannot* do, indicates what he *can* do: "Let them bring forth and declare to us what is going to take place; as for the former events, declare what they were, that we may consider them, and know their outcome; or announce to us what is coming. Declare the things that are going to come afterward, that we may know that you are gods.... Behold, you are of no account, and your work amounts to nothing...." (NASB). Another passage would be Ephesians 2:10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (NASB).

Scripture presents to us God's complete knowledge, including God's total foreknowledge. However, in revealing himself in Scripture, God at the same time is condescending to our human weakness, since our finite human reason cannot fully comprehend the infinite, majestic Deity. Because God employs our human language, with its limitations, he has also adopted our way of thinking and accommodated himself to the laws and ways of human thought processes.[9]

For example, Scripture speaks of God in a twofold manner: 1) in his majesty as being above time and space (e.g. Psalm 90:4: "A thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday"); and 2) in accordance with our human views, as being in time and space. God is conforming to our mode of thinking in terms of time and space, cause and effect. Only in this manner is God comprehensible to us. In fact, when God ascribes foreknowledge to himself, as he does in Isaiah 46:10, he who is outside of time is adapting to

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[9]Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950-1953), 1:428-429.

the mode of thinking of his time-bound creatures. The Deity enters into time and space without becoming temporal or local in his essence.[10]

Likewise, God in his being is immutable. Yet we must so think of God, and Scripture portrays him, as varying from being angry to being merciful according to changes or variations in the object of his affection. That is how our minds and Scripture handle a God who in his essence remains immutable, but who is dealing with people who are mutable.[11] Luther comments:

> God in his essence is altogether unknowable; nor is it possible to define or put into words what he is, though we burst in the effort. It is for this reason that God lowers himself to the level of our weak comprehension and presents himself to us in images, in coverings, as it were, in simplicity adapted to a child, that in some measure it may be possible for him to be known by us....[12]

Luther continues:

> That Scripture thus assigns to God the form, voice, actions, emotions, etc., of a human being not only serves to show consideration for the uneducated and the weak; but we great and learned men, who are versed in the Scriptures, are also obliged to adopt these simple images, because God has presented them to us and has revealed himself to us through them.[13]

A discussion of God's accommodations in his word, then, in part involves Scripture's anthropomorphisms (ascribing human form or attributes to the Deity) and anthropopathisms (ascribing human feelings, emotions, or passions to God). The ascription of human actions to God can be included under both terms. Referring to both by the general use of the one term "anthropopathism," Tayler Lewis points out, "Why talk of anthropopathism as if there were some special absurdity covered by this sounding term, when any revelation conceivable must be anthropopathic?... There is no escape from it. Whatever comes in this way

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[10]Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 1:440, 451.

[11]Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 1:440-441.

[12]Martin Luther, "Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 6-14," vol. 2 of *Luther's Works*, trans. George Schick (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), 45. John Calvin (*Commentaries on The First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, vol. 1, trans. John King [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996], 249) states: "... since we cannot comprehend him [God] as he is, it is necessary that, for our sake, he should, in a certain sense, transform himself."

[13]Luther, "Lectures on Genesis," 2:46.

to man must take the measure of man...."[14] John Lange, after noting the necessity of anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms, focuses on the latter, observing that if we do not accept them we will "have in the mind a total blank in respect to all those conceptions of God that most concern us as moral beings."[15] As he explains:

> Talk as we will of impassibility, we *must think* of God as having παθη, *affections*, something connecting him with the human.... We must either have in our thoughts [with regard to God] a blank intellectuality making only an intellectual difference between good and evil (if that can be called any difference at all), or we are compelled to bring in something emotional, and that, too, with a measure of intensity corresponding to other differences by which the divine exceeds the human.[16]

Lange concludes: "Without this, the highest form of scientific or philosophic theism has no more of religion than the blankest atheism. We could as well worship a system of mathematics as such a theistic indifference."[17] In other words, anthropopathisms, and anthropomorphisms, besides being the vehicles for communicating to us truths about the Deity, give life to the text. They are particularly appropriate in the Old Testament, where, Milton Terry writes, they are "the vivid concepts which impressed the emotional Hebrew mind, and are in perfect keeping with the spirit of the language."[18]

III. Considerations Concerning Translation and Interpretation

Recognizing the accommodations in Scripture, specifically anthropomorphisms and -pathisms, one could argue that the translations that God "repented," "regretted," or "changed his mind" are legitimate. In those verses and contexts, one could hold, this is what God seemed to do, from the human standpoint. Yet, at the very least, the translation that God "repented" must be understood in the sense of the other renderings, namely, that God "had regret" or "a change of mind." God never does

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[14]Tayler Lewis, quoted by Milton Terry in *Biblical Hermeneutics* (1885; reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1964), 103, n.1.

[15]John Lange, *Genesis, or, The First Book of Moses,* trans. Tayler Lewis and A. Gosman, 5th ed. rev. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 288.

[16]Lange, *Genesis*, 288. Italics in original.

[17]Lange, *Genesis*, 288.

[18]Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, 103.

wrong; all his thoughts and ways are thoroughly just, righteous, and holy; there is never any sin or error on the part of God. Also, God's "being sorry," or "having regret" about something, or his "changing his mind," must be understood within the framework of God's total knowledge, including his complete foreknowledge, and the related truth of his immutability.

Nevertheless, the position of this article is that other translations, based on the original language and context, are to be preferred. They are preferable because they will not mislead or confuse the modern reader of Scripture. For when the reader comes across the renderings that God "repented," or "regretted," or "was sorry," or "changed his mind," he could arrive at wrong notions concerning the Deity, as already discussed (and as exemplified by the open theists).

Two sample passages will be examined, which have been translated by some in just this manner, and which have figured into studies of God's knowledge, as well as his immutability. Both passages are from the Old Testament, and both involve the same Hebrew verb used of God: נחם, *nacham*, in the *niphal* stem. The first is Genesis 6:6: "Yahweh *nachamed* that/because he had made man on the earth and he was pained to/in his heart." The second is Exodus 32:14, which occurs in the text after God threatened to devour the Israelites because of the golden calf incident, and after Moses' subsequent intercession on behalf of the Israelites. The verse reads, "And Yahweh *nachamed* concerning the harm/injury/disaster that he threatened to do/spoke of doing to his people."

The verb *nacham* occurs 108 times in the Old Testament, forty-eight times in the *niphal* stem, fifty-one times in the *piel* stem, twice in the *pual* stem, and seven times in the *hithpael* stem.[19] It has a range of meanings, especially in the *niphal* and *hithpael*. Heinz-Josef Simian-Yofre summarizes as follows:

> The only element common to all meanings of *nhm* appears to be the attempt to influence a situation: by changing the course of events, rejecting an obligation, or refraining from an action, when the focus is on the present; by influencing a decision, when the focus is on the future; and by accepting the consequences of an act or helping another

[19]Heinz-Josef Simian-Yofre, "נחם," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 9, trans. David Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 342.

accept them or contrariwise dissociating oneself emotionally from them, when the focus is on the past.[20]

Simian-Yofre observes that the twin factors of decision and emotion are the rule in *nacham*: "they are indissolubly interwoven, even when in individual cases there may be greater emphasis on one element or the other."[21] Years earlier Lange had arrived at a similar conclusion, specifically for *nacham* in the *niphal*, when he noted that the verb relates the dual aspects of feeling and purpose.[22]

For the most part the Septuagint (LXX) uses παρακαλεω, *parakaleo*, "to summon, call upon, invite, urge, request, comfort," and possibly "try to console" or "conciliate," to translate the *niphal*, *piel*, *pual*, and *hithpael* of *nacham*. It uses μετανοεω, *metanoeo*, "to change one's mind," "repent," only for the niphal, several times in connection with Yahweh, sometimes with regard to Israel. The LXX uses ελεεω, *eleeo*, "to have mercy" or "pity," "be merciful," four times for the *piel* and once for the *niphal*. It uses παυω, *pauo*, "to stop, cause to stop, relieve" five times for the *niphal*.[23]

Interestingly, the LXX uses none of these Greek verbs for *nacham*, *niphal*, in Genesis 6:6 and Exodus 32:14. In Genesis 6:6 the LXX renders *nacham* with the verbal root ενθυμεομαι, *enthumeomai*, "to reflect (on), consider, think." In Exodus 32:14 appears the Greek verbal root ιλασκομαι, *hilaskomai*, "to propitiate, conciliate," passive "be propitiated, be merciful" or "gracious." Further, in the LXX Genesis 6:6,7 are the only verses where *enthumeomai* is used for *nacham*, and Exodus 32:14 the only place where *hilaskomai* appears for *nacham*. What this data from the LXX means is uncertain. Perhaps the translators wanted to avoid the impression in both passages that God regretted, was sorry, or changed his mind.

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[20]Simian-Yofre, "נָחַם" 342. He states that "most experts no longer accept an original semantic identification of Heb. *nhm* with Arab. *nhm*, 'breathe heavily,' both because of critical objections to deriving the meaning of a word from its etymology and because the concrete semantic field associated with *nhm* in the OT clearly differs from that associated with Arab. *Nhm*" (341).

[21]Simian-Yofre, "נָחַם" 342.

[22]Lange, *Genesis*, 288.

[23]Simian-Yofre, "נָחַם" 355.

Genesis 6:6

Based on the translation of Gen. 6:6a, that Yahweh "was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth,"[24] Boyd offers the following interpretation.

> Now, if everything about world history were exhaustively settled and known by God as such before he created the world, God would have known with absolute certainty that humans would come to this wicked state, at just this time, before he created them. But how, then, could he authentically regret having made humankind? Doesn't the fact that God regretted the way things turned out—to the point of starting over—suggest that it *wasn't* a foregone conclusion at the time God created human beings that they would fall into this state of wickedness?[25]

The orthodox exegete can respond by saying that in Genesis 6:6 *nacham* is an anthropopathic term describing God's reaction to the horrible wickedness and pervasive corruption of the human race. The rest of the verse is intensely anthropopathic and anthropomorphic: "He [God] was pained to his heart." *Nacham* communicates to the reader that the Deity is not remote, distant, and uninterested in mankind. Rather, he has a keen interest in, watches closely, and gets involved with, humanity. *Nacham* gives the reader the correct impression that God is not static, plastic, both indifferent to and unaffected by, the thoughts, words, and actions of his creatures. Rather, he is a dynamic, living Being, who has a personality, and who, to use more anthropopathic/-morphic language, is concerned with, affected by, and reacting to, how people live their lives.

Because of the preceding context, Genesis 6:1-5, and as a parallel to the second half of v. 6—"He was pained to his heart"—the suggestion is made here that *nacham* be translated as "He was grieved," or "He suffered grief." Such a rendering fits the context and avoids the pitfalls associated with the phrases "He repented," or "He regretted," or "He was sorry that." Other verses where *nacham* in the niphal, used with reference to God, *can* mean "He was grieved," or "He suffered grief," are 1 Samuel 15:11, where Yahweh says, "I am grieved that I made Saul king"; 1 Samuel 15:35, which reads essentially the same way; 2 Samuel 24:16, which relates how Yahweh was grieved concerning a pestilence he had sent upon Israel; 1 Chronicles 21:15, similar to the preceding verse; Jeremiah 42:10, where Yahweh suffers

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[24]Boyd, *God of the Possible*, 55.

[25]Boyd, *God of the Possible*, 55. Italics in original.

grief/is grieved concerning the disaster/harm that he has done; and Genesis 6:7, a partial parallel to verse 6. A related New Testament verse is Ephesians 4:30: "And do not grieve [λυπεω, *lupeo*, pres. act. impv., "to cause sorrow, to grieve"] the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (NIV).[26]

Intertwined in *nacham* in Genesis 6:6 are the dual aspects of feeling/emotion and purpose/decision. When God created the world, everything was very good. The first human beings were holy, perfectly in the image of God. They were made personally by *Yahweh* (God's personal, covenant name appears in Genesis 2), to be in fellowship with him, and to love and serve him, and so it was. But then came the fall into sin, and eventually the spread of unbelief in the human race, which culminates with the scene portrayed in Genesis 6:5: "The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time" (NIV). This is the reality in Noah's day, compared to what could have been! Because he had made man, then, *Yahweh*, who had once been in intimate fellowship with man, suffers grief. His creatures, who had mutated in such a terrible way, cause him to feel not joy, but sadness.

Also due to the present reality, the holy God *decides* to wipe out the human race with a flood. He, who in his essence is immutable, is portrayed as altering in his feelings, due to the change in humanity, and thus changing in his actions.[27] That decision, in turn, brings him grief. He has to destroy the work of his hands, the people whom he loves, and with whom he longs to have fellowship.

Genesis 6:6 (and v. 7) is not to be interpreted, again, as saying that Yahweh "regretted" or "was sorry" that he had made people on the earth, in the sense that he did not foresee how awful the human race would become, and now wishes that he had never made man. There is no hint of Yahweh wanting to retract his previous act of creation, since he now regards it as a mistake. In addition to the matter of the foreknowledge of God, there are other relevant considerations. How can he regard the

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[26]A possible translation of *nacham*, niphal, in Judges 21:6 and 15 is that the Israelites "were grieved" or "suffered grief" in regard to, or concerning, the tribe of Benjamin. Cf. H. Van Dyke Parunak, "A Semantic Survey of *NHM*," *Biblica* 56 (1975): 519, 526-527.

[27]Herbert Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1942), 261; John Davis, *Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis* (Salem, Wisc.: Sheffield, 1975), 116; Lange, *Genesis*, 287.

making of man a mistake, when he has, from eternity, before the foundation of the earth, predestined people for salvation, for everlasting life with him (e.g., Eph. 1:4, 1 Cor. 2:7-9)? He does not think of the existence of the human race as a regretful error on his part, because he has already (Genesis 3:15) promised to send the Savior to rescue fallen humanity. God loves people so much that he thinks they are worth saving, at the cost of the life of his own Son, who himself would become a man. There had been many godly people before the flood who lived to God's glory, as his true servants. In Genesis 6 Noah stands forth, with the believing members of his family, as a righteous man. He walked in close fellowship with his Creator, as had his ancestor Enoch, whom God took alive to heaven (Genesis 5:21-24). God, therefore, does not regret having made man.

Exodus 32:14

In the section of his book entitled "Reversed Divine Intentions," Boyd presents a number of passages that he believes declare "the truth that God changes his mind when circumstances call for it." Here he lists Exodus 32:14, for the relevant part of which he uses the translation "the LORD changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people."[28] At the end of this section Boyd comments:

> Clearly, the motif that God changes his mind is not an incidental one in Scripture. It runs throughout the biblical narrative and is even exalted as one of his praiseworthy attributes. It is very difficult to see how passages such as these can be fairly interpreted if we assume that the future is exhaustively settled and known by God as such.... God is not only the God of future certainties; he's the God of future possibilities.[29]

For Exodus 32:14 this article suggests the translation "And God *relented* concerning the disaster which he spoke of doing to his people."[30] God "backed off," withdrew, from his threat to consume the Israelites and leave

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[28]Boyd, *God of the Possible*, 81, 83.

[29]Boyd, *God of the Possible*, 85. He further comments: "Classical theology cannot accept this conclusion because of philosophical preconceptions of what God must be like: He must be in every respect unchanging, so his knowledge of the future must be unchanging" (86).

[30]John Durham (*Exodus*, WBC 3 [Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987], 424), translates "Thus was Yahweh moved to pity concerning the injury that he had spoken of doing to his people." Similarly, Jonathan Master ("Exodus 32 as an Argument for Traditional Theism," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 45 [December, 2002]: 595) prefers the translation "Yahweh had compassion."

only Moses, out of whom he would make a great nation. He did not wipe them out; however, God did chasten them, by means of a plague, as reported at the end of chapter 32 (v. 35).

The "relent/'back off'" translation well fits the context in Exodus 32. Further, this rendering of *nacham* in the niphal is either the preferred, or a possible, translation in numerous other Old Testament passages.[31] "Relent," this article proposes, is a better choice than "God changed his mind," or "God repented over/was sorry about." The latter two translations, as already explained, can mislead the reader into thinking that God really does not know what he is going to do, that he initially decides on one course of action, but in the end takes another course. Worse yet, the reader might in addition believe that God in the heat of his anger can say some things that he is sorry about later on, realizing that his words were a mistake. The fundamental concept throughout all this type of thinking is that God does not have complete foreknowledge, even with regard to his own activity.

That concept and type of thinking are not in accord with a proper interpretation of Scripture. God is not limited in his knowledge, as well as capricious, and subject to uncontrollable fits of anger that lead him into errors. Besides being omniscient, God is fully in control of himself (to speak anthropomorphically) and all situations. He is consistently holy, just, and righteous in his thoughts, words, and actions.

In Exodus 32:14 *nacham* is an anthropopathic term imparting, anthropopathically, spiritual truths to us mere sinful mortals. God in his Word comes down to our level, communicating with us in the best, most effective manner, to the limit of our understanding.

What are we to see, then, in the use of *nacham* in Exodus 32:14? This verb conveys, as discussed above, the dual aspects of decision and emotion. God, who is immutable and outside of time, is portrayed as making a decision in time, due to a change in his emotions. Righteously angry with the Israelites, and speaking of consuming them, God turns from his fierce wrath (as Moses requested), and spares them. God knew from eternity what he would do and how the situation would turn out; but from Moses',

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[31]E.g., Exodus 32:12; 2 Samuel 24:16 (1 Chronicles 21:15); Isaiah 57:6; Jeremiah 4:28; 15:6; 18:8, 10; 20:16; 26:3, 13, 19; 42:10; Ezekiel 24:14; Joel 2:13, 14; Amos 7:3, 6; Jonah 3:9, 10; Zechariah 8:14; Psalm 106:45.

and the reader's, point of view, God holds out one course of action, and then goes with another.

It should be noted that God did not necessarily say to Moses, "I *will*" destroy the Israelites. Rather, the Hebrew text can be translated as God saying, "Now therefore, let me alone [imperative], that my wrath *may* [jussive] burn hot against them and I *may* [cohortative] consume them" (v. 10; NKJV).[32] With this translation God's words carry a hint of conditionality. They imply that someone can stand in the way of God's fierce anger, preventing him from consuming the people, namely, Moses. As is well known, in Scripture many of God's threats (and his promises, too) are conditional.[33]

God turns aside from his fierce wrath and refrains from carrying out his threat not because of a change in the Israelites. The decisive factor in Exodus 32 *is* Moses, acting as intercessor.[34] *Nacham* in verse 14 presents what is taught elsewhere in Scripture, that the prayers of believers truly have an effect upon God. James writes: "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (5:16; NKJV). On the one hand, God knows in advance how he will act, long before his people pray to him. God announces in Isaiah: "It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer...." (65:24; NKJV). On the other hand, Psalm 106:23 reports, concerning the scene in Exodus 32: "He [God] spoke of destroying them, except that [לולי] Moses his chosen one stood in the breach before him to turn back his rage from destroying." Moses' intercession had an impact; it was effective with God. According to our limited human reason and way of speaking we might say that God allows himself to be moved by the

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[32]This is also the translation of, e.g., the ESV, KJV, NAS, NIV, and the NRSV.

[33]Cf., e.g., Jeremiah 18:7-10; Ezekiel 33: 13-16. Robert Chisholm, in his article "Does God 'Change His Mind'?" (*Biblia Sacra* 152 [1995]), distinguishes two types of divine statements of intention: decrees and announcements (389-391). The former are unconditional promises. The latter, often following a specific grammatical pattern, are conditional, and implicitly open to change. Concerning Exodus 32:10 he writes (396): "The form of the statement (imperative + jussive + cohortative + cohortative [the remainder of the verse]) indicates that it is not a decree but an expression of God's frustration with his people." He concludes: "... God had only threatened judgment, not decreed it" (396). Master, agreeing with Chisholm, notes that "Moses recognized the opening in God's statements and appealed to previous divine decrees which were, by their very nature, unbreakable" (596).

[34]J. Philip Hyatt (*Exodus*, New Century Bible [London: Oliphants, 1971], 307) notes that there are three grounds seen in the Old Testament for Yahweh's relenting: intercession, repentance of the people, and Yahweh's compassionate nature.

prayers of believers, and he also knows in advance he will be impacted by these petitions.

As observed, God in verse 10, with the implicit conditionality of his words, is subtly inviting Moses to plead with him. In addition, at the beginning of the verse God speaks one way—"let Me alone"—to bring about an effect that is the opposite of what his words seem to mean on the surface. Far from leaving him alone, Moses proceeds to engage in intimate, straightforward conversation with God.

In fact, God throughout is speaking with great intentionality to Moses. The scene in Exodus 32 is not one of God being overcome by a fit of anger, and spewing forth rash words, for which he is later sorry, or about which he changes his mind. Rather, God is talking in a deliberate manner with a certain purpose, and corresponding goal, in mind. God's purpose is to put Moses to the test.[35]

In Exodus 32 God chooses his words carefully, to lead Moses into exactly the kind of test he intended for his servant. Scripture teaches that God prepares people in advance for the testing process, and that he puts someone to the test for that person's good, and for the glory of God. Moreover, there are a number of Scriptural examples in which God, while testing a person, seems to take one stance, but actually has something else in mind, as the outcome shows.

In Genesis 22 God puts Abraham to the test by commanding him to sacrifice Isaac. God knows in advance what Abraham will do, and that God's purpose will be accomplished. God did not actually want the

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[35]This is the position of various commentators. E.g., Calvin, in his Exodus commentary, in *Commentaries on The Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony*, vol. 3, trans. Charles Bingham (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 339; John Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt: Studies in Exodus*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971), 296; Terence Fretheim, *Exodus*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1991), 284; and Walter Kaiser Jr., "Exodus," in vol. 2 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 479. A reasonable argument is that, in reality, God could not have wiped out the Israelites, leaving only Moses. As recorded in Genesis 49, God has already, through Jacob, foretold that the coming Savior would be from the tribe of Judah (49:8-10). Moses was of the tribe of Levi. The promises concerning the Messiah in the Old Testament were unconditional. God would not have gone back on his word spoken centuries before by Jacob. One might counter by saying that, theoretically, God was able to raise the Judahites from the dead, but this seems forced. Cf. Genesis 22, and Hebrews 11:17-19. The command to sacrifice is one thing; "I will devour" gives a much different impression.

patriarch to slay his son; other scriptural references proclaim clearly that God abhors child sacrifice. The Angel of the Lord prevents Abraham from killing Isaac, not because God has had a change of mind, but because Abraham has successfully met the test, by God's grace and power. As a result of this crisis Abraham's faith reaches its highpoint; he holds steadfastly to the word of God, as the author of Hebrews indicates.

In Genesis 32, the Angel of the Lord wrestles with Jacob. At first this seems to be a stance of hostility on the part of God; in the end, however, God blesses Jacob. Through this test God causes Jacob to grasp him and his word, so to speak, with bulldog tenacity.

When the Canaanite woman begged Jesus to heal her daughter, Christ apparently ignored her, not answering her a word. When she persisted, Christ gave her a somewhat insulting, and far from encouraging, response. In the end, of course, Christ went on to heal her daughter. Christ knew all along what he would do. He acted and spoke as he did to test the woman, to exercise her faith, so that she could display herself as spiritually bold and persistent.

Partial analogies to these examples are found in Genesis 18 and Luke 24. In the former passage, God appears determined to exterminate totally the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. By the last part of the chapter God agrees to take a different position, in response to the petitioning of Abraham. Because of the way God dealt with him, Abraham shows himself to be a great intercessor. God knew in advance, however, what he would do to the cities, and how he would spare Lot and his family. In Luke 24, the resurrected Christ seems to take a position of ignorance in responding to the question of the two men, whether or not he knew about what had transpired in Jerusalem. Jesus simply replies, "What things?" He knew everything, but replies as he does to have the men articulate their disappointments and concerns, as the background for Christ then ministering to them from Scripture.

In Exodus 32 God speaks one way initially, because he is putting Moses to the test, but later, when the test is over, *nacham*, "backs off" from his threat, from what he suggested as a course of action.[36] As God intended,

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[36]Calvin, in his Exodus commentary has this pertinent comment (340-341): "Nor is there any reason why slanderous tongues should here impugn God, as if he pretended before men what he had not decreed in himself; for it is no proof that he is variable or deceitful if, when speaking of men's sins, and pointing out what they deserve, he does not lay open his incomprehensible counsel."

Moses benefits mightily from this test, which God uses to shape and prepare him for the coming years, and for God's glory. The following paragraphs are illustrative.

Moses rejects ungodly pride, which would have prompted him to jump at the chance to become a new patriarch. Humility remained a characteristic of his life and work.

Through this test Moses emerges as the great intercessor for his people, and takes on in a decisive manner his role as their true shepherd, under God. All that he relates to God concerning the Israelites has meaning also for Moses. Because of this test he sees in clearer fashion the importance of his people, and learns to identify in a closer manner with them. As Maxie Dunnam explains, we see on the part of Moses "a commitment that had moved almost unbelievably from long argument against God's call to standing toe to toe with God for the sake of what God had called him to do in the first place...."[37] Moses will have to endure these Israelites, in a wilderness setting no less, for some thirty-eight-plus years.

God, through this experience in Exodus 32, leads Moses to stand in an even firmer manner on God's Word, with its promises. Moses recalls what God had said to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: "I will multiply your descendants." He reasons, "How, God, can You wipe out the Israelites and make of me a great nation? These future people would be called the descendants of Moses, and not of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Because of his being tested, Moses' *agape* love is drawn out and brightly shines.[38] He has this love, certainly, for his fellow Israelites. He perhaps displays this love for the Egyptians, too, since he says to God: "Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?'" (v. 12; NKJV). Moses possibly is thinking that, whatever positive effect God's mighty miracles in Egypt and at the sea might have had on the Egyptians, would be undone with God's annihilating the Israelites. Ronald Clements emphasizes this point. He writes: "...the foremost reason why God should not destroy Israel is that the Egyptians (and so all gentile

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[37]Maxie Dunnam, *Exodus*, The Communicator's Commentary, vol. 2 (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), 352-353.

[38]Concerning Exodus 32:14, R. Alan Cole (*Exodus*, TOTC, vol. 2 [Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity, 1973], 217) writes: "We are not to think of Moses as altering God's purpose towards Israel by this prayer, but as carrying it out: Moses was never more like God than in such moments, for he shared God's mind and loving purpose."

peoples) would not recognize the LORD as the true God if he did so. In this way God's name would be profaned, as Ezekiel describes in a similar situation (Ezek. 36:20)."

Therefore, in Exodus 32 God is fully in control of the situation. He is acting and speaking according to a preconceived purpose and goal, and having his will accomplished, as was foreordained.

IV. Conclusion

Genesis 6:6 and Exodus 32:14 remind us that Scripture reveals God to us via accommodations, including the use of anthropomorphic and anthropopathic terminology. What we see *is* the truth, yet this must always be viewed within the framework of God's omniscience, immutability, and timelessness, which, however, we do not fully grasp.[39] "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become his counselor?" (Rom. 11:34; NKJV). Now "we know in part ... we see in a mirror, dimly" (1 Cor. 13:9, 12; NKJV). God has chosen the best way of communicating to us, taking our feeble minds to the extent of their capability. While our knowledge of God is only partial, we *do know* the one, true, Triune God—including his incarnate Son—with corresponding love and affection. We can be absolutely sure that, through this knowledge, or faith, we have salvation.

[39]Simply speaking, there are "tensions" (but *not* contradictions) in the Christian faith: spiritual realities which our limited human reason cannot completely figure out or comprehend.

An Historical Study of the "Dignus Est Agnus" Canticle

John W. Montgomery

Unlike such familiar canticles as the *Magnificat* and the *Te Deum*, the *Dignus Est Agnus* poses a challenging and perplexing historical problem. Detailed historical information, together with further bibliographical leads, may easily be found by anyone wishing to study the more well-known canticles (see, for example, the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology*). Such sources, however, yield no data whatsoever on the *Dignus Est Agnus*.[1] Further checking reveals that *Dignus* is not used in the liturgies of the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, or Anglican Communions.[2]

From the standpoint of the present-day liturgical situation, therefore, the *Dignus Est Agnus* is a peculiarly Lutheran canticle. But when we turn to Lutheran sources of information, we are again faced with a dearth of concrete data on this canticle. The 1917-1918 *Common Service Book* includes the text of the *Dignus*.[3] The general rubrics inform us that in Matins and Vespers the *Dignus* is "proper during the Easter season and Ascension-tide" and "may also be used during the Trinity-season," and that this or another canticle or hymn of praise may be substituted for the *Gloria in Excelsis* in the service except on "Festival Days or when there is a Communion."[4] "The Explanation of The Common Service," however, does not refer once to this canticle. The *Lutheran Hymnal* of the Synodical

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[1]The *Dignus* also fails to appear in Herzog and Hauck's *Realencyklopaedie* (and its English abridgment, the *New Schaff-Herzog*); Meusel's *Kirchliches Handlexikon; Die Religion in Geechichte and Gegenwart*; Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*; the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

[2]Note, for example, the absence of any reference to this canticle in Pierre Batiffol, *History of Roman Breviary*, translated from the third French edition, ed. Atwell M. Y. Baylay (London: Longmans and New York: Green, 1912), W. K. Lowther Clarke, ed., *Liturgy and Worship: A Companion to the Prayer Books of the Anglican Communion* (New York: MacMillan, 1932), or the *Hymnal of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America* (New York: Church Pension Fund, 1940, 1943).

[3]The *Dignus* is the last of the twelve canticles, on page 215 in the *Common Service Book of the Lutheran Church*, authorized by the United Lutheran Church in America (Philadelphia: Board of Publication of the ULCA, 1917, 1918).

[4]*Common Service Book*, 291-292.

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Conference gives the text of the *Dignus*, but permits its use only in weekday Matins.[5] The handbook to this hymnal deals only with the historical background of the hymns that are found in the hymnal, so again we are uncertain as to when or why the *Dignus* appeared in Lutheran liturgy.[6]

Luther D. Reed, in his classic *The Lutheran Liturgy*, repeats the information given in the *Common Service Book* on the use of this canticle, and provides as further data on the canticle only the fact that neither the Roman Breviary nor the Common Service text of 1888 contains it (the impression is given that the *Dignus* was first added in the *Common Service Book* of 1917).[7] Strodach makes the tantalizing statement, "It is one of the later Canticles," but gives no authority for this assertion, nor any indication of what he means by "later."[8] Neither Horn, in *Outlines of Liturgics*, nor Alt, in *Der Christliche Cultus*, makes any reference to the *Dignus Est Agnus*.[9] The same is true of R. Morris Smith, who claimed "to trace the origin and give a partial history of the various parts of these [the minor] services."[10]

Moreover, the liturgical volume in the Philadelphia edition of *Luther's Works* gives no indication that the Reformer was acquainted with the *Dignus Est Agnus*.[11] An examination of Sehling revealed that the *Dignus* is not employed in the church orders of the Lutheran Church in the sixteenth

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[5]*Lutheran Hymnal*, authorized by the Synods Constituting the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), 122, 34.

[6]*The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal*, comp. W. G. Polack (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1942).

[7]Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy: A Study of the Common Service of the Lutheran Church in America* (Philadelphia: Muhlenburg Press, 1947), 381, 413.

[8]Paul Zeller Strodach, *A Manual on Worship*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1946), 276.

[9]Edward T. Horn, *Outlines of Liturgics* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1910); Heinrich Alt, *Der Christliche Cultus*, 2 volumes (Berlin: Müller, 1851-1860).

[10]R. Morris Smith, "The Sources of the Minor Services," *Lutheran Liturgical Association: Memoirs*, ed. Luther D. Reed (Pittsburgh: Lutheran Liturgical Association, 1906), 2:2:35-56.

[11]I have checked all the references under "Matins" and "Vespers" in the index at the back of this volume. The heading "Dignus Est Agnus," needless to say, does not appear in the index. Under "Canticles" in the index one reads "see Benedictus; Nunc Dimittis; Magnificat; Te Deum."

century.[12] A study of Section V of Horn's article on "The Lutheran Sources of the Common Service" confirmed Sehling's omission of references to the *Dignus*.[13] A check of various works by Wilhelm Löhe for some mention of the *Dignus Est Agnus* turned out to be a blind alley as well.[14]

In the face of such an absence of information, is it possible for us to discover when and how and by whom the *Dignus Est Agnus* entered the liturgy of the Lutheran Church? Moreover, can we justify the continued use of this canticle or its variations in Lutheran worship? These two questions are integrally connected, for liturgical form is determined not only by scriptural content, but also by historical usage in the church, which is the body of Christ. The remainder of this paper will be devoted to answering these questions.

The Entrance of the *Dignus Est Agnus* into Lutheran Liturgical Usage

Entrance into American Lutheran Liturgy

As pointed out above, the *Dignus Est Agnus* is present in the *Common Service Book* (1917), but was not included in the Common Service of 1888.[15] The first question we face, therefore, is why was it included in the former but not the latter? In a significant article in the *Lutheran Church Review* for July 1901, Luther D. Reed informs us that the General Council *Church Book* of 1900 "furnishes twelve Canticles, which are not given in the Standard edition, except as some of them appear in the various Services."[16] Neither the United Synod of the South (which reprinted the Common Service exactly) nor the General Synod made a similar inclusion. This section of

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[12]The only church order to mention canticles other than the four listed in the previous note is that of Pomerania (1535), which gives a total of ten canticles, none of which happens to be the *Dignus*. Emil Sehling, *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: O.R. Reisland, 1902-1913).

[13]Edward T. Horn, "The Lutheran Sources of the Common Service," *Lutheran Quarterly* 21 (1891): 239-268.

[14]Those responsible for the Common Service relied heavily on Löhe, who lived 1808-1872. For a recent biography of Löhe, see David Ratke, *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament: The Ecclesial Theology of Wilhelm Löhe* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001).

[15]The Common Service was developed by a Joint Committee of the General Council, the General Synod, and the United Synod of the South—the bodies that merged to form the United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA) on November 14, 1918.

[16]Luther D. Reed, "The Standard Manuscript of the Common Service and Variata Editions," *Lutheran Church Review* 20 (1901): 469. See also 460, 472.

twelve canticles (which of course includes the *Dignus Est Agnus*) did not, however, appear in the General Council *Church Book* for the first time in 1900. The editions of the *Church Book* of 1868, 1875, 1891 and 1892 also contain the twelve canticles section (and therefore the *Dignus*). In these editions, the *Dignus* may be used only in Matins, in the (Morning) Service (as an alternative for the *Gloria in Excelsis*), or in the old "Evening Service" (which was later dropped from the hymnal entirely). The Vesper service permits only the *Magnificat* or *Nunc Dimittis*.

Who in the General Council was responsible for the addition of the *Dignus* to the *Church Book*, and why was the addition of this and other canticles made? Two quotations from article by Henry E. Jacobs in the *Lutheran Church Review* offer suggestions toward an answer:

> The General Council Committee, in preparing the text of the edition of the Church Book published in 1892, after the death of Dr. Schmucker [Oct. 15, 1888], was persuaded in a few instances by several of its older members not to make changes in the text of 1868 until it was certain that the Common Service would actually have wide use in the other Bodies.... The prediction was even made in the discussion within the committee of the General Council, that there would not be over a half dozen English congregations in the General Council in which the Vesper Service would be introduced.
>
> A great change in the methods of the committee followed the death of Dr. Schmucker. The "copy" ready for the printer, which "fell from his hands" as he died, was never published in the form in which he had left it.... Dr. Seiss, as chairman of the editorial committee, applied his industrious energy and his acknowledged gifts as a writer, to a revision of parts of the book.... With his classmate, Dr. Schmucker, as his critic and counselor, the contributions of Dr. Seiss to the Church Book were of decided importance. But associated only with those who were less free to offer their objections, his influence has introduced into the issues of the Church Book since 1892 some elements that are individual rather than such as really were determined by the Church. This has been noticed above in the reference made to the variations of the Church Book of 1892 from the standard text of the Common

> Service ... as a comparison with the original text, as determined by the committee, in the *Kirchenbuch* will show.[17]

The questions are, why the incorporation of the canticle and who is responsible for it? Again we quote Jacobs "It seems, therefore, as though the change from the liturgy of 1860 to the form in which it is found in the Church Book [of 1868] was determined principally by the influence of Dr. Krauth, while the chief agent in the preparation of the scheme of details, thus outlined, was always, and to the close of his life, Dr. Schmucker."[18] Dr. Schmucker, moreover, became the leading light on the committee appointed in 1866 to prepare the *Kirchenbuch* (1877).[19] "By his tact, he reconciled conflicting interests, and brought order out of confusion; and by his activity, at the same time, on both the English and German committees, gave assurance that the two books would harmonize."[20] As we have already seen, the General Council *Church Book* published after Dr. Schmucker's death showed variations from the text of the Common Service on whose committee he had been a most influential member. The *Kirchenbuch*, which was completed under Dr. Schmucker's guidance, shows accurately the liturgy he would also have desired in the English *Church Book* (1891 and 1892).[21] The *Kirchenbuch* does not include the canticle section. Moreover, there is no rubric permitting the use—either in the Service, the Matins, or the Vespers—of an alternative canticle section. Clearly, then, Beale Schmucker was not the source for the inclusion of the *Dignus*.[22]

Who, then, was? It appears that Dr. Joseph Augustus Seiss (1823-1904) was chiefly responsible for the entrance of the *Dignus Est Agnus* into the *Church Book* (and therefore into the *Common Service Book*).[23] Three further

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[17]Henry E. Jacobs, "The Making of the Church Book," *Lutheran Church Review* 31 (October 1912): 615, 618-619.

[18]Jacobs, "Making of the Church Book," 612.

[19]*Kirchenbuch für Evangelisch-Lutherisch Gemeinden.* Hrsg. von der Allgemeinen Versammlung der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Nord Amerika (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publication House, 1877).

[20]Jacobs, "Making of the Church Book," 613.

[21]"The text found in the *Kirchenbuch* must be used as the standard to determine the ultimate decision of the General Council upon the recommendation of the committee under his [Dr. Schmucker's] guidance," Jacobs, "Making of a Church Book," 617.

[22]See *Kirchenbuch* 5, 22, 27; compare 276.

[23] For biography of Seiss, see Lawrence R. Rast Jr., "Joseph A. Seiss and the Lutheran Church in America," Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 2003; Samuel R. Zeiser, "Joseph

items of evidence support this claim. First, the "Additional Prayers" in the "Pulpit Edition" of the *Church Book*:

> To the individual efforts of Dr. Seiss, and not to the work of the Church Book Committee, the so-called "Pulpit Edition" of the Church Book and its "Additional Prayers" must be ascribed. At Erie, in 1897, the preparation of this edition was taken out of the hands of the Church Book Committee and given to the Board of Publication. With this authority an entire pamphlet of forty-four pages, which Dr. Seiss had compiled from various unknown sources and published a few years before, was bodily transferred to the Church Book without submission to the Church Book Committee or revision of any kind whatsoever by it or any of its members.[24]

If this could happen with numerous prayers, why should we doubt an innovation on Dr. Seiss's part with regard to a few canticles?

Second, certain statements by Dr. Theodore E. Schmauk in his obituary notice for Dr. Seiss:

> It is the common impression that the General Council Church Book in its liturgical portions are almost entirely the work of Dr. B. M. Schmucker, and, in its hymnological portion, the work of Dr. Seiss. Almost the reverse is the case as far as Dr. Seiss is concerned.... It is quite true that ... improvements and alterations were made as a result of their [the Committee's] united consideration. But the moving mind and the formative hand were those of Dr. Seiss.... It will be remembered that when Dr. Schmucker died, nothing but the Morning Service and what belonged to it was complete.... Though we have never been able to give complete assent to all the principles of Dr. Seiss ... and, on important points we take the position of the *Kirchenbuch*, yet it is our firm belief that ... the present English Church Book of the General Council, which was the pioneer work in the field, owes much to Dr. Seiss in substance, and more in form, than to any other writer.[25]

Augustus Seiss: Popular Nineteenth-century Lutheran Pastor and Premillennialist," Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 2001.

[24]Jacobs, "Making of the Church Book," 619.

[25] Theodore E. Schmauk, "The Death of Dr. Seiss," *Lutheran Church Review* 23 (July 1904): 619-622.

Finally, the *Dignus Est Agnus* is taken entirely from the Revelation of St. John, and Dr. Seiss was almost certainly the greatest Lutheran commentator on this Bible book during the nineteenth century. Thirty-thousand sets of his three volume *Lectures on the Apocalypse* had been published by 1917, and the work is still in print. Although chiliastic in point of view, this book is even today held in high esteem in many quarters. The writing of this book spanned fifteen years (1865-1880) of Dr. Seiss's life, and would obviously have influenced him in areas other than the strictly expository.[26]

The Dignus Est Agnus *and Continental Lutheran Liturgy*

We should also briefly face the problem of a possibly continental liturgical origin for the *Dignus*. It seems doubtful that American Lutherans—or even an individual American Lutheran—would have introduced this canticle into our liturgy without continental tradition favoring such action. Two possible continental origins suggest themselves, and we can only make cursory mention of them here.

The first is the Western Breviary tradition. Clarke writes: "The Monastic Breviary, and the French diocesan Breviaries issued in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are rich in canticles."[27] But note that Batiffol nowhere mentions the *Dignus*.

The second origin is that of individual European Lutheran liturgists and church musicians of the Reformation period, such as Lukas Lossius (d. 1582) or Johann Spangenberg (d. 1550). Archer and Reed mention both of these men in their preface to *The Psalter and Canticles Pointed for Chanting*, which contains a musical setting for the *Dignus*.[28] Wackernagel's bibliographic description of Lossius' four volume *Psalmodia* (Nürnberg, 1553 edition) indicates that the entire second book is devoted to "cantica veteris ecclesiae selects de praecipuis festis sanctorum Jesu Christi."[29]

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[26]Where Dr. Seiss himself got the notion of introducing into the Church Book the *Dignus* (and, for that matter, the whole twelve canticle sections) is a question the answer to which we cannot attempt to give here. Rast argues that the incipient form of the *Dignus Est Agnus* appeared already in the hymnal that Seiss developed for St. John congregation in Philadelphia in 1859, the *Evangelical Psalmist*. See Rast, "Joseph Seiss," 154-159.

[27]Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 273. See also Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 381, 354.

[28]Harry G. Archer and Luther D. Reed, eds., *The Psalter and Canticles Pointed for Chanting* (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1897), ix, x.

[29]Philipp Wackernagel, *Bibliographic zur Geschichte des deutschen Kirchenlieges im XVI. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: Heyder und Zimmer, 1855), 253-254.

Unfortunately, I have not had access to the works by Lossius or Spangenberg through which one might determine if these men were acquainted with the *Dignus*. It certainly seems more likely that the Lutherans who first introduced the *Dignus* in this country would have read Lossius than that they should have been influenced by Roman or Gallican Breviaries.

Historical Justification for the Continued Use of the *Dignus Est Agnus* in Lutheran Worship

Regardless of the somewhat individualistic manner in which the *Dignus* canticle entered the Common Service Book tradition, and in spite of the absence of this canticle from the 1888 text of the Common Service, I believe that sufficient historical evidence exists for its retention in succeeding Lutheran service books. I base this contention on four arguments.

First, Rietschel considers that the very verses in the Apocalypse which make up the *Dignus Est Agnus* are in the nature of New Testament Psalms, and he associates these verses with the *Magnificat*, the *Benedictus*, and the *Nunc Dimittis* passages.[30] Weizsäcker goes even farther, and states concerning these and a few other similar verses in the Apocalypse: "The separate short songs ... fit into one another like strophes of a complete ode."[31] He says that they may be "traditional songs," and quotes the famous line from Pliny's letter to Trajan, "Carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicers secum invicem."[32] Thus from a liturgical standpoint the *Dignus Est Agnus* seems to have a precedent in very early church usage.

Second, even if the *Dignus* were not used in the Lutheran Church during the early years of the Reformation, "the rubrical permission to use another Canticle or Hymn" for the *Gloria in Excelsis* in the Service "except on occasions when a full Service is desirable, accords with Lutheran usage" during the Reformation period.[33] This being true, there has been a place in Lutheran liturgy ever since the Reformation for alternative canticles having the quality of the *Dignus*.

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[30]Georg Rietschel, *Lehrbuch der Liturgik*, 2. neuberb. Aufl. von Paul Graff, 2 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1951 [Bd. I], 1952 [Bd. II]), 201.

[31]Carl von Weizsäcker, *The Apostolic Age of the Christian Church*, vol. 2, trans. from the second, rev. ed. by James Millar (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1895), 260.

[32]Weizsäcker, *The Apostolic Age*, 262.

[33]Horn, "The Lutheran Sources of the Common Service," 251.

Third, even from the standpoint of the Common Service tradition the use of the *Dignus* can be defended. Reed may have written in 1901 concerning the Common Service of 1888, "every variation from the standard form is alike unpardonable," but even before this (in 1897) he had set the *Dignus* and other canticles to music in his *Psalter and Canticles*.[34] He refers to this work frequently, moreover, in his later publications.[35] The *Dignus Est Agnus*, regardless of the rather arbitrary way it entered the Church Book liturgy, was here to stay. In 1917 the same Lutheran bodies that had approved the Common Service of 1888 (without the *Dignus*) placed their stamp of approval on the Common Service Book (which includes this canticle).[36] Here we have an excellent example of the ongoing force of a Spirit-motivated tradition in its continual process of refining and perfecting.

Finally, we note the tremendous value of having a canticle of Johannine authorship in Lutheran liturgy. Our Church has always had at the center of its theology the Lamb of God who shed his blood upon the Cross to save a fallen race; it is therefore only fitting that this sentiment should be expressed in canticle form for use in our services of worship.

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[34]"Reed, The Common Service and Variata Editions," 472.

[35]See Archer and Reed, eds., *The Choral Service Book* (Philadelphia: General Council Publication Board, 1901); Harry G. Archer and Luther D. Reed, eds., *The Music of the Responses* (Philadelphia: General Council Publication Board, 1903); and Harry G. Archer and Luther D. Reed, eds., *Season Vespers* (Philadelphia: General Council Publication Board, 1905).

[36]See Strodach, *A Manual on Worship*, 188.

Theological Observer

Clerical Collar—To Wear or Not To Wear?

Fifty years ago the questions of wearing a clerical collar was much debated in the congregations of our Synod. In the late 1950s I was the pastor of a congregation in a near-west suburb of Chicago. Reading through the minutes of the Voters' Meetings, I discovered that, in the late 1940s, the pastor of the congregation had asked the Voters for permission to wear a clerical collar. A long and spirited debate followed, leading to no consensus. The final resolution of the Voters was "let the pastor decide." That was a very Lutheran answer since the wearing of clerical garb is neither forbidden nor commanded.

The clerical collar is not a vestment. It is ordinary clothing. The use of the collar illustrates something about clerical insignia and dress. From earliest times there were distinguishing marks about the apparel of the clergy. The use of a ring (the mark of a slave), the wearing of the *stola*, and the shaving of the head or tonsure all marked the members of the clergy. What we call liturgical vestments were, in fact, originally ordinary clothing worn by all. The alb, cincture, and chasuble were regular dress in the Roman world. But styles changed. When the barbarians invaded the Roman empire, they brought a new form of dress, trousers and a shirt. As the new styles were adopted, the clergy retained the old clothing. The old clothing was now understood to be liturgical vesture for use in the services of the church. The old clothing, now considered vestments, was given new symbolic meaning. This process of the clergy keeping the old style has gone on ever since. The cassock, a common walking coat used by all gentlemen in the Middle Ages, was retained by the clergy when it was shortened to form a suit coat. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Protestant ministers wore a frock coat and a turn down collar as clerical attire. The frock coat and turn down collar, formerly the common dress of the gentleman, was abandoned in favor of the modern suit coat. But the Protestant clergy retained the older style as a clerical uniform. With our culture adopting more and more casual clothing, it is possible that the new clerical uniform will be a shirt and tie.

From the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, gentlemen wore elaborate collars. Often they were of lace or something that took the appearance of a primitive ascot tie. To keep the collar from being soiled, a band of linen was worn around the neck. In time, styles changed. The collars disappeared, but the clergy retained the band of linen around the neck. That band of linen used to keep the collar from being soiled is the clerical collar of today.

In reality, the clerical collar has become a uniform. Uniforms are worn by those who serve. Members of the armed forces wear uniforms, but the commander-in-chief does not. Waiters and waitresses wear uniforms, but the owner of the restaurant does not. Police wear uniforms, but the mayor of the town does not. Physicians, nurses, and technicians wear uniforms, but the chief executive of the hospital does not. A uniform designates status, the status of one who serves. The pastor who wears a clerical collar as a uniform is indicating not superior status, but rather the status of a servant.

Those who argue against the use of clerical attire suggest that it hampers evangelism. They view the collar as a mark of high status. As one pastor put it, "Sitting next to a sick bed with color (not a collar) is more intimate, personal, and cheerful than clinical, dull black and white." The clerical collar is believed to draw constant attention to the wearer.

Are there advantages to wearing a clerical collar? Certainly the wearer is constantly reminded that as a pastor, he is the Lord's servant to minister to the people. The pastor has greater access to restricted areas such as hospitals. During his visits with hospitalized parishioners, he does not need to constantly explain his presence to the staff. The pastor wearing clerical garb in his rounds of visitation in the community is never confused with a door-to-door salesman. Perhaps the Voters' Meeting of so long ago had it right: "Let the pastor decide."

Roger D. Pittelko
Pastor Emeritus

Carl F. H. Henry: An Evangelical Tribute to a Theologian

The turbulent years of the Missouri Synod from the 1950s through the 1970s still require historical analysis from all sides of the debate. Whether these will spring forth from Missouri's soul is another matter. Should they be written, the name of Carl F. H. Henry, the one outstanding theologian of the Evangelical movement must be included. On December 7, 2003, Henry passed away in Watertown, Wisconsin, at the age of 90. Perhaps more than anyone else he turned the discredited Fundamentalism of the early twentieth century into an academically acceptable force in American Protestantism. Today the pages of *Christianity Today*, of which he was the founding editor, advertise a multitude of seminaries, which testifies to the strength of the Evangelical message that he helped define. During the 1970s *Christianity Today* was the second most widely read periodical by Missouri Synod pastors. Henry expressed his personal distress that today its articles tend to center around a personal Christianity and have become less theological. Nearly forty years ago I was allowed to present an article on baptism ("Conflict Over Baptism," *Christianity Today*, April 14, 1967, 8-10.); such an opportunity cannot be expected now.

Details of his life can be found in the March 2004 issue of *Christianity Today*, but a word should be said of where his path crossed with those in Missouri. Conservative Lutheranism shared with Evangelicals a commitment to biblical inspiration, inerrancy, and historicity. Henry, however, addressed higher critical issues long before and more thoroughly than anyone in the Missouri Synod did. In the early 1960s he set off for Europe and sat down with such luminaries as Rudolph Bultmann and Karl Barth. He also met with theologians who had already addressed Neo-Orthodoxy, whose views had already found their way into the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. There were about sixteen interviews in

all, which he then published in *Jesus of Nazareth: Savior and Lord.* For some of us this provided a map through unchartered waters.

In 1965 I traveled from my Rockville, Connecticut, congregation through wintry weather to hear him speak at Park Street Church on Boston Common, a congregation of the American Baptist Convention. Throughout his life Henry remained a member of that classical liberal denomination and was proud of it. Evangelicals have this kind of freedom. Church and confession do not have match. As I remember, he hinted that I join the editorial staff of *Christianity Today,* but I had been never comfortable with Evangelicalism's lack of sacramentality and its deficient Christology. Some years later as a guest in our home, Henry urged that conservative-minded Protestants should forget their differences to fight against the common enemy. This challenge was tempting, but it comes with a price. Henry was baptized as a Lutheran, but he pointed to his later conversion to Christ as the crowning moment in his life. No surprise. He was after all an Evangelical and a committed Baptist.

Henry's massive 3,000 page *God, Revelation and Authority* (1976-1983) belongs to the Reformed theological tradition and, as such, has no integral place in Lutheran theology. It shows, however, how fervently he worked to keep Evangelicalism theological. Whether his legacy will be preserved among Evangelicals is uncertain but there is a lesson in this for Lutherans who cannot hold a candle to the theological works he produced. Henry was a good friend of the late Robert D. Preus, whom he admired for his work on biblical inerrancy. Ironically he became associated with Richard John Neuhaus in working to prevent the further erosion of core Christianity. At this point ecumenical associations become confessional in insisting that the center of faith must be preserved. If the church is catholic, some invitations to ecumenical participation cannot easily be turned down. Neuhaus notes that "toward the end of his life, he expressed a very doleful view of the state of evangelicalism, fearing that it had fallen captive to market dynamics of American religiosity." Neuhaus urged Henry to join *Evangelicals and Catholics Together,* theologians who recognize a common theological core among themselves and identify their differences. He would have been a natural in this group, but he could not find it in himself to join.

A tribute to Carl F. H. Henry by Neuhaus says it all. "The story is told of a lunch held by mainly liberal religious leaders to honor the Swiss theologian Karl Barth. About two hundred people were present and Carl rose to ask a question, introduction himself as the editor of *Christianty Today.* To the great mirth of the crowd, Barth responded, 'Do you mean Christianity today or Christianity yesterday?' Without missing a beat, Carl answered with a smile, "Yesterday, today, and forever.'" Neuhaus concludes: "Henry was a rare thing, a Christian gentleman, whose graciousness of manner was on easy terms with the clarity and confidence of faith. May choirs of angels welcome on the far side of Jordan" (*First Things* 110 [February 2004]: 67).

David P. Scaer

Book Reviews

Christian Contradictions: The Structures of Lutheran and Catholic Thought. **By Daphne Hampson. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Cloth. xi + 323 Pages. $59.95.**

There are books that need to be read. This book is one of them because of its thesis, the vigor of its argument, the comprehensiveness of its argument, and—simply—it is important. The thesis is provocative and possesses immense ecumenical significance. The thesis, briefly put, is this: the structure of Lutheran theology and the structure of Roman Catholic theology are utterly incompatible. Significant chapters on "Luther's Revolution" (9-55) and "The Catholic Alternative" (56-96) provide trenchant, lucid expositions of Luther's understanding of "extrinsic" righteousness by faith and of the Augustinian, linear ('in via") understanding of righteousness through love and justice. These two understandings, argues Hampson, are expressions of two incompatible structures of thought concerning the reality of the human self and the relation of the human self to God. The ecumenical significance of this claim, obviously, lies in the fact that, if correct, it lays bare the incoherence of the Lutheran-Catholic "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" (signed October 31, 1999). Hampson presents, in fact, an excellent chapter of the debates leading up to the joint approvals of the "Joint Declaration" (176-222). Especially important here is Hampson's report and analysis of an exchange of views between Gerhard Forde and Carl Peter, which reveals, argues Hampson, the ongoing Catholic failure to understand the Lutheran understanding of justification by faith and its hermeneutical use. With great clarity Hampson details the failure of the "Joint Declaration" to take seriously the critical function of justification by faith and the tendency of the "Declaration" to make justification one "criterion" alongside other criteria. Ms. Hampson herself has clearly understood the Lutheran insistance that justification by faith is not merely a doctrine among other doctrines, but rather a statement of the gospel itself by which a relationship of man before God is established in which relationship the human self itself is grounded and defined.

However, Hampson's book is not merely a study of the Lutheran and Catholic structures of thought. Nor, she wants to make clear (293), is she claiming a hopelessness for further ecumenical engagement between Catholics and Lutherans. Hampson's book is also, and perhaps especially, an exercise in theological method concerning a question of existential importance: "It is my conviction that we need to think through theological questions in structural terms and at the kind of existential depth which I have attempted here" (293). By "structural" she means that "doctrines are only to be comprehended in relationship to the structure in which they are placed" (285), or "the way in which different doctrines are arranged in relation to one another" (1). The question of existential importance for Hampson is the question of the human "self" and how that "self" relates to God and what implications arise from the structure of thought which articulates that relationship.

Hampson's analysis of the Lutheran and Catholic structures of thought, therefore, is not only a discussion of historical theology, but it is a systematic attempt to think theologically about the human reality by showing how two

significant, but contradictory, paradigms of Western Christianity have structured their views of the human person. She begins her analysis with a truly outstanding discussion of Luther's understanding of the Christian as one who lives "extrinsically" in Christ: "That the Christian lives 'not in himself' but 'in God' is ... nothing less than what it means to be a Christian. The Christian has a new sense of self, which is not a sense of self as a self-subsisting entity but rather a sense that he lives excentrically to himself (9-55, here 12). This chapter would itself serve admirably as an introduction to the controlling center of Luther's thought. Hampson believes this insight of Luther constitutes a "revolution," a "major disruption" in Christian thinking. Luther's new understanding represented, quite simply, a new form/structure of Christian thought, "a shift in paradigm compared with that which preceded it." That which preceded it was an Augustinian, linear notion according to which the Christian is "in via" ("on the way") toward righteousness (Chapter 2, "The Catholic Alternative," 56-96). In this view, although creation is distorted by sin, there remains at root a fundamental goodness in man which is assisted by (infused) grace, so that man retains always a certain level of potential for the acquisition and reception of salvation. Hampson's conclusion: "It would appear almost impossible for Catholicism to accept the basic Lutheran proposition, that God accepts sinners. [For] it is fundamental to the Catholic structure of thought ... that our relationship to God is founded on our likeness to God" (99). Therefore, for the Catholic, man must be "right in himself" in order to be in relation to God, while, for Luther, man is "right" when "outside himself" in Christ. Says Hampson, "We see that the two systems are strictly non-comparable" (91). Throughout these chapters, Hampson gives an insightful contrast and comparison to the morphologies of Lutheranism and Catholicism. Were we to consider them merely as exercises in theological description, we would have to declare them outstandingly clarifying and honestly sympathetic.

Honestly sympathetic to be sure. But Hampson has a critical edge as well, and no where is this more visible than in the chapter "Catholic Incomprehension" (97-142). Here she details, I believe with great lucidity, the failure of Catholic scholarship to understand Luther's understanding of justification by faith. As she shows, neither von Balthasar, nor Schmaus, nor Rahner, nor Küng, nor Pesch, nor Dulles have ever actually grasped the dialectic of Luther's thinking. These are big names; yet in the light of Hampson's discussion they do seem to be guilty of her charge. Typical of her argument here is this statement:

> Catholics seem to think that they can separate 'justification by faith' from 'extrinsic righteousness', saying that they accept the former while they must deny the latter. However, by 'justification by faith' they understand what they conceive to be the Lutheran way of saying that we are justified by God (that is to say the Lutheran equivalent to a Catholic saying that all grace comes from God). Indeed Lutheran 'faith' is frequently commuted into 'grace', as though these were simply equivalent. But in speaking of 'justification by faith', Lutherans are not referring to virtue infused by God which thenceforth becomes an intrinsic property of the human. They are referring to that act

> whereby I trust in another and not in myself. In other words they are proclaiming the Christian to live by an 'extrinsic' righteousness. The Christian is accepted on account of Christ's righteousness and not on account of anything about the way that he or she is. In this situation to say that Catholicism too is not Pelagian, that Catholics proclaim all grace to come from God, is simply beside the point. What is pivotal to Luther is to have escaped the kind of introspective concern which an interest in receiving grace implies (98-99).

Clearly Hampson sees through easy accommodations.

Additional chapters detail the Lutheran theology of Anders Nygren (and his critics, including Karl Barth, 141-175) and the Lutheran theology of Rudolf Bultmann (223-248). It is in these chapters, and especially the latter, that Hampson moves more decisively to the discussion of her systematic interest in the existential question of the human self. She believes Bultmann to be a true Lutheran voice that can speak to the modern world. Like Luther, Bultmann believes the Christian life to be one of "radical discontinuity, chosen once and again." The certainty of one's past must always be shattered by the new life in faith which never itself becomes an endowment or possession, but which is ever renewed by the decision of faith. Bultmann, too, understands the Christian life extrinsically: "Exactly as in the case of Luther, we are present for the world in a wholly new way on account of our having based ourselves beyond the world" (231). Let me say again that Hampson has been an insightful and sympathetic expositor of the Lutheran interest. It is, however, in this discussion of Bultmann that Hampson reveals her own opposition to Luther's structure of living "extrinsically." Hampson denies Bultmann's claim that through the preaching of the death and resurrection of Jesus the human person is set free: "I should not wish to base myself on that which lies outside myself and which is other than myself. I see no need to break my sense of self" (237). Hampson is aware that for Luther the human being must "first be broken before the possibility is opened up of being grounded in Christ in God." Here Hampson, rightly, sees the crucial importance of revelation. "It follows that if we are to hold that the self cannot be itself except as it is grounded in God, the self as we know it must be shattered in order to be based in God revealed in Christ. To take revelation seriously is to hold that the self cannot come to itself apart from this revelation" (237). Now Hampson reveals her own stance. Partly influenced by feminist writing, she is first interested in being "'centered' in oneself" and secondly is concerned for the "transformation of the self, rather than the breaking of the self." She wishes to assert "a self being able to be centred-in-relation." Such a centredness "allows one in turn to be open towards other people." It is part of the unfinished agenda of Hampson that she does not explain just what it is in this centered self that "allows" the move toward others. Perhaps Hampson would have to discuss more thoroughly than she has the reality and nature of sin. Certainly she is aware of the central importance for Luther of the forgiveness of sin. However, the nature of sin and the reality of death never, it seems to me, take the center stage which they demand in her discussion. In my opinion, a scar on an otherwise profoundly provocative discussion is Hampson's assertion that the Lutheran position is a

"profoundly masculinist description, in which the self, in its isolation and consequent insecurity, pits itself against the world and God" (238). Shortly afterward she claims that women have often lacked an "adequate sense of self," as well as men who do not "conform to the white, bourgeois, heterosexual norm" (238). I respectfully submit that this line of thought is not capable of forwarding Hampson's quest for the true self. If there is such a thing as a "human" self, then the intrusion of feminist, gender-laden categories would seem inadequate. And this, even if one must acknowledge that every human self is also a gendered self. For Luther as least, the insecurity of the human self is not a male problem. It is rooted in the fact of mortality and death, which, last I looked, plagued women as much as men. As Luther said in the first thesis of his *Disputatio de homine*, the person who is defined by what he possesses in himself (philosophical man) is the one who dies. *That* man does not live eternally. I think this aspect might have occupied Hampson more than it seems to have done.

Hampson's Epilogue, I think, reveals the fact that Hampson has not come to any certain conclusions, except perhaps that finally Lutheranism is not the way to go in defining the self. This is a tightly argued book with many insights and many claims. It is worthy of a careful reading, and profitable if one takes that effort.

William C. Weinrich

***First and Second Timothy and Titus.* By Thomas C. Oden. In *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching.* Louisville: John Knox Press, 1989. v + 190 pages. $16.95.**

The commentaries in the Interpretation series are especially designed to be helpful to teachers and pastors. They built a bridge from the world of hermeneutics to the fields of pedagogy and homiletics. Thomas C. Oden, Henry Anson Buttz Professor of Theology, Theological School and Graduate School at Drew University, wrote this volume. Two things in particular engage the reader.

Oden's skill in the use of language strikes the reader almost immediately. He knows how to capture the attention of the reader with effective and emotive language. When Oden writes of Paul's first defense at the end of Second Timothy (4:16), he says, "... no one took his part. No one stood with him; no advocate came to help; no patron provided assistance or support; no one 'seconded' his plea." Why was Paul put in this undefended position? Oden continues with this counterpoint," No one else stood by me—the Lord stood by my side. No one visited me-the Lord attended me. No one encouraged me—the Lord gave me strength." Oden concludes, "Paul seized the opportunity of a trial for his life to attest Christ ... the last public opportunity that he had to witness to Jesus Christ amid the life of the nations."

A second engaging characteristic of this volume is that Oden deals topically with the material in the Pastorals. He does not treat the three books, First Timothy and Second Timothy and Titus, in canonical sequence, but he blends the insights of all

three books under topics. The five topics are the "Authority of the Apostolic Tradition," the "Heart of Christian Preaching," "Pastoral Care," the "Right Ordering of Ministry," and "Paul Concludes His Letters to Timothy and Titus." Throughout the commentary, Oden makes constant reference to classic Christian interpreters of the pastoral letters, e.g., Athanasius, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Jerome, Luther, Calvin, and Wesley. He finds these interpreters to be "more attentive to a received tradition of consensual exegesis and less distracted by speculative theories." He treats the text as word of God. On the other side, Oden characterizes modern speculative criticism as "... especially defensive toward the Pastorals,..." singling them out for "... some of the most unreasonable and virulent attacks and speculative pseudo-scientific treatment of all New Testament documents." Oden largely eschews the historical critical method and attempts to rise to a higher and more rigorous standard, grounded in the classical and consensual tradition of interpretation, thereby challenging the speculative excesses of the historical critical method. Oden interacts, though briefly, with people in the critical literature-Bultmann, Dibelius/Conzelmann, Easton, Harrison, and others—but himself upholds Pauline authorship of the Pastorals with the likes of Zahn, Lock, Schlatter, Jeremias, Spicq, Kelly, Guthrie, Fee, and others. I think Oden should be respected for his divergence from the standard critical approach. If a person walks with the standard critical and speculative crowd, they can readily find that perspective in other commentaries.

Since the commentary is now over a dozen years old, the book is not entirely current on the state of biblical studies in the Pastoral Epistles. Also, the topical approach to the Pastorals, Oden's attempt to make them "more accessible for preaching and teaching," may not be the best if, in fact, these books are three separate letters from Paul. Taken separately, they are not one document and should not be treated as though they were.

However, for the pastor who wants solid scholarship and meaningful insights for teaching and preaching, this volume will offer them. While there are more recent conservative commentaries available that will also help you in preaching and teaching, e.g., Knight, Johnson and Stott, Oden's commentary will stimulate, challenge, and uplift you by its call to the text, "... God's word.... the veritable address of God for us today, cutting to the heart of the matter of ministry. The Spirit speaks to us through the written word."

L. Dean Hempelmann
Director of Pastoral Education
Board for Pastoral Education
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

***Genetic Testing and Screening: Critical Engagement at the Intersection of Faith and Science.* Edited by Roger A. Willer. Minneapolis: Kirk House Publishers, 1998. 210 pages. $10.00.**

C. S. Lewis wrote: "Each new power won *by* man is a power *over* man as well. Each advance leaves him weaker as well as stronger. In every victory, besides being the general who triumphs, he is also the prisoner who follows the triumphal car" (*The Abolition of Man*, 71). Perhaps the truth of Lewis' observation is nowhere better illustrated than in the realm of genetic technology. The contributors to this volume, all member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), represent the disciplines of theology, genetics, counseling, medicine, and business. Under the sponsorship of their church body's Division for Church and Society, these nine writers seek to inform pastors and laity of the state of genetic research and application as well as provide theological reflection and guidance for pastoral care and decision-making.

Three of the essays introduce the reader to the field of genetic testing. Kevin Powell, a pediatrician, with a doctorate in medical engineering, provides a road map to the scientific discoveries that have emerged since the identification of DNA over a half-century ago. A genetic counselor, Kirstin Finn Schwandt, lays out several case studies from her own practice. "Genetics in the Market Place: A Biotech Perspective" is authored by John Varian, an executive of a biotechnology firm.

Four theologians engage the topic. Philip Hefner sees the genetic "fix" as a challenge to Christian faith and community that can be addressed from the perspective that human beings are "created co-creators." According to Hefner this allows Christians to embrace genetic testing and intervention. Hard decisions will be made, including the decision to abort a genetically defective fetus in some cases. All of this, however, can be embraced within "Christian friendship" that characterizes the church as a "supportive community."

An evolutionary understanding of creation underlies Hefner's article. He writes "We are thoroughly creatures of natural processes, just as surely as are the plants and other animals on our planet. The billions-of-years long process of nature's evolution has made us what we are—it is the means God has employed to create us" (77-78). Similar evolutionary perspectives are found in the essay by Robert Lebel who draws heavily on Teilhard de Chardin.

The feminist theologian Elizaberth Bettenhausen provides a chapter under the title "Genes in Society: Whose Body?" Asserting that our bodies are uniquely "our own," Bettenhausen's arguments focus on issues of inclusiveness and social justice. Completely lacking is any attention to the trinitarian truth that the human body is created, redeemed, and sanctified by God.

Ted Peters' chapter is a forecast of "free market eugenics" (116) where children become commodities. The "perfect child syndrome," Peters worries will lead to a "downpour of selective abortions" (117). While Peters generally argues that care

should be extended to those who have not yet had the opportunity to be born, he does suggest that the principle of *beneficience* might be invoked in some cases where the child would be born into a life of "unbearable suffering" (124).

The most substantial theological work included in this volume comes from Hans Tiefel. Tiefel observes that American individualism has shaped much contemporary Christian thinking on all moral issues-especially bioethical issues. The language of the faith, that is, the vocabulary of the Scriptures, creeds, and liturgy of the church—not the language of the laboratory and clinic ought to shape our discourse on the begetting and care of children. In contrast to the other essays in *Genetic Testing and Screening,* Tiefel 's "Individualism and Faith: Genetic Ethics in Contrasting Perspectives" represents a biblically informed response to the challenges of genetic technology.

A final chapter by retired hospital chaplain, Lawrence Holst, sees the role of the pastor as providing companionship in order to clarify values, commitments and options for those who suffer genetic tragedies. Abortion is held up as one of those options. As Tiefel's chapter was rich in the use of the church's language, by way of contrast, Holst's essay is impoverished by the vocabulary of Paul Tillich and Carl Rogers.

Apart from the essay by Hans Tiefel, the confessional Lutheran pastor will find precious little that is useful for catechesis and pastoral care in this volume. Much more helpful is the profound reflection on these issues by Leon Kass in his book, *Life, Liberty and the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics* (Encounter Books, 2002).

John T. Pless

The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions. **By Bruce M. Metzger. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001. 200 Pages.**

Why did Bruce Metzger publish this book? Interestingly, he never tells us. Perhaps that's one reason why this work lacks a theme. Instead, it reads almost like a dictionary—one Bible version after another, from the Septuagint to Eugene Peterson's *The Message,* each presented with just a little bit of background and characterization before we are off to the next!

Obviously, there's nothing *wrong* with this sort of work and it might make sense as a kind of reference volume—a place to look, for example, if someone mentions the Gothic version of the Scriptures and you want to know a little bit more about it. But this may not be the best place to look. Although Metzger tells us about the Arian bishop Ulfilas and his translation, he does not suggest any additional sources if you want to read more. But a good reference book would do just that.

Occasionally, Metzger provides a footnote that points his reader to more information but this is rare, and it is not clear why he does so only some of the time. For instance, he suggests that readers look to his article in *Theology Today*

(1960) on the Geneva Bible "for a fuller account" than that provided in this work—which is fine. But why no comparable note for the Bishops' Bible or Tyndale's versions from the same period? Even more surprising is the fact that in a section dealing with ancient versions, he fails to mention his own, excellent work, *The Early Versions of the New Testament* (Clarendon Press, 1977). Too often in the work at hand, the reader is left to his own devices if he wants to do additional research.

Another problem with treating *The Bible in Translation* as a reference work is the occasional inaccuracies that one meets. I noted several of them in chapter three, "English Bibles Before the King James Version." For example, in his treatment of the Wycliffite Bible, Metzger says bluntly: "Two complete versions of the Scriptures were produced by his pupils and colleagues, John Purvey and Nicholas Hereford" (57). Although there is some evidence of Hereford's involvement, there is none at all for Purvey. Metzger's statement is the conjecture of an earlier generation, but it has been thoroughly debunked by more recent scholarship (see Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation* [Clarendon Press, 1988], 241-42). Other slips include: Coverdale dedicated his 1535 Bible to the king and not to the "king and queen" (60), William Whittingham was not Calvin's brother-in-law (64), the Great Bible's Psalter was incorporated into the Bishops' Bible in 1572 not 1568 (61), and Gregory Martin was not a Jesuit (67).

Obviously, none of these miscues is all that important, but present as they are in just one chapter, they do raise questions about the reliability of the work as a whole. One hesitates to criticize someone as renowned in biblical scholarship as Bruce Metzger, but this work certainly could have used some careful fact checking before it was published.

In spite of these criticisms, however, I did find many interesting things in the book. After all, Metzger describes and evaluates briefly forty-five English versions as well as the principal ancient versions. Coming from someone who has spent much of his life working on translation projects (he was the chairman of the New RSV translation committee), his comments on the various versions reflect both erudition and experience. His style is clear, and the book is well-organized. So I might very well use *The Bible in Translation* the next time someone refers to Ulfilas's version. I just wouldn't cite it in a term paper.

Cameron MacKenzie

The American Paradox: Spiritual Hunger in an Age of Plenty. **By David G. Myers. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.**

For those who love to ply their sermons with statistics and sound bites about how the spiritual and cultural landscape of America has changed in the past fifty years, this book will prove to be an almost never ending resource of survey results and pointed almost up to date illustrations. Those looking for a more substantive treatment of the subject will be generally disappointed by a book that is big on

observation and short on analysis. It should not take a mountain of statistical data to point out the obvious fact that American culture in general is morally bankrupt.

Myers begins with the assertion that we live in a paradoxical time. Americans have more material goods, more access to education and information, and more equality between the races and the sexes than ever before. At the same time we are facing a culture that is in erosion. Using 1960 as the benchmark he points out rising trends in divorce, teen suicide, violent crime, prison population, single parent families, and cohabitation. The big culprit behind these and other problems facing our culture, according to Myers, is the radical individualism that is at the background of what it has historically meant to be American.

Myers' thesis is that the start of all these problems can be traced to the sexual revolution and the decline of marriage that began in the 1960s. He then links the trends started in the sexual revolution to problems with poverty, children, and violence. Myers also offers chapters on money (it apparently doesn't buy happiness), the media, and education, concluding with a chapter on faith and society.

In the midst of the carnage that the decade of the 60s wrought in our culture, Myers does find hope. He believes that most of the problem trends have crested and are even beginning to reverse. His optimism, however, is somewhat misplaced as it is overly tied to a pre-9/11 view of the world.

> The network news, cabled into my home on one of the dozens of available channels, has recently headlined new peace treaties. Northern Ireland is resolving years of strife. Russians and Americans, Israelites and Palestinians, South African blacks and whites, have taken steps toward a new world order by agreeing to turn more swords into plowshares. Communism is dying. Democracy is thriving. Military budgets are shrinking and bases are closing. Not facing (as I write) wars overseas or riots at home, we get our blood pumping with movie images of dinosaurs, extraterrestrial assaults, mutants, and icebergs (2).

Myers' solution for the problems facing America is "more we think than me think." Myers sees community as the answer. There is nothing wrong with this, but he offers no real solution on how this community is to be created, or what will keep it together. He holds that religion is the catalyst that can help to create this community but for Myers this is not any one religion, only religion in general. People of faith, he points out are more likely to be "we think" people, to volunteer more, and to have a higher moral character. Religion for Myers seems to serve a more pragmatic role in creating the kind of culture he envisions. It is good because it works, not because it is true. In the end Myers leaves the paradox in place and the spiritually hungry unsatisfied

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Eschatology. By Hans Schwarz. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000. xv + 431 pages. Paper.

Hans Schwarz's book, *Eschatology,* pursues the discussion of "the last things" through a maze of competing and conflicting views. The subject of "the end" is presented from the perspectives of science, philosophy, political ideology, and even occultism. It includes such topics as physical death, scientific projections of cosmic collapse, near death experience, and non-Christian concepts of life after death. Schwarz's main goal is to present a solid framework in which to set his discussions about Christian eschatology. His thoroughness, which is certainly a scholarly attribute, at times seems to reach a bit too far and cover too many bases. For instance the section on projected ecological disasters bringing about the end of the world seems a bit out of place. Yet behind Schwarz's many tangents on the "end" theme one can see his desire to set off the uniqueness of Christian eschatology.

The most helpful part of this book for those wanting to explore the variety of Christian presentations on eschatology is the third of his seven chapters. In it Schwarz surveys the contributions of major theologians in the field of eschatology and explores the unique insights each has. Chapter six offers another survey of views, this time of the more controversial eschatological ideas. This chapter delves into different types of millennialism and gives an insightful discussion on *Apokatastasis.* It is obvious throughout that Schwarz is well read and has an outstanding academic grasp on the views of the prominent dogmaticians.

The most disappointing part of this book is the initial two chapters where Schwarz explores the development of eschatological ideas in Israel. These chapters present the author's opinion that the eschatological hope of Israel as found in the Old Testament evolved gradually by borrowing ideas from neighboring religions such as Zoroastrianism (55-60). He does not entertain the argument that other religions might have borrowed from Israel.

Another disappointment is Schwarz's claim that "the promise of and hope for a Messiah emerged fairly late" in the Old Testament (31). He bases this on several dubious assertions such as the belief that Isaiah ("Deutero-Isaiah") was not identifying the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 with an historic Messianic figure (51), and that the "God-provided figure who will usher in the *eschaton* ... seems to have originated from a retrospective glorification of David and from the promise that was given to him through Nathan" (49). Such conjecture over the evolution of Old Testament Messianic and eschatological doctrine finds more common ground with extreme elements of critical research than it does with credible conservative scholarship.

To the credit of Dr. Schwarz, it is clear that his final goal is a pastoral one. His concluding chapter tries to take eschatology out of the realm of academic speculation and into the realm of daily life. He speaks of the Christian understanding of eschatology as one of "proleptic anticipation," wherein the Christian strives to live openly with the hope of the *eschaton.* With such an open

witness of christological faith Schwarz hopes some of the human impediments to the credibility of the Christian message will be removed.

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The Vision of the Pope: A Narrative—A Parable about Christian Identity in an Ecumenical Age. **By Edmund Schlink. Translated by Eugene M. Skibbe. Minneapolis: Kirk House Publishers, 2001. 104 pages. Paperback $12.50.**

The "communion ecclesiology" of Vatican II (Decree on Ecumenism, 1964) has reemerged in recent discussions among Roman Catholics as well as between many ecumenically-oriented Protestant theologians. Communion ecclesiology (and there are several nuanced definitions and distinctions even among those who prefer the idea) emphasizes a relational and sacramental basis for uniting all Christians under "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church." The logic of the argument is simple. By participating in joint worship services, particularly by sharing in a common experience of holy communion, the church is drawn together by God's grace (variously understood and defined) into a unity that transcends doctrinal disagreements and ecclesiastical discord. Schlink's "vision" embodies that concept in a most winsome (and for this reviewer, worrisome) manner.

Imagine the Pope of Rome directing a truly Christ-serving, gospel-centered, church-uniting ecumenical initiative and you will have the broad vision that Edmund Schlink (1903-1984) vividly portrays in this extended novella. His engaging narrative begins with a physically exhausted and emotionally drained Pope who experiences a bewildering vision of a bleeding broken dismembered body of Christ. Through a series of papal self-examinations, political intrigues, and clandestine visitations, the story concludes with a worldwide trans-denominational ecumenical communion celebration on the island of Patmos on the festival of Pentecost.

Marking the progressive change both in the Pope's perception and that of his curia, the central drama of this book draws the reader into an enticing ecumenical mindset of magical proportions. As an official observer of the Vatican II deliberations, Schlink was intimately involved in conversations regarding ecumenism and particularly Christian re-unity with the Roman Catholic Church. Roman Catholic scholars such as Yves Congar and Henri de Lubac had toiled for decades on just such a vision which they believed would engage and draw together the Roman Catholic church with the rest of world Christianity.

One example of this ecumenical worldview comes in Schlink's description of the Pentecost festival event in the final chapter of his parable. He writes: "In the common reception of the body of Christ the assembly *became one body*" [emphasis added]. Furthermore, he delineates what he understood as the principle for unification: "unity, not in uniformity, but in fellowship; the precedence of the

confession of faith in worship over statements based on theoretical reflection" (94). This is not much different than the "communion ecclesiology" espoused by the Dutch Roman Catholic theologian, Edward Schillebeeckx, before Vatican II and practiced and promoted by the World Council of Churches today as "*Koinonia* ecclesiology."

This small book (less than a hundred pages of actual text) is the first English translation of *Die Vision des Papstes*, which was written over twenty-five years ago, yet it still speaks an enticing word today in our ecumenical age and even more provides a way to understand and critique our American ecumenical scene in light of our post-9/11 environment. (The original work was published pseudonymously in 1975 and was republished in 1997 by Hans Thoma Verlag, Karlsruhe, Germany, which is the version translated here.)

Helpful notes are provided at the end of the book, including a glossary of nineteen terms deemed unfamiliar or important for the reader to understand. A "Translator's Note" on the last several pages of the book would have been more helpful as an introduction to the book, which readers might still skip in their readings, since they provide an informative context for the whole composition. The booklet concludes with six "Questions for the Reader," which would have fit better in an introductory section, most beneficially immediately after the Translator's Note. One final editorial criticism is that of the structure of the chapters themselves; the reader immediately enters the narrative with no introductory remarks and the eighteen chapters are of such various lengths that there could have been a more balanced presentation. These concerns are a matter of format more than content, however.

Yet, the book itself is ensnaringly enchanting—in a dangerously deceitful way. Following the emotionally charged progression of the Pope's unexpected and uncharacteristic decisions toward a communion-based union, the reader is drawn into the logic (albeit absent of a biblical and confessional "theo-logic") of ecumenical unity and eventually papal supremacy. One wonders how Schlink's strong systematic and confessional background could have been so tantalized into an ecumenical position which disregards doctrine almost completely, but that is the whole purpose of the project. When an emphasis on outward relationships overcomes the substance of that relationship, dangerous consequences quickly and inevitably follow.

Modern ecumenists will undoubtedly hail this work by Schlink (and Skibbe's excellent translation), but confessional Lutherans should evaluate the propositional posture of unity-in-diversity, as well as the postmodern predisposition toward relationships over rational arguments. A distinct distortion of God's gracious gift in Christ is at the heart of this narrative. Still, this book is worthy of critical study by pastoral conferences throughout our synod.

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The Living Text of the Gospels. **By D. C. Parker. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge Unversity Press, 1997. xv + 224 pages. Paper.**

For many of us the textual apparatus on the bottom of the pages of the Greek New Testament is as indecipherable as hieroglyphics. Even if we cannot plough our ways through the data, its presence confirms that there is no one Greek New Testament. The United Bible Societies and the Nestle-Aland versions are not identical. The textual apparatus tells us that we have not found the original texts. That is Parker's first point. His second one is that we will not find it. At the base of his arguments are the plethora of the ancient documents, which are cataloged as Greek papyri, majuscles, minuscules, and lectionaries. Early translations, patristic citations, and harmonies also play a role. Before the printing press texts were read and remembered and then copied (37-38), variants accidentally or deliberately resulted (2). (Weren't they also dictated?) Deliberate does not mean heretical, since some changes were seen as clarifications. The copyists were influenced by oral tradition and other sources like the other Gospels. Though the *Textus Receptus* enjoyed an official status, its formation "was due to accident, ... based on material on which Erasmus happened to seize when preparing his first edition. It does not invariably present the Byzantine or Majority Text" (129).

To demonstrate that the original texts may not have existed, Parker notes that Shakespeare's play *King Lear* existed in several divergent printings. Further adjustments came with the performance (4-5). A similar situation exists with Melanchthon's various editions of the Augsburg Confession. Helpful analogies cannot be taken as proofs, but perhaps we can agree that the even the first reading of the Gospel may have differed on this or that point from the manuscript from which it was read. William R. Farmer argued that Mark provided the longer ending for his Gospel after he wrote the first version (130), but adjustments to this or that Gospel could have just as likely come from over-zealous copyists. Parker does not mention that by dictating their documents, the biblical authors provided several copies of same document, which could be the origin of the variants. He makes the important point that the transmitters of the texts were more than mere copyists. Chapter nine, "The Last Three Chapters of Luke," presents the theological implications of textual transmission. In another edition, a word could be said about John 1:13. One set of texts using the plural speaks of conversion. Another set offers the singular and provides the one clear reference to the virgin birth in this Gospel.

Uniform transmission of texts came first with the printing press, but it also led to the false impression that hand written manuscripts were also uniform. They were not. In the chapter entitled "From Codes to Disc," Parker notes that today's electronic copies of biblical texts now used on computers resemble the scrolls on which the New Testament was first written. (In fact one function on the computer keyboard is called "scroll.") These electronic biblical scrolls make no mention of what their versions are (194). *The Living Texts of the Gospels* addresses the issue of variants in ancient texts, but the struggle about texts continues in churches and scholars agreeing to the best translations. Each translation carries a bias. With each

of our sermons the tradition of *The Living Texts of the Gospels* continues. Parker provides a stimulating discussion that should inform how we look at those documents which preserve and determine the church's faith. Highly recommended.

David P. Scaer

***Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science and Theology.* By William A. Dembski. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1999. 312 pages. Cloth.**

William Dembski is a leader in the "intelligent design" [ID] movement. In support of ID, his book does three things: develops a program for examining intelligent causation, puts the screws to naturalistic evolution, and explains divine creative activity. Critics of Dembski will accuse him simply of masquerading creationism in new clothing, a garb that he would even dare charade as "scientific."

This is not Dembski's first attempt at outlining such a program. He won critical acclaim for his previous work, published both in journals and in books. Of course, due to the subject matter he also has had severe critics. This book partly responds to such opponents, who while having their objections answered will no doubt continue to object. With earned degrees and accolades in the fields of mathematics, theology, and psychology, one should in any case be foolish simply to label the author as mad scientist or armchair theologian.

This particular volume aids the ID program by illustrating the idea of "specified complexity." The game of Scrabble provides and example. If one saw two tiles lined up together, ME, one could not be sure if they were intentionally arranged: ME is "specified" in order (i.e., recognizable) but it is not yet "complex." Conversely, a grouping of letters such as HZBHWOYQNBUL is complex, but not specified, since it does not obtain a recognizable pattern. Intelligent design, however, involves both complexity and specificity, such as in the following arrangement: HESHOULDBEAPASTOR. Both complex and specified, this intelligible order leads one to conclude that more than chance patterning was at work. In like manner Dembski argues that specified complexity and ID provide some reliable criteria for detecting the origin of species. Yet, as the subtitle of his book indicates, he recognizes his limitations. ID is "modest" in its attempts to explain (247).

Dembski has organized his work in three parts: history, design theory, and bridging science and theology. One might view this progression as historical, systematic, and practical (with exegetical aspects interwoven). This book has something for everyone, if it is not entirely readable by just anyone. Whetting the reader's whistle are Homer Simpson, Moses, Pharaoh, the Philistines, the ark of the covenant, and the resurrection. Rationalists will be engaged by the discussion of miracles, faith, and prayer that accompanies an assessment of Spinoza and Schleiermacher in chapter two. Briefly put: "Religion properly rationalized and purified had no place for sporadic interventions by a capricious deity" (52). Schleiermacher's "impeccable" reasoning, however, is not without fault (63). Hungry readers can later get a taste of computational reductionism,

irreducible complexity, and dysteleology. With eight chapters, endnotes, and a sizeable appendix devoted to answering objections, there is no shortage of grey matter exhibited here. By chapter five, things get pretty heady. The reader will appreciate the comprehensive index and the substantive endnotes, though on the latter point constant flipping to the back of the book is annoying.

This book will seriously engage those who want both to see God in the creative formula and to see how he scientifically lays out the formulas. The author's underlying views cannot avoid spilling over even if he claims that ID is distinct from creation science—a distinction that he must yet make over and against those who accuse him of repackaging creationism in the form of science-speak. Yet he maintains that ID has "no prior religious commitments" and that it does not use the Genesis account as a starting point (247f.). Rather, ID starts with the empirical data found in nature and proceeds to argue for intelligent causation, which is seen in specified complexity.

A second objection he addresses is put forward by those who claim that ID is not science. To wit, if a "designer" should be discussed, this would be tantamount to implying supernatural explanations—whether it be the "Christian" god or some other god is beside the point—and this is not science. But Dembski asserts that ID does not require miracles: ID can be seen in all sorts of everyday, non-miraculous processes. And since he has "no prior commitments to supernaturalism" he may rightly and properly discuss with colleagues whether an intelligent cause has acted within nature (259). This question is separate from asking if an intelligent cause is located *within* or *outside* nature. The skeptic will not be moved by his answers, strong and clever as they may be. ID is hampered by the truth that, as a movement, it points *beyond science* ("metaphysics") toward a brilliant architect of some sort. This may make some readers uneasy.

Other objections appeal to "suboptimal design" or invoke the problem of evil. Such may include, "What sort of God would create a structure like that?" and "Did God then design evil as well?" Dembski recalls his limitations and remains consistent in his line of thought: to ask such questions is to move into philosophy and theology. He says: "The existence of design is distinct from the morality, aesthetics, goodness, optimality, or perfection of design" (262f.).

Dembski must also address the "God of the gaps" argument. Antagonists will argue that relying on ID sidesteps the need for scientific investigation, i.e., one may simply claim a supernatural explanation when a naturalistic one will suffice. But Dembski asserts that in some cases natural explanations will just not suffice. "Not all gaps are created equal," he says (245). And just what is a "natural explanation" anyway? The critic may commonly attempt to shut down an adherent of ID by accusing him of appealing to a "God of the gaps." But since the ID adherent is questioning the critic's very own naturalistic explanations for certain large gaps in development, the critic may have no other countermeasures available in his arsenal.

We may thank William Dembski for his solid, sober, and bold contribution to the discussion of science, philosophy, and apologetics. Attempts to question accepted tenets will attract persecution. Therefore we should not be surprised that he has taken hits for his work, for standing by his convictions, for seeking to uncover the the truth. He was removed from his position at Baylor University for supporting and pursuing ID. This fact in itself might give us good cause to "take and read" Dembski's findings.

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God's Gift To You: A Devotional Book on the Lord's Supper. **By Gaylin R. Schmeling. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2001. 133 pages. Paper. $11.99.**

Gaylin Schmeling is currently the president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary in Mankato, Minnesota, but his nineteen years spent in the parish ministry are evident in this fine devotional book. His goal is to assist communicants properly to prepare for the sacrament and to deepen their appreciation for its many blessings.

Schmeling divides the book into four main parts. The first is a simple review of the Lord's Supper and the Holy Scriptures. The next is a look at the Sacrament with the church year in view. As he focuses on each season, he gives wonderful, simple, and practical applications of various texts to the Lord's Supper. From the season of Lent, under the title, "The Ransom Money for Our Salvation," Schmeling sites Matthew 20:28. In the typical two-page devotion, he ends with the wonderful sentence: "In this Sacrament the Lord has put into our mouths the very ransom price that paid for our sins, namely, his true body and blood" (55). In the devotion, "One Like David, Only Greater," he compares Jesus with David, with this insight: "He crushed the head of the evil one under his feet, as David beheaded the giant" (59). This is very nice imagery and is commonly found in the pages of the book.

The third part of the book offers devotions dealing with our devotional life, applying such texts as Psalm 121, and assuring us that "not only *can* help he us, we have the certainty that he *will* help us" (108). In the fourth and last part, Schmeling gives us some helpful and new prayers for before, during, and after the sacrament.

This volume could serve the parish pastor as a useful tool in making delinquent visits with his members. Schmeling carefully distinguishes law and gospel in each of the forty-one devotions. The pastor might read a devotion aloud to his members in various places, from the hospital bed, to the council meeting, or in the living room with a shut-in.

Schmeling always points us to the source of our forgiveness, Jesus Christ, who is present to forgive and strengthen in the sacrament. The pastor reading this book will find the phrases used in describing the person and work of Christ in the

Sacrament somehow familiar, sometimes new, sometimes repeated, but always a strong emphasis on the real presence.

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Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England. **By David Zaret. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.**

In modern democratic forms of government, "public opinion" matters, but what is it and where does it come from? These are questions that David Zaret answers in his *Origins of Democratic Culture* for England in the seventeenth century. This was a period when parliament developed rapidly as an instrument of government over against the monarchy, and public opinion started to come into its own.

Zaret's work is thorough and convincing, but what makes it especially relevant to readers of this journal is the fact that a central issue regarding which the political nation developed opinions and began to express itself was the shape of religion in England. This was the era of Puritanism, and Puritans wanted a state religion reformed after the models of Scotland and the continent, not the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559. Elizabeth and James I were both recipients of this critique, but it was Charles I who lost his crown and then his head on account of the Puritan revolt.

But how did England arrive at such a state, and why is it that English political forms developed in the direction of representative government during the same period? Zaret's answer is to concentrate on the techniques of communication. Eschewing the great names and their ideas, Zaret argues that the key to understanding these developments is to study the "communicative practices" of "a larger group of speakers, writers, printers, petitioners, publishers, and readers. We must study how individuals talked, argued, sang, wrote, read, and petitioned ... and how this changed, not only in salons and universities, but in alehouses, shops, and churchyards" (4-5).

At the beginning of the period, political communication was not "public" at all. The governing class had a responsibility to govern, and those in the classes below had the obligation to obey. Political discussions and debates were none of their business. But the printing press opened up other possibilities, and Zaret shows how commerce and controversy combined to create a public sphere, powered by printing.

This was most notable in the 1640s—the period of the English Civil War and its aftermath—when Royalists and Parliamentarians, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists used printing to reach the people, whose leaders then began to use public opinion to influence the government. But the groundwork had been laid

in the previous decades when critics of established religion used printed texts to fuel their criticism by appealing to readers to make judgments for themselves on the basis of what they could read for themselves about the issues. Through printing, Puritans were able to provide the people with textual sources that gave them reasons and evidence for deciding issues in the religious debates instead of simply accepting what the authorities said (165).

Of course, there was a great deal more to this period than religion, and there is a great deal more to Zaret's book than this brief summary. Furthermore, a work like this will not be to everyone's taste. A perfect example of social history, it is short on narrative and long on detail. But in an age when new technology is rapidly changing the way we communicate, *Origins of Democratic Culture* reminds us that in a previous period, such changes included not only how much was said but what and why it was said as well. Churches committed to an "unchanging gospel" are wise to keep this in mind.

Cameron A. MacKenzie

Servant of the Word: The Life and Ministry of C. F. W. Walther. **By August R. Suelflow. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000.**

It has been said that history is essential to identity. Who we are has a lot to do with who we were. In the case of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod this is especially true as we seem to be in the midst of a crisis of identity. We argue about who we should be in large part because we do not know who we were. Some of this may be due in part with our ongoing inability to engage our past in a critical and meaningful way. Nowhere is this truer than in the debates surrounding the legacy and continuing authority of C. F. W. Walther. In the midst of competing views on theology and practice in our synod, this would seem to be an area for some definitive scholarly work to be done.

Unfortunately, *Servant of the Word* does not fully take advantage of the opportunity. This book is a largely friendly treatment of Synod's first president. Suelflow's stated goal is in "depicting Walther as a human being who lived in mid-America at a time when ... Lutherans in America were becoming more aware of their distinctive theology and their life in mission." (8) In addition to Walther the man, he also wants to focus on the institutions founded by Walther.

The way in which Suelflow attempts to meet his goal makes for a biography where readers not well versed with LCMS history could quickly become lost in a myriad of undefined terms and references to events that have not been introduced into the narrative. The chapters seem to function more like independent essays which are more topical than chronological. That the author knows his subject well is beyond question. The structure and flow of the book, however, might have been improved. Suelflow's premature death, before he had completed the manuscript, may explain this.

The Walther that does emerge is a remarkable man who simultaneously acted as administrator, professor, pastor, and family man. Unfortunately, he is rarely critically engaged, his motives remain unquestioned, and his theology largely unexamined. As helpful as this volume is in introducing Walther to its readers, we are still in need of a responsible, critical study of the man, his life, and his impact on The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

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***Robert Grosseteste.* By James McEvoy. Great Medieval Thinkers Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. 219 pages.**

One of the greatest medieval thinkers, yet one of the least familiar, is Robert Grosseteste (1168-1253). Born to Anglo-Norman parents, Grosseteste became one of the most influential Englishmen of his age—a creative mathematician, an inquisitive scientist, a competent academic administrator, a profound philosopher, a committed churchman, and a biblical theologian—he served as chancellor of Oxford University, bishop of Lincoln, and a leader in the First Council of Lyons.

Universities were just beginning to develop during Grosseteste's lifetime. Yet, the quiet rise of scholarship at the schools of Oxford is most ably reported by Father James McEvoy, Dean of the Philosophy Faculty at the National University of Ireland and the Pontifical University in Maynooth, Ireland. The remarkable fame of Oxford occurred several years after Grosseteste attended and lectured there (after 1214), but McEvoy describes the prestigious scholars who served before Grosseteste.

Scholars interested in medieval thinkers and education, theologians interested in Roman Catholic philosophical theology, and historians wishing to catch a glimpse of pre-modern life in burgeoning England and English education will appreciate this detailed work of biographical scholarship. The lives and contributions of such unfamiliar, yet remarkable men as Theobald of Etampes, Robert Pullen, Gerald of Wales, William de Monte, Alexander Nequam, John Blund, and St. Edmund of Abingdon are described in some modest detail. Other Oxford dons are also given several pages of note, Adam Marsh, Thomas of York, Richard Fishacre, and Richard Rufus.

Anonymity is a characteristic of many medieval figures. This is particularly true of Grosseteste's early years. Actually, the first sixty years of his life are concentrated into a single chapter by McEvoy, not by neglect but because of lack of sources. Although Grosseteste was a deacon for much of his early years of service, he still taught theology, preached, and served officially in the church until he was finally elected bishop in 1235 as a compromise candidate, serving the largest diocese in England until his death.

Noting the contributions of Grosseteste, McEvoy devotes almost a quarter of the book to his influence at the Council of Lyons as well as his philosophical and scientific, exegetical and linguistic, and pastoral activities. He notes that Grosseteste's "motivation for inquiry undoubtedly lay in his religious faith" (80). In addition, the influence of the mendicant orders on Grosseteste, especially the Franciscans, is given in two complete chapters of this book.

McEvoy has provided this outstanding tribute to Robert Grosseteste as a labor of love. As he acknowledged, "I could never have suspected, when I first took up the study of his writings, the extent to which his influence would insinuate itself, discreetly but progressively, into my own life as teacher, research, traveler, and priest. In a word, I have been infiltrated by him in the dimension of the spirit" (xvii).

Obviously, for Lutheran pastors and theologians, the theological dimensions of this biography are imperative for this review. Most noteworthy are the insights into pastoral care, an extremely important activity for Grosseteste as bishop of Lincoln. He believed bishops carried "direct, personal responsibility before God for every soul in his diocese" (47). He thought of theology as "essentially a preparation for the apostolic ministry, and in particular for preachingY[and] learning should be placed at the service of evangelization" (55).

Biblical scholars will appreciate the detailed study carried on by Grosseteste as an exegete. Pastoral training was biblical training, as far as Grosseteste was concerned. The Gospels and Epistles were the tools of the trade. He prepared commentaries on Galatians (emphasizing Christian liberty) and the Psalms (christologically understood). In addition, his lectures on Genesis, the Decalogue, and the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 52:13-53:12, along with prophetic studies of Daniel 9, are still extant. Following a literal sense, he explored several other applications of the biblical texts, yet did not fall into the later medieval requirement of expounding four or more senses. However, in spite of his careful and christological biblical studies, Grosseteste was most celebrated by those who followed him for his translation from Greek of Aristotle's *Ethics* and two books from the period of the apostolic fathers.

Luther, we are aware, was not the first reformer. Interestingly, Grosseteste is sometimes identified as a proto-reformer (*"ein Vorgänger der Reformation"*). McEvoy addresses several nineteenth-century arguments that used Grosseteste's antipapal remarks and the glowing admiration he later received from Wycliffe to establish such a role. Yet, McEvoy suggests that for all his criticism of papal abuse, Grosseteste was still a faithful Catholic bishop, supportive of the church and its leadership.

Evaluating this book is not easy. There is so much contained in it, yet much of it still tentative. Perhaps that is its weakest point. McEvoy, in seeking to be fair, continues to draw back on making conclusive statements, and instead invites readers to join him in discovering more details and perspectives of this great

medieval mind. He provides three enticing and engaging entries of Grosseteste's writings as appendixes—a sermon on Galatians 5:24, a section of his commentary on Galatians 4-6, and an essay "On Educative Love." More of this material or references to sources in English could have been provided the interested reader.

Yet, in spite of these few minor inadequacies (including a rather small type font), McEvoy's deep admiration of Grosseteste is recognizable from the first pages of this insightful biography to his concluding comments. McEvoy's contribution to medieval scholarship will be treasured among English-speaking academics and theologically attuned pastors for years to come.

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***Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel.* By Seyoon Kim. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. 336 pages.**

Reading Seyoon Kim's *Paul and the New Perspective* is like walking into the middle of a long argument. Kim's interlocutor, and in this case nemesis, is James Dunn, the father of the "New Perspective." Dunn, drawing upon the work of E.P. Sanders, argues that Paul's understanding of justification and the law has long been misunderstood. According to Dunn, the early Paul persecuted Hellenistic Jewish Christians not because they preached Christ crucified, but because they advocated a Christianity that did not practice Old Testament rituals such as circumcision. Paul's conversion, as such, was not that he began to confess Christ as God's true Son, but that he now understood that gentiles could become the people of God apart from the works of the ceremonial law. To put it another way, the Damascus event was for Paul a commission to the gentiles rather than a conversion to Christ. According to the New Perspective, Paul formulated his distinctive doctrine of justification only later in his apostolic ministry as an answer to those who charged that gentiles could not become God's people apart from the observance of the ceremonial law. As such, the doctrine of justification was more a tactical maneuver than the center of Paul's theology. Thus, when Paul claims that one is justified "apart from the works of the law," he means that one can become a member of God's covenant people apart from such distinctive Jewish practices as circumcision, sabbath observance, and other aspects of Levitical law. Dunn's argument, if it were to win the day, would substantially undermine the exegetical foundation for Luther's doctrine of justification, and, as such, it no mere academic matter.

In response to Dunn's *New Perspective,* Kim offers a sturdy defense of a more traditional reading of Paul. He demonstrates, for instance, that Paul's doctrine of justification was already substantially developed by the time he wrote the earliest of his epistles, 1 Thessalonians. He also argues persuasively that the Damascus event was truly a conversion experience by which he came to understand in an existential manner, that salvation is by grace alone, apart from good works of any

kind, whether ceremonial or moral. More provocatively, Kim argues extensively that not only did the Damascus event change Paul's mind and heart, but that it also provided much of the theological material from which he formed his theology. Kim sees in the Damascus christophany the theological revelation of Christ as the Last Adam and Son of Man, themes that Paul developed extensively in his epistles. He also points readers to the Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition, and argues that Paul's εἰκών theology originated largely from his Damascus experience. Though it seems to this reader that Dunn's reading of the Damascus experience may be overreaching, his suggestions are intriguing.

Finally, in a chapter that should prove quite useful as reference tool, Kim argues that Paul's theology also depends upon the Jesus tradition itself. Helpfully, Kim catalogues "Certain or probable" references to the Jesus tradition, as well as "Possible Echoes of Sayings of Jesus."

By doing so, Kim shows a real continuity between the preaching of Paul and the life of Christ. This chapter, I think, merits further attention. We might go further and ask which of the gospels did Paul use and know? We might further ask whether the teachings of Jesus' earthly ministry did not in fact have more influence upon him than, for instance, the Damascus experience.

In sum, this book may strike the reader as a bit defensive, and at times tedious in its style, and relentless in its rehashing of personal disputes. However, those who uphold a more traditional understanding of Paul and his doctrine of justification owe Kim a debt of thanks.

Peter J. Scaer

The Power of God: Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology. **By Michel René Barnes. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001. 368 Pages. $64.95.**

In his short work *On the Holy Trinity*, Gregory of Nyssa, the youngest of the Cappodocian fathers, summarizes his trinitarian faith not with the familiar orthodox formula of "three Persons, one essence," but with the formula "three Persons, one Goodness, one Power, one Godhead." In this well researched and clearly written monograph, Michel Barnes explores why language such as "one Power" could and did express Gregory's pro-Nicene faith. Many reasons, explains Barnes, account for Gregory's use of the term *power* (δύναμις): it was a scripturally based word, authoritative in the tradition, given content and nuance by philosophy, and by the early 380s enjoyed a rich history in trinitarian discourse. Although Gregory's reasons for using the term *power* in a trinitarian formula are easily identifiable, the explanation of why the phrase "one Power" expressed so well the Nicene doctrine of "one essence" may not seem as obvious to us today. The first goal of Barnes' study, then, is to recover the technical philosophical sense of the term *power*.

In chapter one, we learn that the "technical" sense of *power*, as Barnes calls it, dates to the fourth century B.C. and the medical writers of the Hippocratic school. For them, *power* meant the affective capacity of something that materially exists. In chapter two, we learn how Plato freed the term *power* from Hippocratic materialism by applying it to the immaterial realm, e.g., understanding the power of the Good as transcendent cause (*Republic* 509 B). Barnes' efforts in these two detailed chapters mark a significant contribution to patristic studies as he demonstrates the medical influence on Plato's thought and its impact on patristic trinitarian theology.

After recovering and making clear the philosophical sense of *power*, Barnes turns, in chapter three, to the varied uses of power language in the trinitarian literature of Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Origen. In chapter four, he demonstrates how the existence of these different trinitarian power doctrines assumed a traditional and authoritative role for the pro-Nicene and neo-Arian theologians of the mid-fourth century. The technical philosophical sense of power appealed to the pro-Nicene theologians because it appropriately described God as Trinity. By using the philosophical sense of *power*, Gregory of Nyssa and the other pro-Nicenes, like Hilary of Poitiers and Ambrose of Milan, argued that to have one and the same power is to have one and the same nature—a connatural power.

An alternative understanding of power and the relationship between the Father and the Son emerged in the thought of Eunomius of Cyzicus. In chapter five, Barnes explains why Eunomius' materialist understanding of *ousia*-based language led him to reject any notion of connatural power. In order to preserve his claim that God's essence is ingenerate (ἀγέννετος), he argued that the Father and the Son have one and the same power insofar as they have one and the same intention when they act. For Eunomius, the moral unity existing between the Father and the Son occurs not at the level of nature but at the level of energy (ἐνέργεια) and work (ἔργον). As such, the capacity to create (God's productive capacity), is not an essential attribute of God's nature but is an act of the will. (God's will for Eunomius has a separate existence in time from his essence). The power, then, shared by the Father and the Son is a delegated power and does not indicate a common nature.

In the final two chapters, Barnes explains in detail Gregory's rejection of Eunomius' subordinationist theology. Gregory argues that the Son's capacity to create reveals the common *power* and thus the common nature the Son shares with the Father. The pro-Nicene argument here is that the *power* to create is indicative of divinity (Rom. 1:20, Heb. 1:2-3). To have the power to create is to be God for only God can create. Therefore, for Gregory and the other pro-Nicenes, if the Father and the Son manifest the same *power*, then they must also share the same *nature*. For the pro-Nicenes, 1 Corinthians 1:24 and John 5:19 form the scriptural basis for this technical sense of *power*.

In the end, the fourth-century argument can be simplistically reduced to the question: Does God by nature stand apart from his creation or does God by nature

engage his creation? For Gregory and the other pro-Nicenes, God is a God who acts. By understanding the Son as the "power of God," Gregory argues that anything done by the Son is also done by God the Father. Common power indicates common nature. Therefore, Gregory's formula "three Persons, one Goodness, one Power, one Godhead," works within the cultural-philosophical idiom of the fourth century to express and secure the scriptural witness that the Son is God in the same way the Father is God.

Michel Barnes' study carefully and thoroughly outlines the philosophical development of the term *power* and its important role in patristic trinitarian discourse. For anyone wishing to understand the complexities of these debates and specifically how the term *power* was used to articulate the scriptural witness of God's productive capacity and the divinity of the Son, Barnes' study is a must read.

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***Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible.* Edited by James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson. Grand Rapids and Cambridge (U.K.): William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003. 1629 Pages. Hardcover. $75.00.**

This one-volume biblical commentary is successful in something very few books written by scholars ever accomplish: covering a lot of ground in relatively few pages. In a time when we are getting accustomed to multi-volume commentaries on a single canonical document, it is refreshing to read the crisp distillations of the meaning of the biblical text found here. The editors tapped numerous biblical scholars to write commentary on each document in the Protestant canon as well as the books of the Old Testament Apocrypha. This volume also features several introductory articles on the various collections of biblical and non-canonical literature. It is surprising to find thirty-six pages devoted to *1 Enoch,* in spite of its importance, in a commentary on "the Bible." Like the editors, the majority of the contributors are from the United Kingdom, although the United States is well represented. Many are known experts in a particular biblical document; a few in the mix are newer voices. The exegetical method obviously varies with individual contributors, but narrative and social science approaches are widely used alongside traditional historical criticism. The pages are free of footnotes, yet helpful bibliographies are found at the conclusion of each entry. This commentary delivers representative scholarly biblical exegesis in a form that can be easily purchased and digested by the wider educated public.

Charles A. Gieschen

***1 & 2 Kings.* By Volkmar Fritz. Translated by Anselm Hagedorn. A Continental Commentary. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003. xiv + 448 pages.**

Volkmar Fritz's commentary is not overly verbose or burdened with a massive apparatus of footnotes. The English version of the biblical text uses the NRSV

(adaptations are made when the author's translation differs significantly from the NRSV). The translation of a text (or literary unit) usually is followed by a brief paragraph on the passage as a whole. After this paragraph comes a verse-by-verse commentary (often the verses are dealt with in groups).

One major concern of Fritz is to explain, as he sees them, the literary processes that lay behind the individual passages. In this analysis he maintains a classic historical-critical stance. The reader will note how Fritz in various parts of his commentary explains that there was an earlier, and a later version of the same story; how a narrative had one function originally, but that it took on another function with its position in *Kings*; and how there are numerous secondary, redactional additions to the text.

In line with this stance, Fritz holds to the evolutionary development of religion, as when he writes that Naaman's confession that Yahweh is the only God in all the earth (2 Kgs. 5:15) is a confession that could have "developed only in the exilic and postexilic period" (260). Also, he regards much of *Kings* as legend or literary fiction: for example, the story of Solomon's succession to David (1 Kgs. 1:1–2:46), the account of the theophany at Gibeon (1 Kgs. 3:4-15), and, of course, the report of God's miraculous delivery of Jerusalem (2 Kgs. 19:35), which is a "hyperbole" (369). Fritz states explicitly that Isaiah's prediction of the Babylonian conquest of Judah (2 Kgs. 20:16-18) is a *vaticinium ex eventu*, that is, a "prediction" of an event that has already taken place (383). This narrative, therefore, is "of no historical value, even if the figure of Merodach-baladan is historically attested" (383-384). One is not surprised that Fritz's treatment of the elevation of Jehoiachin in Babylon (2 Kgs. 25:27-30) lacks any reference to the Messianic import of these verses, understanding the passage only as a concluding "note of hopefulness" (425) that the Davidic dynasty would continue.

Once past the historical-critical analysis of a passage, Fritz does have some beneficial insights into the text. In addition, he provides necessary historical information and makes appropriate references to the comparative literature of the ancient Near East. Further, he helpfully identifies biblical place-names with modern locations. Fritz's archaeological activity as the director of the German Evangelical Institute of the Holy Land has influenced his approach in the commentary. However, this reviewer was surprised by, and disagrees with, Fritz's assertion that child sacrifice was not practiced in the Phoenician culture, not even in the Punic settlements (340, 407).

Fritz correctly maintains that in *Kings* the guiding principle for the evaluation of the kings of the Divided Monarchy is how they related to official worship practices established by divine law. This included their view toward the Jerusalem temple, the central sanctuary (Deut. 12:1-14) where Yahweh chose to be worshiped. Fritz writes: "As the temple is the only proper place of worship, so is the worship of Yahweh alone the only right attitude in the question of gods. With the recognition of Yahweh as the only God all polytheistic practices are excluded" (1). With regard to this standpoint of *Kings*, he concludes, "The faith in the one and only God is the

only measurement for the kings and people" (1). That is a good summary of a key theme of *Kings*.

Walter A. Maier III

***Leviticus*. By John W. Kleinig. Concordia Commentary. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003. 610 pages.**

The large-scale neglect of Leviticus in the lectionaries, Bible studies, and homilies of the church today is symptomatic of deeper ailments afflicting many congregations and synods. Chief among these is an attitude toward matters ritual and sacramental that ranges from yawning indifference to jaded rejection. Books such as Leviticus, far too often, are bypassed as waterless pits incapable of quenching the spiritual thirst of modern church-goers. Such an appraisal, however, reveals a gross miscomprehension of the meaning of this book, its christological and sacramental underpinning, and thus its gospel proclamation to ancient Israelites as well as to modern believers.

A commentary such as this one by John Kleinig ought therefore to be loudly applauded as a giant leap forward in recapturing Leviticus as a book of the church and for the church. A pastor and professor of the Lutheran Church of Australia, Kleinig presents a reading of Leviticus that is christological, ecclesiological, and typological. The liturgy and ritual of sacrifice, the tabernacle, the priesthood—all these find their telos in the incarnation, sacrifice, and continual divine service of Jesus in the church. The ritual elements of Leviticus, the very heartbeat of the liturgical life of Israel, reveal the divine pattern of how the Lord continues to impart his saving gifts in the rituals and liturgies of today. Kleinig highlights and explains the oft-misunderstood categories of clean and unclean, holy and common, as well as their theological applications to the individual Christian and the church. One of the greatest contributions of the commentary is his focus on what it means for God to be holy and to make his people holy. How God communicates his holiness in Leviticus has direct application to the means by which the holiness of Christ is communicated today.

As with the other volumes in the Concordia Commentary series, Leviticus includes a fresh translation of the biblical book, accompanied by textual notes, followed by a theological commentary that expounds and applies the biblical text to the life of the church. Because it supplies the necessary interpretive tools by which to mine the wealth of Leviticus, the introduction alone is worth twice the price of the book. Scattered throughout the volume are numerous helpful charts and figures, most notably those that elucidate the types of sacrifices, their purposes, and the liturgy in which they were offered.

It is difficult to overestimate the value of this volume's contribution to a proper apprehension and application of Leviticus. Speaking of the Old Testament priesthood, sacrifice, and other Levitical matters, Luther wrote: "If you would interpret well and confidently, set Christ before you, for he is the man to whom all

of it applies, every bit of it," (*LW* 35:247). This volume does just that—it sets Christ before the reader, pointing to him as the Holy One, Priest, Tabernacle, and Sacrifice foreshadowed yet also present in the Gospel of Leviticus.

דרבּ לְ דאהצ

Chad L. Bird

Christians in Society: Luther, the Bible, and Social Ethics. **By William H. Lazareth. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001. xii+274pp. $22.00**

For over forty years, William H. Lazareth has been writing about Luther's social ethics. In this work, the former Director of the Faith and Order Secretariat in the World Council of Churches and former ELCA bishop of New York has summarized "a lifetime of Luther research that continues to provide christocentric guidance for the church's life and mission" (xii). The result is a stimulating analysis of Luther's thought on the Christian and his social environment that also tries to show Luther's ongoing relevance to the church today.

After an introductory part one, which includes both the obligatory survey of previous scholarship and a presentation of how Luther's understanding of the Scriptures shaped his understanding of ethics, the rest of the book shows how Luther's social thought derives from his fundamental convictions regarding the situation of man before God. In part two, Lazareth describes Luther's universe as a battleground between God and his grace on the one side and sin and Satan on the other. In part three, he presents the twofold rule of God over this universe and against Satan through Christ and temporal authorities. Through the intersecting functions of law and gospel for Christian salvation and service, God in Christ both redeems and preserves his creation. God not only justifies sinners, he also sanctifies them for life in society.

Thus, one of Lazareth's principal concerns is to avoid a reductionist approach to Luther whereby he sings only one song, the gospel, and so abandons the world to the devil. Instead, Lazareth argues convincingly that in his battles "against the license of Protestant sectarians that followed his initial conflict against the legalism of Romans semi-pelagians" (86), Luther developed the idea of God's *twofold* rule through government (and other social structures) and Christ for earthly life as well as eternal salvation. In this way, Lazareth contends, Luther was able to avoid "the activism of those zealots who would publicly identify the church and the world ... and the quietism of those pacifists who would privately divorce them" (140). Sanctification follows justification but is never separate from it.

Lazareth also points out that according to Luther, not only Christians but non-Christians too can do things that are good for society. Thus, the law has not only a theological function (to reveal sin) but also a political function: "The preservation of society, despite prevailing sin, through the public struggles for order, freedom, and justice" (137). Although the law has no power to reorient sinful hearts to a gracious God, sinners sometimes do the right things for the wrong reason. This

means then for Lazareth (if not precisely for Luther) that both Christians and non-Christians, the former motivated by the gospel and the latter by the law, can work together for a just society: "For Christ's sake and in Christ's name, Christians are called and empowered by the Holy Spirit to pray and work joyfully in critical cooperation with all persons of good will as God's coworkers in society" (234).

Although this work demonstrates Lazareth's wide familiarity with Luther's work and includes much that one can learn about the Reformer's thought, there are a few points that I found annoying. One of these is Lazareth's crusade against the "third use of the law" (Formula of Concord, Art. 6). It is certainly correct that Luther did not use this terminology (at least most of the time but see Scott Murray, *Law, Life and the Living God* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001], 27). But how then does one explain all of those passages in which Luther lays out the obligations of the Christian life? As he has in earlier works, Lazareth, instead of categorizing them as law (*Gesetz*), calls them "commandment" (*Gebot*), and by this distinction intends to emphasize the unique motive for a Christian's doing God's will, viz., love. The "law" always accuses; but transformed by the Spirit, a believer willingly carries out the double commandment of love toward God and his neighbor.

For the most part, Lazareth does not use this distinction to avoid identifying the content of Christian ethics with God's law. He eschews license as well as legalism. However, by refusing to talk about the third use of the law in Christian ethics, he arrives at a *second* use of the gospel, the parenetic use, i.e., the gospel as motivation for good works (199). But to talk about a second use of the gospel (also not to be found in Luther) runs the risk of turning gospel into law. Better to stay with Lutheran (if not Luther's) terminology.

Of course, part of the objection to "third use" terminology is its association with the Reformed. For Calvin, the third use was the chief use. The real irony of Lazareth's work, however, is that after thoroughly rejecting the "third use" in the Formula of Concord, he practically has to readmit it on account of the ELCA's establishing full communion with the Reformed! Citing the "dual commitment" of today's Lutherans and Reformed to "reconciled diversity in a more charitable and accommodating ecumenical age," Lazareth contends that their "full communion" is defensible in theological ethics because "Luther and Calvin, along with Melanchthon and Martin Bucer, do all finally unite together in endorsing a biblical ethic of norms based on a theology of grace" (244-45).

Lazareth's assault on the third use of the law is rather prominent in this work. Less so but still annoying is his occasional obeisance to political correctness. For Lazareth, however much he admires Luther's fundamental insights, stands ready to reject the content of Luther's ethic when it conflicts with contemporary mores. So, for example, he disputes the propriety of Luther's urging wives to obey their husbands but proposes a departure from Luther (and Paul!) when it comes to social justice for certain groups, including "gay and lesbian persons" (222-23). Although

remarks like these are not prominent in this work, I for one can do without such casual endorsements of sexual immorality.

Also irritating are Lazareth's affirmations of a higher critical approach to Scriptures over against Luther, e.g., "it is impossible for current Christians to accept many of Luther's sixteenth-century exegetical methods and historical interpretations" (32; cf. also 39-40, 59, 103, 223-24, 236). Even though Lazareth's view of the Bible is not especially significant for his understanding of Luther, Luther's view of the Bible *is* significant for Luther's understanding of Christian ethics. One wonders how long Luther's theology can stand when one severs it from Luther's (precritical) approach to the Scriptures that undergirds it.

Unfortunately, such irritants are all too common in today's scholarly literature, and in this respect Lazareth's work is unexceptional. What is exceptional and therefore what makes this book worth reading in spite of its flaws is Lazareth's treatment of Luther's thought. Not only does he understand Luther in general, he also demonstrates familiarity with many individual works of Luther and treats them in a way that respects their historical contexts. Although Luther never wrote a systematic theology of ethics, Lazareth has created one for him that in most respects is right on target.

Cameron A. MacKenzie

***Our Suffering Savior: Exegetical Studies and Sermons for Ash Wednesday through Easter.* By Christopher W. Mitchell. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003. 158 pages.**

We live in a world where the Scriptures have been taken out of the sanctuary and imprisoned in the classroom. Modern exegetes treat sacred texts as if they are ancient artifacts testifying to a dead past. As a result, a text's meaning is limited to the secret intent of the original author and to the historical context of his cultural milieu. The inaccessibility of the author's original intent and cultural context gives the academic world freedom to speculate, criticize, and undermine the integrity of the prophetic and apostolic writings. Modern scholastics fancy themselves archeologists charged with the task of dissecting the scriptures to uncover the secrets of ancient civilizations.

The value of Christopher Mitchell's new book, *Our Suffering Savior,* is its thoroughly christological, sacramental, and ecclesial exegesis. Mitchell's short monograph studies Isaiah 52:13-53:12 for the sake of the church. He arranges this volume so that his exegetical studies are fulfilled in the pastor's sermon. For Mitchell, the true home of the scriptures is the sanctuary where its intended target is not the skeptical mind of the modern scholar, but the believing heart of the faithful. The sacred text is not merely an ancient artifact testifying to a distant past, but the living and creating word of God that inspires the church of the present and renews a dying world.

Mitchell's study invites pastors to use Isaiah's suffering servant song as a Lenten sermon series. He divides the text of Isaiah so that it can be used for Ash Wednesday, five Lenten midweek services, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. While some pastors may find that this series stretches Isaiah's song too thinly, it works. Indeed, this structure allows him to consider Isaiah's prophecy in great detail and to mine the text of several hidden exegetical treasures.

The book opens with a valuable introduction in which he places Isaiah 52-53 in the context of Isaiah as a whole. In addition, he recounts the variety of interpretations offered by scholars and establishes the basis for his own christological interpretation on which his entire exposition is built. Each section begins with Mitchell's insightful exegesis, which is organized around certain textual themes. Unfortunately, many of his most valuable insights are more difficult to discover because they are inconveniently placed in endnotes. Following his exegetical notes, Mitchell concludes each section with a short homily. While I am not a fan of preaching the words of others, Mitchell's homilies are certainly worthwhile offering many theological and rhetorical ideas that pastors can employ for their own purposes.

Christopher Mitchell's exegetical insight, christological conviction, and ecclesial purpose make *Our Suffering Savior* a helpful tool for pastors preparing for Lent or for laymen seeking substantive material for their own meditation. Mitchell's work should be received with much thanksgiving and with expectations of more to come.

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***One Gospel from Two: Mark's Use of Matthew and Luke.* Edited by David B. Peabody, Lamar Cope, and Allan J. McNicol. Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2002.**

The theory that Matthew and Luke were composed using the Gospel of Mark and "*Q*," a.k.a., the "Two Document Hypothesis," has long been assumed by a majority of scholars and clergy. Even if *Q* speculations are not accepted, Markan priority usually is. For most of the twentieth century those holding Matthean priority were often relegated to voices in the wilderness amongst New Testament scholars, though not all of their claims were considered illegitimate. In fact, for the past fifty years historical and literary evidence for Matthean priority has silently been on the increase. Lacking was a unified, up-to-date, and thorough treatment. Enter the recently formed Research Team of the International Institute for Renewal in Gospel Studies. Based on elaborate research this group of scholars proposes that the predominantly accepted Mark-to-Matthew-and-Luke model be inverted and *Q* be cut off. They argue that Mark used Matthew and Luke as the primary sources in composing his Gospel. This is dubbed the "Two *Gospel* Hypothesis." This volume explains and applies this thesis.

The basic idea of the Two Gospel Hypothesis is really not new. There is even strong evidence that Augustine believed Mark used Matthew and Luke (54). Over the past 200 years the basic model of the "Two Gospel Hypothesis" has been known as the "Greisbach Hypothesis," though dwarfed in acceptance by the Two Document Hypothesis and others. Much of the information Johann Greisbach popularized has indeed been useful in recent studies, but the Research Team has given cause for a new name for the same basic theory. Tools, charts, new discoveries, and over two centuries of scholarly discussion have prompted revision in many points. Particularly taken into account in this effort are findings from source, literary, and redaction criticism.

Besides these findings and increasingly stronger arguments for Matthean priority, a third factor allowing for this hypothesis is the recently more pronounced difficulties with the Two Document Hypothesis. Many of these difficulties have actually been present since that hypothesis' inception, such as explanations for Mark's lacking of the Sermon on the Mount and other key pericopes, words, and phrases found in Matthew and Luke. To compensate for such discrepancies modern variations of the Two Document Hypothesis called for apocryphal *Q* documents (e.g., *Q*1, *Q*2, etc.) as sources for the Synoptic Gospels. However, as such sources became more complicated and imaginative, so were they more difficult to believe.

While skepticism of the Two Document Hypothesis was growing scholars such as Dom J. D. Orchard, David Dungan, David Peabody, William Farmer, C.S. Mann, and Basil C. Butler worked to defeat it with countering hypotheses. Major ground was broken in 1996 with the Research Team's publication of *Beyond the Q Impasse: Luke's use of Matthew*. Here flawed assumptions in the "*Q* Hypothesis" were rigorously exposed and the necessity of *Q*'s existence rejected. The next step, though, was developing the Two Gospel Hypothesis—that not only was Matthew first and used by Luke, but Matthew and Luke were used by Mark. Essays advocating this view were delivered to the Society of Biblical Literature, among other institutions, through the 1980s and 90s, but arguments were not thoroughly developed.

In order to establish the Two Gospel Hypothesis two basic assumptions had to be established. First, the Gospels were based more on written tradition than oral. If oral transmission was more likely, the Gospels would have been constructed more independently. However, it is now more widely agreed that communities documented the Gospels and passed along "traditions" in this way, with only a few Gospels having remained useful and authoritative. Second, the premise that Luke knew Matthew is critical. If this were not true, various theories calling for Markan priority have an advantage, mainly because certain pericopes in Mark appear dependent on Luke and not Matthew. Since these two assumptions have proved defensible in recent scholarship, the Research Team was then able to apply additional research on conflation in ancient documents (92ff), i.e., how ancient works would blend two or more source documents in being composed, to ground their argument.

The Research Team notices certain patterns in Mark's probable use of Matthew and Luke as they examine the Synoptics. They distinguish six: 1) In the order of pericopes Mark alternates between Matthew and Luke, with exceptions, when Mark does not agree with Matthew and Luke or where he is unique; 2) In wording within given pericopes Mark alternates between Matthew and Luke; 3) Words and phrases characteristic of Matthew or Luke appear at least twice as often in the same pericope in Mark than characteristically Markan words in Matthew and Luke; 4) Repeated words and phrases characteristic and distinctive of Mark have a literary, historical, theological, and ethical consistency; 5) Mark obscures Matthew's organized structure (which the editors believe are Mark's revisions); 6) Evidence external to the Synoptic texts supports the internal evidence according to the above patterns.

Two particular strengths of this theory and book that opposing theories cannot claim are uses of patristic references (6) and the demonstration of that the authors term the "Markan Overlay" (4). The editors thoroughly display how consistent this overlay is throughout the Gospel, and how Markan conflation [points 1), 2), and 3) above] of Matthew and Luke supports it. Special words for Mark, for example, include "again" (an important structural word for Mark), "teacher," "gospel," "the word," "see," "hear," "understand," "baptism," and "the way." Other hypotheses could also discern these words to be Markan, but the editors of this volume convincingly demonstrate how facets of structure, content, pattern, theme, and theory distinctively match for this Gospel, and agree with external evidence.

Where Matthew and Luke disagree in contents, important phrases, and length, Mark has two basic strategies. He either carefully conflates what is deemed necessary, or he reduces the account to a brief summary if not eliminating it altogether. Such is the case in the account of Jesus' Baptism in the first chapter. When he seemingly omits important pieces they are sometimes dispersed throughout the rest of the Gospel, as in the case of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew). On the other hand, when Matthew or Luke contain material not in Mark, it is assumed this material is not necessary for Mark's purpose. Thus, Mark is also believed to be the most theologically developed Gospel.

Mark does indeed contain unique material in a few locations, but when such cases occur the editors demonstrate how these are within his overlay. For this reason, the editors believe that the ever-controversial last twelve verses of chapter sixteen are legitimate verses of the Gospel. Very few verses appear inexplicable for the hypothesis. In these rarities Mark's close connection to Peter and/or Paul as sources of this additional information is not suggested perhaps as much as it could be.

Observing the whole, the editors believe Mark has a clear structure or "compositional strategy." On this point much is taken from David Peabody's previous work, *Mark as Composer* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1987). This is not to say that Mark has a clear structure within its pericopes, which is quite the opposite. In fact, this lack is a good argument against Markan priority. For its

fundamental framework, the second Gospel has the basic "Petrine and Pauline *kerygma* as set forth in Luke-Acts" (61f). Jesus is a living demonstration of this proclamation. Note well that the editors observe and assume an inherent theological unity of Peter, Paul, and the Gospels. Mark's Gospel begins with Jesus' early ministry (pre-Sermon on the Mount) condensed to twenty verses. After noting that Jesus taught, Luke's order of activity is followed to the point where Sermon on the Plain would be. This is followed by an alternation of Matthew and Luke in relating Jesus' Gallilean ministry, which demonstrates his wisdom and power. Then, the mission of "the Twelve" is recorded until the Gospel's climax in the feeding of the 5,000. Hereafter, Matthew's order of pericope is usually followed to the end. First, Jesus tours from Bethsaida to Bethsaida, and then goes on to Jerusalem and the Passion Narrative. Along the way he preaches and catechizes in a more directed manner, emphasizing essentials. Hence, Mark has the same basic content as the others, but in a get-to-the-point style and shorter narrative.

With the themes and patterns observed the Research Team asserts that Mark was written in or near Rome not long after Peter and Paul's martyrdoms, assumed to have taken place between A.D. 65-68. A more detailed defense for these dates is wanting, but they are mainly based on the pending persecution under Nero and subsequent emperors. Christians needed encouragement for loyalty to Jesus, just as he was loyal unto his death.

The reader will find this volume surprisingly easy to use and follow because the editors have organized it so well. After an explanation of the Hypothesis in the book's introduction, the demonstration proceeds. The Gospel is divided into seven major parts, which are sometimes divided into sections, and, then, individual pericopes therein. Preceding each division is an overview of what it will cover and a summary is given at the end. Individual pericopes are then treated in verse-by-verse, phrase-by-phrase, and even word-by-word divisions. In this way the authors are very meticulous, but hardly lose sight of the forest for the trees. Additionally, helpful charts, tables, appendices, and excurses are referred at critical points to expound on debated issues in Mark's composition or to assist in demonstrating claims.

But not only is the organization well done, so is the exegesis. The editors carefully demonstrate how major words, phrases, and ideas function within their sentences either to assist in interpreting Mark or to lend credence to the hypothesis. In the course of one's study the user will likely see even greater evidence for the hypothesis besides that which is spelled out.

This book is not a commentary, nor is it necessarily attempting to be, but the exegete and practical user will find the information brought out to be helpful no less. It demonstrates the uniqueness of each of the Synoptics, and especially the stresses of Mark. A most helpful accessory tool is the CD-ROM, entitled "A Synopsis of Mark." This is different from the well-known Aland or Huck synopses because is it built on the assumption of the Two Gospel Hypothesis. It is arranged to follow the book as it demonstrates Mark's conflation of Matthew and Luke

through color-coded words along with added charts and summaries. Some readers will not find it necessary to obtain the synopsis, depending on what they are seeking from the book, but for Gospel scholars it is almost necessary.

What are the implications of this book for exegetical and theological study? Of course, it remains to be seen. It should become a great stumbling block for the long-standing theory of Markan priority, which has long been a hindrance to basic Christian beliefs (e.g., the virgin birth, the resurrection). Here is substantial evidence from reputable scholars. As it calls for an overhauling of important isogogical and exegetical presumptions, it should open up new territory for exegesis and new light in Gospel studies.

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Deuteronomy: A Commentary. **By Richard D. Nelson. The Old Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002. xv + 424 pages.**

With so many commentary series being produced, it is difficult, if not impossible to determine the most useful volumes to consult and which ones to avoid. Richard Nelson has produced a commentary that is useful in several ways. The format is similar to many in the Old Testament Library Series. At the front is a substantial (but not comprehensive) bibliography of important commentaries, books, and articles on Deuteronomy, most of which are no more than a decade old. For someone looking for relatively recent scholarship, this is indeed useful. The introduction is short, covering only nine pages. It treats the major issues of the book briefly but competently and gives a good summary of current higher-critical thought on the composition and origin of Deuteronomy. The only disappointing section is that on theological themes in Deuteronomy. It presents a kind of least-common-denominator approach to theology that points out obvious themes, but in a way that leaves one feeling that there must be more to the theology of this important Old Testament book than a sort of bland theology. Indeed, the beautiful balance of law and gospel that characterizes Deuteronomy is completely overlooked and misunderstood here.

The commentary itself treats texts on a section-by-section basis, with the author's translation as the first feature. Philological notes on the Hebrew text keyed to the preceding translation with superscript lowercase letters follow. Many of these notes are quite helpful for anyone interested in the details of Hebrew grammar and text-critical questions. They cover most of the important issues in this area. Following this there is a section of commentary that treats both the literary issues of the text and some of its theological accents. Many of the literary insights that Nelson shares with readers are helpful in understanding the organization of the book and its ways of conveying its message. Each section ably summarizes current higher-critical thought. This alone makes the commentary one worth consulting.

However, the theological discussion suffers from the same malady that afflicts the introduction.

Is this a useful commentary? If one is looking for a good summary of philological and text-critical issues on a passage in Deuteronomy: yes. If one is seeking to understand the literary features of Deuteronomy to aid in preparing a sermon or Bible class: yes. If one wishes to obtain a basic understanding of current critical thought on this final book of th Pentateuch: most certainly. However, if one is looking for theological insight into the book that will help you appreciate its balance of law and gospel and its christological passages, this is not the commentary to use. Despite this deficiency, Nelson has been faithful to the Old Testament Library Series' format, scope and approach, and offers a good example of the series at its best.

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