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## EDITORIAL

As the *Journal of Grace Theology* enters its third year of publication, I continue to be amazed at the reception. Although they could improve, subscription numbers are good and there are a few Bible College and Seminary libraries which have subscribed. Several contacts from people outside Grace Circles have asked me about the *Journal*, so our reputation is growing.

I am often asked how people might participate in the *Journal*. First, please subscribe and/or renew your subscriptions. There are quite a few people who subscribed after the first year but have let their subscriptions lapse. Usually this is an oversight, but if you have let your subscription lapse for a particular reason, I would love to know why. The subscription price covers most of the cost of printing and mailing; without sufficient subscriptions it would be impossible to produce the *Journal*. Second, you may give a special gift to the GGF to help defray the cost of publication. Third, please consider contributing an article. The last page of this issue has a short description of the kinds of articles best fit the *Journal*. I am personally encouraged when people tell me they are working on an article, short note or book review (and more so when then actually send me their work!) Please feel free to contact me directly if you have questions about the *Journal* or if you are able to help in any of these ways.

In this issue Dr. Jan Schregardus, Professor of Human Services at Grace Bible College contributes an article on "Looking for a 'Christian' Counselor." Dr. Schregardus draws on her experience as a counsellor to offer some practical advice for people in ministry with respect to what mental health issues they should (or should not) offer. She includes several appendices drawn from her research which should prove helpful. Second, Timothy F. Conklin and Dale S. DeWitt have transcribed and edited a 1955 interview with J. C. O'Hair. They have made notes expanding and clarifying details of the transcription. This article is a companion to Dale DeWitt's articles on O'Hair's pamphlets and should provide some insight into the development of O'Hair's theology. Third, Mark Sooy draws on his experience with Charles Colson and the Centurions Program (now called the Colson Fellows) in order to show that Dispensationalism is compatible with Christian Worldview as presented in the broader evangelical world. Three shorter articles from Ivan Burgener, ("The Demon Who Wouldn't and the Disciples Who Couldn't"), Chuck Schiedler ("God's Purpose through the Ages"), and Robert Williams ("Twelve In, Twelve Out") deal with various dispensational issues.

As always there are a few book reviews included in the *Journal*. These continue to be popular with readers and offer busy pastors and teachers an opportunity to evaluate a book quickly as a potential resource for preaching and teaching. At the end of this issue I have included an index of all twenty three of the book reviews published in the first four issues of the *Journal*. This is typically done at the end of a volume, but it was omitted at the end of volume 1 and 2. In addition to the index, this and future issues will include a Books Received list. These books are available for review by contacting the editor. Publishers who wish to see their books reviewed in the *Journal of Grace Theology* may contact the editor or send copies to the address listed on the subscription page to my attention. Inclusion on this list does not guarantee a review. There is one additional small change. Starting with volume three, the *Journal* will have continuous numbering for both issues in the volume. This is typical of scholarly journals and will a great benefit for indexing future volumes.

Once again I am in the debt of Tim Conklin for his help editing the articles. His eye for grammatical as well as style issues is greatly appreciated. I am sad to say my intern Zach Niles is finishing his time at Grace Bible College and will be moving on to Seminary next year. Zach has been the ideal intern and has greatly improve the *Journal* with his attention to detail. He will be greatly missed!

Once again, thank you for your support of the *Journal*, I look forward to our future discussions in the *Journal of Grace Theology*.

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## LOOKING FOR A “CHRISTIAN” COUNSELOR

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### INTRODUCTION

In August, 2007, I completed a dissertation in which I reported on a quantitative study of counselors in the Grand Rapids area. The focus of the study was whether counselors (social workers, counselors, psychologists) would benefit from a 10-hour workshop which focused on learning the skills of integrating spirituality in the counseling process. The idea for the study resulted from a literature review which by and large indicated that the counseling “tool” of integrating spirituality in the counseling process was perhaps only touched upon in the courses taken by counselors, or more likely was not covered at all (Burke et al. 1999; Green, Benschhoff, & Harris-Forbes, 2001; O’Connor, 2004). Yet, studies seem to indicate that not only does spirituality play an important part in helping to heal physical illnesses (Albaugh, 2003), but also helps in the healing process for those struggling with mental illness (Razali, Hasanah, Aminah, & Subramaniam, 1998).

I studied the issue from the existentialist point of view espoused by Victor Frankl (1986) in which he emphasized his belief that counselors need to know what gives one meaning in life in order to best help a client. Therefore, I took the stance that counselors need to be trained in the skills of integrating spirituality into the counseling process as one’s spiritual life seems to be what gives many people meaning. To me, being trained meant counselors must have a basic knowledge of various belief systems and then be trained in dealing with people from those belief systems. As I researched

various studies which have been done, I began to feel concerned that this seemed to be an area sadly lacking in counselor training, yet appeared to be very needed in helping others to deal with the challenges in their lives (Myers & Willard, 2003). As a result of little or no training, it appeared that counselors are reluctant to address spiritual issues in the clients' lives (Myers & Willard, 2003). On the other hand, other research indicated clients would very much like spirituality in their lives to be addressed in the counseling process (D'Souza, 2002, Wade, Worthington, & Vogel, 2006). In fact, some research found the client's sense of well-being could very well be enhanced by integrating spirituality in the process of counseling (Faller, 2001; Hall, Dixon, & Mauzey, 2004; Weinstein, Parker, & Archer, 2002). In one study, clients indicated they would like to have the therapist prepared if spiritual issues were to arise (Haug, 1998).

All of this could have serious consequences in the clients' lives. What if spiritual issues were contributing to the client's ongoing problem (Cashwell, Myers, & Shurts, 2004)? Some believe a broad definition of the word "spiritual" means no part of one's life can be separated from the spiritual (Anderson & Worthen, 1997; Helminiak, 2001). If, indeed, spirituality may affect every aspect of one's life (relationship to self, others, and a higher being), not dealing with spirituality could leave a great void in the counseling process (Haug, 1998; Silberman, 2003) – or maybe even cut short the counseling relationship (Burke, et al, 1999).

I realize I have been talking about spirituality rather than Christianity. This is because I received my degree from a secular university and was not able to focus just on Christianity. In my dissertation, I used the definition of spirituality given by Morgan (2007): "a search for the sacred, [and] is about discovering the fundamental roots of existence, the meaning of living, or discovering what is worthy of one's full devotion and commitment" (p. 4). I believe this very well includes what Christianity is all about. I would add the caveat that a true, healthy relationship with Jesus Christ fulfills the search for the Christian, but sometimes personal difficulties can interfere with that relationship.

In the dissertation, I separated the concept of spirituality from the concept of religion because I believe they are related, but emphasize different aspects of one's life. I used Hodges definition of religion: "a particular set of beliefs, practices, and rituals that have been developed in a commu-

nity by people who share similar, existential experiences of transcendent reality” (2001, p. 36). I believe it is important for the therapist to be able to distinguish between the two as sometimes the “beliefs, practices, and rituals” may get in the way of a person’s ability to appreciate the spiritual aspect of his/her faith-walk. In my counseling experience as a Christian counselor, for example, clients have felt guilty because they do not read their Bible every day and spend time with God. The goal in counseling is not to discourage the client from reading Scripture, but rather to see what is blocking that desire. In this way, the counselor can help the client not only deal with the block, but also see that a healthy relationship with Christ may help the client to WANT to spend time with God to enhance a relationship, not because (s)he feels (s)he MUST spend that time.

Although several diversity issues are included in therapists’ training (LGBTQ issues, racial issues, cultural issues to name a few), training in spirituality has been lacking throughout the years. There are a couple of reasons why this is so. One reason appears to be the claim of many that psychology is value-free and the belief that training in spirituality will compromise that claim. One author challenges psychology’s claim of being value-free with or without spirituality (Helminiak, 2001), so to Helminiak and others including myself, this argument is a moot point. Try as we might, we cannot ever be totally value-free; the best a therapist can do is be aware of one’s biases and make sure they do not interfere in the counseling process.

Interestingly, a landmark article written by Sue, Arredondo, and Mac-Davis (1992) “emphasized the need for therapists to have a knowledge of multicultural similarities and differences, as well as specific training in the skills to best use this knowledge to enhance the therapeutic process” (Schregardus, 2007, p. 31). One of the tools of counseling is the ability to enter the world of the client; how difficult this is when one is unable to enter that world, of spirituality which may be a major part of the client’s experience.

A second reason for the lack of training in spirituality seems to be the on-going dispute between psychology and spirituality ever since psychology became a recognized discipline. This is mainly due to the detrimental things said by early psychologists regarding religion: Freud called it an oedipal search for a father figure (1953/1962) among other things; Jung’s

teachings have the danger of watering down Christianity (Fitch, 2000); Rogers' conclusions are very controversial, but lean toward a humanistic point of view (Thorn, 2001); and Ellis (1993) compared religion to irrational thinking which could be connected with emotional disturbance, although he did modify his views later in life (2000). Others like Perls (1969) and Bandura (2003) seemed reluctant to completely throw out the spiritual, but did not place a major emphasis on it.

On the other side of the coin, some Christian psychologists believe psychology has very little place, if any, in counseling (e.g., Adams, 1986). Some who adhere to this way of thinking are called nouthetic counselors.

Despite these roadblocks, a study done in 2001 found that pastors were open to learning how psychology and theology can interface, especially in the areas of sin and psychological dysfunction. However, the pastors still maintained the importance of theological explanations for human behavior over psychological theories (McRay, McMinn, Wrightsman, Burnett, & Ho).

So how does this affect today's pastors? I believe if pastors wish their parishioners to have a positive growth experience through counseling, a couple of things need to happen. The first is quite simple: pastors need to have some training in psychological counseling so they can become aware of basic counseling skills and so recognize when they need to refer clients out to professional counselors. Some of the basic skills needed by pastors are those of active listening, paraphrasing, and summarizing. They also need some knowledge of the causes of more common mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety. So often well-meaning Christians tend to tell those who are suffering from these maladies they simply need to pray and read their Bible more. What pastors need to know is that some mental illnesses are biologically based. This means some people may need to be put on prescription medications by a medical doctor or psychiatrist so the brain messages can again become more normal. Telling some depressed and/or anxious people who have these medical challenges to read the Bible and pray more is like telling someone with pneumonia to only read the Bible and pray more. Without medication, the healing process will be much slower – or no process will be made at all.

The other thing which needs to happen is much more complicated. Pastors may have to refer their parishioners out to a counselor – preferably a

“Christian” counselor. Lichi has given some reasons for referring clients to a professional counselor (see Appendix I). However, what does this mean and how do we know the therapist has had training in dealing with spiritual matters?

In their book, *Christ Centered Therapy*, Anderson, Zuehlke, and Zuehlke (2000) address the issue of what is “Christian therapy?” The reader is very encouraged to obtain a copy of the book, but I will summarize the various concepts of Christian therapy as defined by others and by the authors themselves in the third chapter of the book.

The authors give a brief summary of four men’s conceptualizations of what Christian counseling is. First is Dr. Everett Worthington. His first two conceptualizations (Across the Gap and The Collaborative) deal with therapists who are not religiously committed. The third (Behind the Door) are religiously committed therapists who either “ignore or refrain from dealing with religious commitment and religious values in therapy” (p. 65). The fourth he calls The Conjoint, describing the therapist who is religiously committed and deals regularly with the client’s religious commitment in therapy.

Secondly, Anderson, et. al describe Dr. Larry Crabb’s early concepts of a Christian counselor:

*Separate But Equal*: This position is maintained by those who believe Scripture deals with spiritual and theological problems only; all other issues should be referred to other qualified professionals.... “ (p. 65)

*Tossed Salad*: Combining insights and resources of Scripture with wisdom from psychology

*Nothing Buttery*: This view ignores psychology altogether

*Spoiling the Egyptians*: Crabb calls this an attempt to compare psychological and Christian concepts in terms of compatibility

A third theologian, Gary Collins, includes five ways in which Christian counselors approach the integration of psychology and Christianity:

*Mainstream*: Basically this is the Clinical Pastoral Education movement which has been accused by some conservative Christian counselors as prioritizing psychology over Scripture

*Evangelical Pastor:* Ministers such as Charles Swindoll, Charles Stanley, etc. who provide a biblical counseling orientation from a preaching-teaching perspective

*Christian professional:* Professionally trained therapists – sometimes criticized for not using Scripture enough when counseling

*Theoretician-researcher:* People who seem to feel the need provide an “apologetic” for the people who challenge Christianity’s place in the counseling office

*Evangelical Popularizers:* Those who have much scriptural training, but not much formal training in psychology

The final classification system is presented by Siang-Yang Tan who writes about implicit and explicit integration of religion in the counseling process. Implicit integration emphasizes a more covert approach with little open or direct use of Scripture, prayer, etc. On the other hand the explicit integration directly deals with spiritual issues and uses spiritual resources.

From these, Anderson, Zuehlke, and Zuehlke (2000) describe their proposed framework: Bible-only counselors (no integration); Closed counselors (counselor is a Christian, but does not address spiritual issues in counseling; Closet counselors (therapists who have integrated their own faith with psychological principles, but do not demonstrate this in therapy); and Conjoint counselors (set goals for counseling using both spiritual and psychological aspects). As one can see, the definition of “Christian” counselor can mean very different things (Anderson, Zuehlke, & Zuehlke, 2000, pp. 64-84).

Another aspect of counseling which pastors need to question is whether the counselor has the skills required to call oneself a “Christian” counselor. McMinn (2011) describes the challenges the Christian counselor needs to be aware of if (s)he desires to practice as a Christian counselor. The first challenge he calls “moving from two areas of competence to three” (p. 9). Not only does McMinn believe a Christian counselor needs to be competent in the areas of theology and psychology, but also the Christian counselor needs to “understand spirituality and the process of spiritual formation” (p. 10). McMinn believes even if the person has had training in theology and psychology, there is no way to be trained in spirituality in the classroom. “Spirituality training is experiential and often private. It

is rarely found in the classroom or represented by graduate degrees, but it is found in private hours of prayer and devotional reflection, in church sanctuaries where Christian communities workshop, in quiet disciplines of fasting and solitude” (McMinn, 2011, pp. 10-11). Here he seems to be saying that in order to help others in their Christian walk, the therapist needs to also be growing spiritually.

A second challenge, according to McMinn, is a blurred personal-professional distinction. Professional codes for counselors stress a distinction between the personal and professional life of the counselor and client. McMinn feels that for the Christian counselor there also needs to be a personal aspect. He writes, “but ideally a Christian counselor is also a healing agent – one whose spiritual life spills over in interactions with everyone, including the client” (p. 13). Competency to be a “Christian” counselor requires a personal relationship with Jesus Christ which is reflected in one’s counseling skills.

Another challenge addressed is what McMinn calls confronting dominant views of mental health. According to McMinn, contemporary world views of mental health stress feeling good about one’s self. This can lead to blaming genetics, others, defective neurochemicals, etc. for one’s difficulties. Therefore, one needs to look out for ME and if others are getting in the way of me and my needs, those people or things need to be disposed of. McMinn counters by saying, “The Christian gospel gives hope for broken people, but only after they recognize their brokenness” (p. 19). So therapy from a Christian therapist would include not only the difficulties faced by the client, but possible spiritual brokenness experienced by the client which needs to be repaired. The Christian counselor needs to be aware of possible areas of spiritual brokenness and scriptural concepts which help repair this brokenness.

The final challenge seen by McMinn is defining relevant ethical standards. I believe what McMinn says in this section is very important as one decides what the elements of Christian counseling are. One can call oneself a “Christian” counselor, but in order for the client to give what is called “informed consent” (information about the counselor, his/her theoretical stance, and procedures used), (s)he needs to know what the counselor means when (s)he calls him/herself a Christian counselor. Some clients believe calling oneself a Christian counselor automatically applies counsel-

ing techniques within formal religious practices (McMinn, 2011). The reality is that usually these practitioners are not practicing in the mainstream mental health community. Therefore, they often cannot accept insurance reimbursement and may not even include an informed consent form for the client. McMinn believes informed consent is an obligation “because those seeking our services are often unaware of the options available” (p. 25). I believe there are a few dangers in this in that the person practicing outside the mainstream mental health community may not have the academic qualifications to do therapy and/or may use this as an opportunity to proselytize the client.

On the other hand, those who label themselves a Christian counselor may actually use secular techniques and just throw in religious interventions at various points in the therapy. This needs to be clarified in the informed consent so the client knows what to expect (McMinn, 2011).

Many of these issues have been addressed in psychological research. Some interesting reasons have been gleaned as to why a person may or may not be reluctant to integrate spirituality and psychology. According to Curtis and Glass (2002), some counselors have little knowledge about spiritual issues and how they may affect the client. Or the counselor may fear (s)he is incompetent (Glatterer, 2001). Similarly, some counselors are uninformed about the importance of spirituality even if it is important to the client (Schulte, Skinner, & Claiborn, 2002).

In another vein, the counselor’s attitude toward spirituality may affect his/her comfort in bringing it up in counseling (Schulte, Skinner, & Claiborn; Schaffner & Dixon, 2003). According to Glatterer (2001), counselors may take one of three stances: 1) those who are spiritual and can accept others’ beliefs; 2) those who are uncertain about spirituality and how to bring it up in counseling; and 3) those who are turned off by any kind of religion or spirituality. Another category is presented by Schulte, et al (2002) in which the counselor zealously imposes his/her spiritual views on the client.

One thing to keep in mind in terms of a referral is that limited research indicates a desire of the client for a counselor who shares similar beliefs and values (Rose, Westefeld, & Ansley, 2001). Morrow, Worthington and McCullough (1993) concluded the therapist needs to at least validate the client’s belief system even if not in agreement with it.

Where does this leave one who is looking for a Christian counselor who espouses the same viewpoint of integrating (or not integrating) psychology and Christianity in the counseling process? The Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (Appendix 2) has listed the competencies one needs to have in order to integrate psychology and spirituality.

In addition, Bufford (1997) gives some great suggestions as to what to look for in what he calls some basic elements of Christian counseling:

*Pursuit of Excellence:* Counseling involves careful, quality work – doing it “as unto the Lord”

*Christian World View:* The Christian counselor must be committed to this, along with a biblical view of people

*Christian Values:* Means, ends, and motives must be examined against the backdrop of our best understanding of Scripture

*Personal Faith of the Counselor:* The Christian counselor must have a personal relationship with God

*Personal Calling of the Counselor:* One must feel (s)he has been set apart for Christian counseling

*Person and Work of God:* The Christian counselor must acknowledge, invite, and involve the presence of God in the counseling process

*Spiritual Interventions and Resources:* The Christian counselor uses non-Christian tools, but adds such things as forgiveness (giving and receiving), prayer, Scripture, etc. This may also involve volunteers from the Christian community

Exploring some of these concepts with a prospective counselor may help one decide if this is a person to whom one would refer a client for Christian counseling. Some additional information is included in Appendix 3 which focuses more on ecumenical counseling.

## CONCLUSION

Several ideas have been discussed without definite answers. Most counselors have received little, if any, training in how to integrate spirituality and psychology. This may leave them ignoring the spiritual aspect or dealing with it with incompetence. Yet clients may need help with the spiritual

aspect of their lives as this is what gives meaning to life. However, what would be included in the training for competency is also questionable. In my workshop, the results were very positive in terms of how helpful it was to increase the knowledge of integrating spirituality and counseling. In addition, skills practice in the workshop showed learning had taken place (Schregardus, 2007). However, there were many limitations of the study, not least of which was how effective the training was in future work of those involved. Generalization was very limited due to the small number of people involved and due to the fact everyone came from the West Michigan area (Schregardus, 2007). Research continues in the arenas of training counselors how to integrate spirituality and counseling, as well as if it is necessary. In a search on the PsychInfo database using the words spirituality and counseling, over 800 peer-reviewed, scholarly articles have been written since 2007.

Meanwhile, pastors need to know what to look for when referring a person to a “Christian” counselor, as this can be a misleading title. Some suggestions have been given as to what to look for when referring in terms of when to refer and how to discern that the counselor indeed knows what it means to be a “Christian” counselor.

## APPENDIX 1: WHEN PASTORS SHOULD REFER

In some instances, assessment of the counselee’s issues and identification of his goals reveal that he needs services or resources surpassing the pastor’s level of competence. In these cases, the wise pastor will refer the counselee. Referral is a professional as well as ethical issue, and it is important for the pastor to ascertain various referral sources for the counselee. Appropriate referrals also allow the pastor to use his time with efficiency and wisdom.

- In general these are some reasons to refer:
- You feel overwhelmed by the counselee’s problem.
- The counselee is stuck or unwilling to be active in taking responsibility for change.
- The counselee is poorly motivated, hostile, has a long history of poor relationships, or expects to be a passive recipient of help.
- You are concerned about the counselee’s self-destructive, suicidal, or violent behavior, or if he seems to be out of touch with reality.
- If you notice excessive weight loss or gain or eating problems.
- If you suspect drug abuse.
- If you suspect child abuse.

Be sure to explain to the counselee the need for the referral, the anticipated benefits of the referral, and, if possible, provide a choice of options.

Some counsees may resist a referral and insist you are the only one who can help them. Thus you must describe the behaviors which concern you and give your reasons for making the referral. Reassure the counselee you have confidence in the referral source and emphasize the importance of a timely follow-through with your suggestion.

As appropriate, you may state that once he has received appropriate help you may be able to see him on a follow-up basis, providing he has gotten the help you have suggested.

Lichi, D. A. (2016). *The Competent Christian Counselor*. From [http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/201003/201003\\_034\\_CompCoun.cfm](http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/201003/201003_034_CompCoun.cfm)

APPENDIX 2: COMPETENCIES FOR ADDRESSING SPIRITUAL  
AND RELIGIOUS ISSUES IN COUNSELING (ASSOCIATION FOR SPIRITUAL,  
ETHICAL, AND RELIGIOUS VALUES IN COUNSELING)

CULTURE AND WORLDVIEW

The professional counselor can describe the similarities and differences between spirituality and religion, including the basic beliefs of various spiritual systems, major world religions, agnosticism, and atheism.

The professional counseling recognizes that the client's beliefs (or absence of beliefs) about spirituality and/or religion are central to his or her worldview and can influence psychosocial functioning.

*Counselor Self-Awareness*

The professional counselor actively explores his or her own attitudes, beliefs, and values about spirituality and/or religion.

The professional counselor continuously evaluates the influence of his or her own spiritual and/or religious beliefs and values on the client and the counseling process.

The professional counselor can identify the limits of his or her understanding of the client's spiritual and/or religious perspective and is acquainted with religious and spiritual resources and leaders who can be avenues for consultation and to whom the counselor can refer.

*Human and Spiritual Development*

The professional counselor can describe and apply various models of spiritual and/or religious development and their relationship to human development.

*Communication*

The professional counselor responds to client communications about spirituality and/or religion with acceptance and sensitivity.

The professional counselor uses spiritual and/or religious concepts that are consistent with the client's spiritual and/or religious perspectives and are acceptable to the client.

The professional counselor can recognize spiritual and/or religious themes in client communication and is able to address these with the client when they are therapeutically relevant.

### *Assessment*

During the intake and assessment processes, the professional counselor strives to understand a client’s spiritual and/or religious perspective by gathering information from the client and/or other sources.

### *Diagnosis and Treatment*

When making a diagnosis, the professional counselor recognizes that the client’s spiritual and/or religious perspectives can a) enhance well-being; b) contribute to client problems; and/or c) exacerbate symptoms

The professional counselor sets goals with the client that are consistent with the client’s spiritual and/or religious perspectives.

The professional counselor is able to a) modify therapeutic techniques to include a client’s spiritual and/or religious perspectives, and b) utilize spiritual and/or religious practices as techniques when appropriate and acceptable to a client’s viewpoint.

The professional counselor can therapeutically apply theory and current research supporting the inclusion of a client’s spiritual and/or religious perspectives and practices.

Revised and Approved, 5/5/2009 [http://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/C\\_Cashwell\\_New\\_2010.pdf](http://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/C_Cashwell_New_2010.pdf)

### APPENDIX 3: CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE ECUMENICAL PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

Effective ecumenical therapists:

1. Are aware of their own religious/spiritual heritage, worldview assumptions, and values, and are sensitive to how their own spiritual issues, values, and biases could affect their work with clients from different religious/spiritual traditions
2. Seek to understand, respect, and appreciate religious/spiritual traditions worldviews, and values that differ from theirs
3. Are capable of communicating interest, understanding, and respect to clients who have religious/spiritual worldviews, beliefs, and values that differ from theirs
4. Seek to understand how a client's religious/spiritual worldview and values affect his/her sense of identity, life-style, and emotional/interpersonal functioning, but they are sensitive to how their own religious/spiritual values and beliefs could bias their judgment
5. Are sensitive to circumstances (e.g., personal biases, value conflicts, lack of knowledge of the client's religious tradition) that could dictate referral of a religious client to a member of his/her own religious tradition
6. Have or seek specific knowledge and information about the religious beliefs and traditions of the religious/spiritual clients with whom they work
7. Avoid making assumptions about the beliefs and values of religious/spiritual clients based on religious affiliation alone, but they seek to gain an in-depth understanding of each client's unique spiritual worldview, beliefs, and values
8. Understand how to sensitively handle value and belief conflicts that arise during therapy and do so in a manner that preserves the client's autonomy and self-esteem
9. Make efforts to establish respectful, trusting relationships with members and leaders in their clients' religious community and seek to draw on these sources of social support to benefit their clients when appropriate

10. Seek to understand the religious/spiritual resources in their clients’ lives and encourage their clients to use these resources to assist them in their efforts to cope, heal, and change
11. Seek to use religious/spiritual interventions that are in harmony with their clients’ religious/spiritual beliefs when it appears that such interventions could help their clients cope, heal, and change

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J. C. O'HAIR'S 1955 AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR:  
TEXT AND NOTES

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INTRODUCTION

The document published here for the first time originated in November 1955 in Milwaukee at the home of (then) Milwaukee Bible College President Charles F. Baker. O'Hair was in Milwaukee for a series of lectures at the College. Baker prepared a tape recorder and microphone for O'Hair, asked him to turn the recorder on and explain his life and ministry; apparently he spoke *ex tempore* without any special preparation. In 1961 the College moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan where the recording was transcribed into a typescript of nineteen double-spaced pages. A few copies were made available and came into possession of several leaders, pastors and teachers.

The text of the transcript published below is from a copy of the original duplicated document; it has no paragraphing. We have paragraphed the text based on our own decisions about thought groupings, and lightly edited the text, smoothing out some grammatically rough sentences, footnoting a few factual matters, and offering a few footnoted comments for clarity. We also introduced the two-part outline. Otherwise we have kept closely to the text as O'Hair first spoke it into the tape recorder. This account of his life and thought is offered as a resource for further study, understanding and writing, while recognizing it is somewhat anecdotal and incomplete nature, and the need to supplement the account with added information

from O’Hair’s writings and other documents which might become available. Additions to clarify thought flow or fill out incomplete sentences are bracketed [ ] in the text.

### 1. EARLY LIFE, CONVERSION AND MINISTRY

Brother Baker, I’m sitting here at your table where you study in Milwaukee. Your wife<sup>1</sup> tells me that you set your recording machine already, and that you want me to record my testimony—something about where I came from, what I’ve been doing, where I’ve been and where I’m going. Well, I want you to know that my present position, my citizenship, is in heaven, and I’m looking for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ to come and change this body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto his body of glory.

Many people have asked me if my middle initial is Calvin—John Calvin O’Hair. Many of them think from my theology that my middle name ought to be Calvin. But my middle name is Cowan. Mr. Cowan was my step-grandfather, that is, the step-father of my mother. My mother’s father’s name was Kennedy; she was born Lizzie Caroline Kennedy.<sup>2</sup> Several years before I was born, [my father and mother] were married in Memphis, Tennessee about 1872 or 71.<sup>3</sup> They moved to Little Rock, Arkansas in 1873. The first of twelve children was my older sister, who is still alive and lives in Austin, Texas, then an older brother; I was the third of the twelve children.<sup>4</sup> We were six boys and six girls. The family lived for more than thirty years on the corner of Fourth and Izard in Little Rock. The house where I was born, 313 Izard Street in Little Rock, is still standing.<sup>5</sup> When I first moved to the area of Chicago, I lived in Oak Park where the number of our house was 313; I’m now living in Evanston at 313 Wesley Avenue. As you know, I have been pastor of North Shore Church at Sheridan Road and Wilson Avenue since the seventeenth day of July, 1923.

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<sup>1</sup>Teresa, nee Bettis.

<sup>2</sup>In most family legal documents her name is Lizzie; one son’s Texas death certificate gives her name as Elizabeth.

<sup>3</sup>The marriage license date is 1873.

<sup>4</sup>The eldest sister was Nathalie and the second sibling was James Thomas, Jr., named for his father.

<sup>5</sup>This address is 315 Izard in Little Rock directories and other documents exhibited at Ancestry.com.

Perhaps you heard the story of the young man who took a new position in London, and was asked by the [personnel] man, "George, where were you born?" He said, "Sir, I was born in Edinburgh and Glasgow." The man said, "You didn't understand my question." And he said [again], "where were you born?" And he answered again, "in Edinburgh and Glasgow." The man said, "Now George, we don't want any smart alecks around here. Answer this question." "Well, sir," George said, "I was born of my mother and father in Edinburgh. I was born again in Glasgow before I came here to London to work." Well, I was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, on the thirty-first day of December, 1876. I was born again right at the beginning of the twentieth century, right before my birthday, my twenty-third birthday, in 1899.<sup>6</sup> In August, 1898 I went to this little town [of Neame, Louisiana] about 130 miles south of Shreveport. I went there from Kansas City, Missouri to be an auditor for the Central Coal and Coke Company at their large lumber mill at Neame,<sup>7</sup> Louisiana about eight miles south of Leesburg<sup>8</sup> and the same number of miles north of DeRidder. And there I had the wonderful experience of passing out of death into life through faith in a crucified and resurrected Christ.

I spent twenty-two years in Little Rock. I went to school there fourteen years, having finished high school and business college. When I had finished school and business college at the age of nineteen, I went to work in a law firm where two members of the firm were Jews;<sup>9</sup> one was my neighbor

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<sup>6</sup>At this point O'Hair skips several intervening events in order to speak of his conversion while working at Neame, Louisiana as an "auditor" for a lumber operation. In the next paragraph he backs up in time and resumes the chronological account of events between Little Rock and his arrival at Neame.

<sup>7</sup>The transcript text reads here, "Neme (?) or Keep (?)." The correct name of the village is Neame. "Keep" was the transcriber's attempt to discern what is actually Keith, Louisiana, an alternate name for Neame or a nearby township or village. Keith is not a county (parish) name; Neame is in Vernon Parish; a legal name change is possible. On the surviving second page of an O'Hair letter to one or both parents, the formal letterhead reads "Central Coal and Coke Company, Keith, La. (P. O. Neame, La.)." The letter portion is in possession of the O'Hair collection at Bultema Library, Grace Bible College.

<sup>8</sup>The transcript reads "Leesburg"; on recent maps the town is Leesville.

<sup>9</sup>By "members of the firm" O'Hair may have meant "employees" since the man in question is immediately said to have gone to Monroe, Louisiana to do "stenographic" work which does not sound like the function of a law partner or law firm lawyer.

and a real friend of mine. He went down to Monroe, Louisiana where he did some stenographic work, and stayed there for three months. [When he came back] I had changed from the law office to an insurance company where I worked for two years in Little Rock. When he came back, he said, “How would you like to go down to Monroe, Louisiana and go into the lumber business?”<sup>10</sup> After he told me about the beautiful place down there and the wonderful people he’d worked for, I said, “I believe I’ll try it.” So he wrote to them, and I went down when I was twenty-two years of age—no, at that time not quite twenty-two. [But] the lumber company went out of business a few months after I went there; I didn’t put it out of business. They just went out of business because at that time we had a depression.<sup>11</sup>

I went from there to Kansas City, Missouri. One of the officers of the lumber company at Monroe asked me to go to Kansas City. I also met the bookkeeper who had been an auditor for many years for the Willimantic Thread Company in New York City. He was a wonderful, wonderful accountant. So I went to Kansas City. When I got there, I went to work for the Daily Drivers Telegram.<sup>12</sup> Mr. George Neff, who later became mayor of Kansas City, asked me to remain with him;<sup>13</sup> but my friend who [had] moved down to Neame where I was saved wrote me and asked me to come down and work with him. So in the year of the Spanish-American War, 1898, on the thirty-first day of August, I reached the little town of Neame.<sup>14</sup>

Having left a wonderful city, that is, a large city like Kansas City, I became very lonely [in Neame] and wondered why I had ever done such a thing; why did I leave Kansas City and go down to that place where the train didn’t even stop? There was only one store there and a post office and not very many houses at the time. The plant was new. But I learned later on, just about eight months after I arrived there, that a young lady arrived, the lady who later became my wife. Her father was the superintendent of the logging and railroad there. After I’d been there for some months at the

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<sup>10</sup>Monroe, Louisiana is about 150 miles south of Little Rock, Arkansas, hence “down.”

<sup>11</sup>The American financial depression of the 1890s. The year appears to be 1897.

<sup>12</sup>A daily cattleman’s paper.

<sup>13</sup>Neff’s function is not stated; perhaps he was the editor of the Telegram.

<sup>14</sup>Here the account returns to Neame, Louisiana, the place of his conversion to Christ as noted above.

hotel, we moved to another hotel. I want you to know that at that time—I'm not proud of it and not boasting—I was an ungodly, ruined, immoral, lost sinner; I was living in sin. And when I went over to this new boarding house, on the first day we had to wait a little while for our meal. I was pacing around the floor and the lady said, "Sit down and calm yourself; read something." I said, "What'll I read?" And she said, "Read this book, the Bible." She had it open at the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. As I look back, although I was twenty-three years of age, I could not have quoted one single verse in the Bible. But I read that story and came back the next day and read about Daniel in the lion's den. I asked her if I could borrow the Bible and take it to my room. She said, "If you're interested in this story, come up to the little Sunday school—a country Sunday school—next Sunday. I'll introduce you to a nice young lady. The preacher there is teaching the book of Daniel and you'd be very much interested in hearing him." I'll never forget him with his piercing eyes, his gray hair, his long beard [which] seemed to be twelve or fourteen inches long. That man left his home Friday noon every week or two [to come to] this place and he walked most of the distance. He used to get about six to eight dollars in the offering. He was a real prophet of God, a man of God with a real message; I'll never forget the first time I heard him.

The next Sunday I went out to the Anacoco River<sup>15</sup> near there with a friend of mine. I was on the largest mule we had there, about seventeen and a half hands high, and I had a six-shooter. We went out to the Anacoco River to shoot alligators and get some wild magnolias. We killed several small alligators and I got up and picked a few magnolias. When we went back home, this young lady to whom I was to be introduced was standing at the gate. The man who was with me said, "Come over here and I'll introduce you to a lady." So we went over to the gate and he introduced me, and I gave her a couple of the magnolias. She was the young lady to whom I was to be introduced by the hotel proprietor—the lady who was to introduce me.<sup>16</sup>

Within a few weeks from that time<sup>17</sup> when I was reading the Bible, this

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<sup>15</sup>Bayou Anacoco on recent maps, a small tributary of the Mississippi River.

<sup>16</sup>O'Hair uses "lady/the lady" for both the logging superintendent's daughter and the hotel proprietor—two different women.

<sup>17</sup>He seems to mean, "During the period when I was continuing to read the

young lady gave her testimony; I heard her sing it, and heard her give her testimony. I went home, and one night I was reading the Bible, and while I was reading the Bible, I got under deep conviction. I knew I was a sinner all the time; I cried many times over my sin. When I was a boy for a little while I was an altar boy and I was miserable with that religion. I didn't want to go through hell to get into heaven, and the priest couldn't tell me how to be saved; and so I drifted away. That night I was convicted of the fact I was not only a sinner, but a lost sinner. I [had] cried many times over my sin, and [had] confessed my sin.<sup>18</sup> So I learned that when it says, "If thou wilt confess thy sins, thou art faithful. If thou wilt confess thy sins, God will be just and faithful to forgive thy sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness," he wasn't talking to sinners because I had done that. But I want to tell you, my dear brother,<sup>19</sup> the night I was convicted of my sins and knew I was not only a sinner but a lost sinner convicted by the Holy Spirit of my need of the Lord Jesus Christ, I learned where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. I could go right down there and take a piece of crayon and draw a circle where one night at midnight, just at the beginning of the twentieth century, right before that, right before my birthday—my twenty-third birthday [on] the thirty-first day of December—I passed out of death into life through faith in a crucified and resurrected Christ. As you know, what we need is eternal life. And when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, we do receive eternal life as he tells us in his Book as we read in John 5:24 and 11:25-26, and Colossians 2:13 and Ephesians 2:5-6. And we're told in Romans 6:13 that as Christians we're alive from the dead. So I received the gift of God, eternal life, and passed out of death into life.

My whole life was changed in a very short time. I went on working for the company for a while, but I was so persecuted there by the other employees with whom I had been associating and going out with them in sin that pressure was put on me. A friend came along and asked me how I would like to go with him to Mexico City. So in 1900 I went up to Muskegon and Grand Rapids, Michigan to visit this man, and from there I went down to old Mexico, spending some months in Monterrey and then

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Bible," rather than "on one Sunday school occasion when I was reading the Bible while sitting in the congregation."

<sup>18</sup>A reference to Catholic confession.

<sup>19</sup>From here to the end of the paragraph, he is talking as though Baker is personally listening.

moving to Mexico City.<sup>20</sup> When I got to Mexico City, I was in business, but I found out that the United States Ambassador there was a very warm personal friend of my father. When I went to call on him, he said, "How would you like to be my private stenographer?" So, I went to work as a private stenographer and secretary of the United States Ambassador there in Mexico City. When I was on furlough, I went on leave in the first week of July, 1901 to Kansas City where my sweetheart had moved; there on the eleventh day of July, 1901 we were married.

The Lord gave us six children. I've often given this testimony, that the Lord Jesus Christ has been the solution of every problem we've ever had. Some time ago—last July—we celebrated our fifty-fourth wedding anniversary. I thank God for the influence of my beloved wife and the fellowship we've enjoyed together. And we thank God now that each and every child and our grandchildren, each and every one has received the Lord Jesus Christ; I believe there is not one of them who is not saved. After I arrived at Kansas City, we decided not to go back to Mexico, but went south to Louisiana, first to Texarkana, [Arkansas?], then to a place called Hornbeck [Louisiana] where our first child, Robert, was born in August, 1902. We moved [next] to St. Louis [Missouri] and there our oldest daughter, Kathleen, who now lives in Rockford [Illinois], was born in 1904.<sup>21</sup> We lived then [in St. Louis] at 50170 McPherson,<sup>22</sup> where I was in the lumber business. The Lord blessed me there and I've often said that before I was saved I wasn't so faithful and loyal to my employer as I was after I was saved. The Lord blessed me when I was twenty-nine years of age. I was

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<sup>20</sup>These moves and associations are obscure and cannot be clarified or resolved in our present state of knowledge about this stage of O'Hair's life. This relationship with the unnamed (Michigan?) man does seem to have been a business relationship, perhaps having something to do with lumber or Mexican wood products. O'Hair's business connections beginning with the Neame, Louisiana lumber mill were almost entirely in the lumber and building industries.

<sup>21</sup>O'Hair's wording here is, "The next was born, we moved to St. Louis, and there the oldest daughter, Kathleen who now lives at Rockford, was born in 1904." As transcribed, the first few words of the sentence might sound like the next child was born in Hornbeck, Louisiana. He means rather that Kathleen, the second child, was born in St. Louis as shown in family history genealogical charts.

<sup>22</sup>There is no such address in St. Louis; the number appears to be the transcriber's error. There is a 5170 McPherson, a SE-NW diagonal street ending where it intersects Kingshighway Blvd.

getting a salary of about \$600 a month; that was good pay in those days. In [1905] my father died in Little Rock, leaving my widowed mother, my invalid brother who was older than I, two younger brothers and four sisters.<sup>23</sup> For a while I was the only breadwinner in the family. God wonderfully took care of us, and I moved the family. I had gone for one year over to Sedalia [Missouri] where I built fifty houses I was developing there. I came back to St. Louis, and then when we went to move the family from Little Rock, we moved them to St. Joseph, Missouri, and in St. Joe I built fifty houses.

From St. Joe, Missouri we moved to San Antonio, Texas. We arrived there on the second day of July, 1911. In the city of San Antonio I built [another] fifty houses. At the beginning [of the story] I told you how the Jew who worked with me had gone down to Louisiana and how he came back to Little Rock and asked me if I'd like to go down to Monroe [Louisiana] to work. The thing of interest, as I look back, is the several Jews who had an influence on my life; if it hadn't been for that Jew, I wouldn't have gone to Louisiana, and if I hadn't gone to Louisiana, I never would have been saved at the time and place I was saved. And then when I lived in San Antonio, when I was building houses there, I was also preaching as a lay preacher for the Presbytery of West Texas. They finally said to me, "How would you like to be ordained?" So in 1916 at Lockhart, Texas, I was ordained by the West Texas Presbytery. And, brother Baker, you remember Billy Anderson who was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church at Dallas; he's one of the men who laid hands on me at the time I was ordained. And then I went out preaching as an evangelist while also carrying on some of the business. I finally decided, like Matthew, I'd leave all to follow the Lord. I closed up the business, and the thing that helped me was this—another Jew came into my life; this Jew was very rich. At the time I had six houses under construction and I owed about twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars. [This Jew] said, "How would you like for me to take that burden off of you?" And I said, "That would be fine." So he paid my indebtedness and out of it I got several thousand dollars and was free to go out into full-

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<sup>23</sup>James and Elizabeth O'Hair had twelve children; John C. was the third, born 1876. The list and groupings in the text represent a total of eight children who moved. Three others had died in infancy or childhood. Nathalie, the eldest child, was already married at the time of their father's death.

time service.

In the meantime, there was in San Antonio a friend by the name of Elby Haines (spelling uncertain). We were preaching to the soldiers. There were about 30,000 soldiers there, and some of them were in awful sin—hell-holes, taverns, brothels and everything open. We began to preach on the street corners at night in front of the saloons and wherever soldiers were gathered. One night during our first week out—I had a Stevens-Duray car—about seventeen of those soldiers accepted the Lord Jesus Christ. We put them in the car, took them to the YMCA, and after midnight fifteen of those boys surrendered and received the Lord Jesus Christ. A regular revival broke out. In June of 1917 we were [preaching] one night in front of the Alamo. There were hundreds and hundreds of people there, and another Jew came along who had something to do with my life. That Jew was Joe Flax (spelling uncertain). He came up and said to me afterwards, “I’ve never seen anything just like this. How would you like to come up to Chicago and hold a meeting?” I said, “I’m working here in the Presbytery, but I might come up for two or three weeks.” He went home to Chicago and made arrangements. [In Chicago] a Mr. Gosnell who was then with the Moody Bible Institute told Flax that [if] he found a businessman who would like to be superintendent of men to do what he could to get [the] man. So [Flax] wrote to me as well as to Gosnell, and I came up and met Gosnell. (I wanted to mention this because some years later it was Mr. Gosnell of the Moody Bible Institute who was responsible for my first visit to teach the Bible in Milwaukee in January, 1924.) But after I talked with Gosnell and he found out we had several children, he said this wouldn’t do because he wanted me to live on the inside of the property there. And so this Jew, Joe Flax, had [gone] back and told some friends in Chicago [about the San Antonio meetings].

So in August, 1917, I was brought here [to Chicago] by the church known as the Madison Street Church in Oak Park. I held a meeting for fifteen nights in a tent in Forest Park [Illinois]. I had a wonderful time of fellowship with those brethren, and after the fifteen nights they came to me and said, “How would you like to be our pastor?” I had been seventeen years in business, all but the one year when I was the Ambassador’s secretary in the City of Mexico. I was in the lumber and building business, and I went out of full-time business one month into full-time ministry. I accepted

that pastorate and that meant I gave up an income of several hundred dollars a month with a wife and five children, and I took the pastorate there for \$150 a month. Some of my acquaintances called me a fool; I guess I was a fool for Christ's sake. I became pastor there in the closing months of 1917. And we bought a lot on the corner of Wisconsin and Madison from Mr. Ullman (spelling uncertain) and Madison Street Church stands there. I'll never forget the first Sunday I preached in that place. There were about ninety-four members there, and every single member had a Bible. The moment I began to preach, every Bible was open, and I found out that those people were really Bereans; they searched the Scriptures daily and loved the Bible. So I was not surprised that out of that church there went fourteen pastors, pastors' wives, or missionaries, eight of them to the foreign field. It was a wonderful testimony and I stayed there for a while.

Finally, I was introduced to Mel Trotter at Grand Rapids and I used to go up there and hold meetings. Mel asked me how I'd like to go around and visit the different missions. So I went around to the different rescue missions and had a great time for two years. In 1921 I was holding a meeting where A. B. Simpson had his tabernacle [in New York City].<sup>24</sup> Mr. Menardi was then the superintendent—Mr. Simpson had died—and I stayed there for fourteen nights preaching and had a wonderful time with him. They then called him to North Shore Church [Chicago] to open up a branch of the Pacific Garden Mission. North Shore Church met upstairs, and Pacific Garden Mission, which opened there in 1920, met downstairs.<sup>25</sup> So when brother Menardi came to Chicago, he asked me, in July, 1921, to come to North Shore Church to teach the Word of God. I taught there from charts for two weeks. Then they asked me to return in the summer of 1922. In 1923 I was holding a meeting in the Far Rockaway Presbyterian Church on Long Island where I received a telegram asking, "Would you be willing to become pastor of the North Shore Church?" I didn't know what I was getting into at the time, nor did the people. That was in June, 1923, and on the seventeenth day of July 1923 I became pastor at the North Shore Church where I have now been pastor for more than thirty-two years.

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<sup>24</sup>A. B. Simpson was the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

<sup>25</sup>The dates on the opening of the basement rescue mission are slightly discrepant; perhaps the ground work was done in late 1920 and full operations began in the first half of 1921.

One year from the week I became pastor we had our first broadcast over our radio station. A few months after I arrived we decided to build [it].<sup>26</sup> We got a license from Washington with the call letters WDBY. At that time we were running all over the band and people in the neighborhood said, “WDBY stands for ‘we delight in bothering you’.” The first broadcast was on the 17th day of July, 1924. July is a big month for me because it’s our anniversary (July 11th); in July I became pastor there, and we began broadcasting in July. I remember the night they voted for me to come as pastor.<sup>27</sup> There were only about sixty-five people left and they were divided, thirty-five against thirty; I had a difficult time there for a while and it wasn’t very easy. The first night I preached there—a Sunday night—there were about sixty-six people and about \$3.70 in the offering. By the grace of God we’ve been able to continue there and the Lord has wonderfully blessed; we thank God for the many who have been saved there and the many saved through our radio ministry during all these years.

Concerning Milwaukee, I had a friend there at the Perseverance Presbyterian Church, Archie Wright whom I met in St. Joe [Missouri]. We worked together there as a gospel team, going out with a laymen’s missionary movement as a team. We preached all over northwest Missouri. Then I became a Gideon and we went around placing Bibles in the hotels. I was in business there. Then brother Wright went to McCormick,<sup>28</sup> graduated, and went to Milwaukee. In 1920 I went to Milwaukee to preach for him and met a friend who heard me preach; he was superintendent of the work at 26th and West Hadley. He asked me if I would come there in 1921 to teach the Bible. I had the chart there and was preaching here in Milwaukee in 1921. Later on Mr. Gosnell, Lyle Rader (?) and Mr. Huston<sup>29</sup> started a

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<sup>26</sup>These lines have been reworded. He is referring to the radio station being built in the church by Charles Baker.

<sup>27</sup>O’Hair said above that he was in Long Island, New York when he received a telegram asking if he would be willing to become pastor at North Shore Church. Here he is speaking of the actual congregational vote which occurred after he arrived back in Chicago.

<sup>28</sup>McCormick Theological Seminary, a major Presbyterian seminary in Chicago.

<sup>29</sup>T. R. Huston was a Milwaukee businessman who owned a keyboard instrument shop in Milwaukee. He became a major donor in support of Fundamental Bible Church in Milwaukee and Milwaukee Bible Institute in its first two decades of operation.

Bible class here. Lyle gave it up and Mr. Winchester came for a while, then John Page firm [Moody Bible] Institute in Chicago and several others. Later Gosnell accepted the responsibility to teach; but he also gave it up. At that time Milwaukee was called the evangelists' graveyard; it was a hard place. [Gosnell] told Mr. Huston, "There's an Irishman down there in Chicago. I believe he can make a go of it anyone can." So I came up and was introduced to Mr. Huston. I came for the first time in 1924.

Then Mr. Huston found out that I didn't believe in water baptism and that I was always "hopping"<sup>30</sup> as they said on Pauline truth, the message of the gospel of the grace of God. I think brother Huston concluded no one could hurt the situation any [more?], so he gambled with me. I'll never forget the first meeting we held in the little hall in January 1924. There were about twenty-five people there. I think about twelve were leaning toward Pentecostalism, and two or three got right near the door so they could get out in case they didn't like what I was saying. Later, Mr. Huston came to me and said, "Let's make a go of this . . . . If you'll stand by, I'll finance it and we'll keep going." We did, and after a little while attendance increased and we kept going until you, brother Baker, came here to take over.

## 2. THE MESSAGE OF GRACE

Perhaps you'd like to know, in the meantime, how I got into the message of grace. About two or three years before I went to North Shore [Church], I had gone down to St. Louis where there was a place called the Gospel Center. Bill Sharp, who had been superintendent of the Sunshine Gospel Mission on Clark Street in Chicago, had gone down to St Louis. They were meeting on the corner of Grand and Finney, and were having a terrible time because it wasn't really a good place for a rescue mission. It was a better place for a Bible center for teaching the Bible. There was a wonderful man of God there, O. B. Bottorff;<sup>31</sup> he's still alive. I stayed for nineteen weeks that year with brother Bottorff. Between the meetings, I had gone over to

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<sup>30</sup>O'Hair's wording may have been "harping"; perhaps the transcriber heard "hopping"; or, O'Hair actually said "hopping."

<sup>31</sup>Bottorff was a Christian businessman in St. Louis and involved in city rescue missions and Bible teaching. At least one letter of O'Hair to Bottorff survives. Before 1930 Bottorff founded a union of fundamentalist churches which later joined the Independent Fundamental Churches of America shortly after it was organized.

Indianapolis where I was with brother Jim Nipper at the Empire Theater. While I was preaching there the Lord was blessing. The majority of the people attending belonged to the American Holiness Society,<sup>32</sup> the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and the Pentecostals and Nazarenes. Brother Nipper said [to me], “Did you ever see such great zeal?” and “Why is it that the evangelical grace people do not have this zeal and enthusiasm?” I said, “I don’t know,” and he said, “They’d be a wonderful people if we’d just get them delivered from some of their teaching and bring them out into the gospel of grace.” He said, “Let’s do our best,” and I said, “All right.” He said, “I’d like to have you get up a message and tell them why tongues are not God’s message and program for today.” I said, “All right.” I was staying<sup>33</sup> at the Washington Hotel; I went to my room and prayed, and got up a message on “Three Reasons Why Tongues Ceased When Paul Reached Rome.” I went back and delivered that message at the Empire Theater. The next night a Pentecostal preacher came to me and said, “Brother, that argument last night was unanswerable.” I believe you gave the truth. I want you to know I’m giving up Pentecostalism and tongues. And he did.

About five years later I was in Austin near Chicago; I was there to hear a Plymouth Brethren speak in the Brethren Hall. He was about thirty-six and had a lovely wife. He came up, patted me on the shoulder, and said to his wife, “Here’s the man who led me out of Pentecostalism five years ago down at Indianapolis.” But when he came out, I didn’t know anything about him, but the other man gave it up.<sup>34</sup> And then [the man who gave it up] came back two nights later there in the Empire Theater and said to me, “brother O’Hair, I went home and did some thinking myself last night; and this is my conclusion: the same three reasons you gave to prove that tongues ceased with the close of the book of Acts—I can prove by the same three arguments that water baptism ceased at the same time.” “Oh,” I said,

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<sup>32</sup>Apparently there was no organized holiness association or body of this name. The name may have been O’Hair’s term for several affiliated holiness groups.

<sup>33</sup>The transcript reads, “stopping”; this oddity may be the transcriber’s attempt to understand the tape.

<sup>34</sup>He apparently means—this man at the Plymouth Brethren meeting had left Pentecostalism, although O’Hair did not know about it until this contact; the other man seems to be the man who, as O’Hair says above, told him after the message at the Empire Theater that he was leaving Pentecostalism.

“You’re mistaken.” “Well,” he said, “You asked me to be a Berean, didn’t you?” I said, “Yes.” He said, “I was honest wasn’t I?” [I said,] “Yes.” He said, “I had the courage of my convictions and I found out I was wrong. Will you do the same?” So I went to the Washington Hotel, took out my Bible, put down those three reasons, and studied and studied until after two o’clock in the morning. I [finally] said [to myself], “That man is absolutely right.”

In studying the Bible, I presume you’ve learned<sup>35</sup> that water baptism and the Lord’s Supper are never connected; they are never mentioned as sacraments, and we remember the Lord at the Lord’s Table as a memorial: “As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you show forth the Lord’s death till he shall come.” But I said signs and visions and tongues and angelic visitations—all of these things are inseparably connected with water baptism. There is not one mention of a record of water baptism where we do not find linked with it something else of a Jewish ceremony or vision or speaking in tongues or what we call divine healing as a miraculous sign healing. Everywhere you have water baptism in connection therewith you have a sign—some kind of a sign. Any exegesis or any intelligent principle of progressive revelation or dispensationalism that will eliminate the signs must of necessity [also] deliver us from or rule out water baptism. The last recorded water baptism in the Bible is found in the 19th chapter of Acts—if indeed these disciples were re-baptized. After that we find the apostle Paul laying hands on those people, and they prophesied and spoke with tongues, and then immediately it says God performed special miracles by the hands of Paul, and handkerchiefs and aprons were brought to him for his blessing; the demons were cast out by these blessed handkerchiefs and aprons, and the sick were healed. We then come to the 20th chapter and find out that Paul was able to raise the dead. We speak of the 28th chapter of Matthew as the great commission. Certainly the 10th chapter [of Matthew] was a great commission when the Lord said to the Twelve, “Go not in the way of the Gentiles, but to the house of Israel. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out the demons, raise the dead.” The same Lord Jesus who told the twelve apostles to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost, told them to raise the dead. They went forth and the signs followed them. I presume you’ve noticed that about every sign or miracle performed

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<sup>35</sup>Another reference to Baker as the immediate listener to the taped narrative.

by Peter, the Lord permitted Paul to duplicate

Now, brother Baker, getting back to the ministry I spoke of at the Gospel Center in St. Louis, I’ll never forget the first Sunday I was there. There was a big burlap curtain hung between the front porch and the back part of the large room. There were about sixty-five or sixty-six people there and most were women who were way past middle age. They had just recently received great blessing in a Pentecostal meeting. When I walked in I said, “I don’t know what we’re going to do here.” But they asked me to teach the book of Acts; so I taught the book of Acts, and we saw that there was going to be a division, but kept going. And before we knew it we had about half of them brought over into the message of the grace of God. The report went out and there was a wonderful Bible class there; it has remained faithful to the grace message. They had once been under the teaching of William R. Newell. And one of the ladies came to the meeting and went back and told the [her own?] class, “There’s a man over there at the Gospel Center now who’s teaching very much like Mr. Newell; he’s teaching the Pauline gospel of grace.” And within four months we had about 200 people in our Bible class at the Gospel Center. They paid off the indebtedness and God began to bless. I have a letter in my file from Mr. Bottorff. In it he said, “Humanly speaking there would not be a Gospel Center here in St. Louis if it hadn’t been for your ministry.” After that, brother Bottorff turned away from teaching the distinctive ministry of Paul. Some people got in there, and although [Bottorff] stood for the one baptism, he went back on it and we had to sever our relation; still, he did a wonderful work there.

When I was teaching at Indianapolis, after I gave the message “Three Reasons Why Tongues Ceased when Paul Reached Rome,” and the Pentecostals challenged me to study and apply the same principle [to water baptism]—“Three Reasons Why Water Baptism Ceased when Paul Reached Rome—a man walked up and said to me, “Here’s a book that teaches almost what you teach.”<sup>36</sup> That book was by A. E. Bishop who had been a missionary in Central America. It was entitled, *Signs and Tongues and Visions not God’s Order for Today*. I was particularly interested in it because it had an endorsement on the front page by Dr. C. I. Scofield for whom I

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<sup>36</sup>Here the account combines two Indianapolis events. In *Accuser of the Brethren and the Brethren* (1945), p. 3, O’Hair separates by “a few nights” the “challenge” on water baptism and the Bishop “book” scene noted here.

had great respect. Dr. Scofield was brought to the Lord by two of the elders in the church where I was a member,<sup>37</sup> where I was associated—the Washington-Compton Church in St. Louis which later became Brookes Memorial Church; Dr. Scofield was well thought of there.

I always thank God for the men who meant so much to me in my ministry when I was first saved, Leon Tucker, for example. Not many months after I was first saved I received his booklet, “Wonderful Words of Truth.”<sup>38</sup> I also had Dr. I. M. Haldeman, *How to Understand the Bible*. And then for many months [I was] under Harris Gregg, the pastor of Washington-Compton Church [in St. Louis].<sup>39</sup> These men of God really knew the gospel of the grace of God. Then I saw Dr. Scofield’s name in his endorsement of the book of A. E. Bishop [Signs, Wonders and Visions Not God’s Order for Today].<sup>40</sup> Although I didn’t know very much about Mr. Bishop, I read it and it’s a very interesting book—a book every Christian ought to read, especially right now when there is a wave of fanaticism and healing all over this country and in other lands. In that book, Scofield endorses Bishop’s teaching. In that teaching he says God did not start a new church after the 28th chapter of Acts, but that God brought in a new order, and the sign gifts of 1 Corinthians 12 were operative only during the period covered by the book of Acts. He also endorsed there the teaching of Sir Robert Anderson in which Anderson says our program today and the way we walk today is not by sight but by faith according to the words of the Lord who spoke to

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<sup>37</sup>One of the two was Thomas McPheeters, a member of the Washington-Compton Church (see R. T. Mangum and M. S. Sweetnam, *The Scofield Bible: Its History and Impact on the Evangelical Church* [Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2009], p. 78, and their documentation). The other man is unknown unless it was J. H. Brookes himself, the pastor of Washington-Compton Church and Scofield’s first personal mentor after his conversion.

<sup>38</sup>The international publication index WorldCat has no such title, although it might exist. Perhaps O’Hair was using the title of Tucker’s periodical, *The Wonderful Word*, a magazine he published for several years.

<sup>39</sup>Harris Gregg was J. H. Brookes’ successor at Washington-Compton Church. Brookes died in 1897. O’Hair arrived in St. Louis in 1902-1903 when he began attending this church. Gregg sometimes spoke at Bible and prophetic conferences of the era; like Brookes, Gregg was a millenarian.

<sup>40</sup>O’Hair’s intent here was to include Scofield among teachers he learned from in the years after his conversion. In mentioning Bishop he skips the years from about 1904 to 1920 when he first read Bishop’s pamphlet.

Thomas and said, “Thomas, thou hast seen. Blessed is the man who hath not seen and yet hath believed.”

Sometimes we’re called “Bullingerites.” I’ve read many of Dr. Bullinger’s writings; but what I believe [did not come from Bullinger].<sup>41</sup> Really, the Pentecostal preacher who challenged me and the book of A. E. Bishop are what got me into the message that I am now proclaiming and that you love and all of us love . . . [and] that’s being taught here in Milwaukee Bible College. I did not get one line of it and did not know one thing Dr. Bullinger taught at that time. Later on I read some of his writings—many of his writings—and I know wherein we disagree with his teaching. We do not teach that a new church began and a new body after the 28th of Acts, neither do we believe his argument concerning soul sleeping or the annihilation of the soul, nor do we believe his argument that the Lord’s Supper has been done away with because it’s mentioned in connection with the blood of the new covenant. It is to be deplored that some of the brethren who began with us in emphasizing what we call the Pauline truth and the dispensation of the grace of God,<sup>42</sup> [and who with us sought] to show the principle that the Bible must be interpreted, understood and applied in the light of the truth which the Apostle Paul said was committed to him by revelation which we speak of as the dispensation of the mystery, [are no longer with us].

I’m sure you remember, brother Baker, the day we met at Des Plaines some years ago and decided we needed a Bible school where we could train young men. We decided to call it Milwaukee Bible Institute and to come here and buy property, although we had very little to begin with. We thank God for our brother Huston and what he meant to us in those days when we first started out, and for the friends who were so gracious and kind to let us have the money. I’m sure you and I, after these several years, thank God for Milwaukee Bible Institute now Milwaukee Bible College, and we thank God for those who have gone out [from this school]. Perhaps you do

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<sup>41</sup>O’Hair’s thought is somewhat broken in the typescript. Apparently his sense was an outline of the human sources of his theology which did not include Bullinger. The sources were rather the teachers named here and the 1920 Indianapolis events—the Pentecostal minister’s challenge and the Bishop pamphlet encounter.

<sup>42</sup>The sentence is incomplete in the typescript. The brackets represent what he seems to mean.

not remember, but about twenty-seven years ago, nineteen or twenty of us sat in the auditorium of the North Shore Church discussing the truth as it was revealed in the Bishop book, *Signs, Tongues and Visions—Not God’s Order for Today*, and what Dr. Scofield said [in his Introduction], that a new order began after the 28th of Acts after Paul reached Rome and miraculous sign gifts ceased and a new order [arose] in the dispensation of the grace of God. We have reason, I think, to be encouraged when we stop to think today that perhaps 30,000 people and more than thirty assemblies are now standing for this wonderful truth. We know the harm that’s been done by those who went into what is called “hyper-dispensationalism” and “ultra-dispensationalism.” We have to take a stand against that just as much as we do against the teaching of Pentecostalism—that signs and visions and all the miracles and those things which would still be in the church today and practiced and exercised by members of the body of Christ [because] we had the same faith and were as spiritual as the people who lived in the first Christian century.<sup>43</sup>

As we think of what has been accomplished here at Milwaukee Bible College, we thank God for the wonderful, gifted spiritual teachers we have who really know how to rightly divide the Word of Truth. I’m sure we think of that verse of Scripture in Isaiah which says, “The lame take the praise.” And we think of that as we think of what is being accomplished in the Belgian Congo through the missionaries under Worldwide Grace Testimony mission.<sup>44</sup> We thank God for the many friends who make that testimony possible; I think it’s remarkable. We could do many more things, of course, if the people had more of a vision. But when we look back and see what God has been able to do, we thank God for the men on our board and for the faithful friends who have stood by as we’ve carried on the work in Africa. We can look to the Lord, I’m sure, knowing there is a sense in which we can say, “My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” I don’t know that this refers to financial help, but we do look to him and thank God for Worldwide Grace Testimony and this wonderful ministry in Belgian Congo. We are trusting that other

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<sup>43</sup>The sentence is not entirely clear in the transcript; he seems to mean the Pentecostals would like to see the present church practicing all the signs and wonders exhibited in the book of Acts. Hence we have inserted [because] in the sentence instead of the transcript’s “that.”

<sup>44</sup>The mission was begun by O’Hair and his colleagues in the late 1930s.

missionaries will volunteer to go out, that the money will come, and we'll be able to send them. I hope, brother Baker, as you read this you'll keep in mind that I've been teaching here three or four hours a day, including this morning for three or four hours. Yesterday I taught three and a half hours. I had to go back to Chicago for a funeral. I thought I'd rest going down; [but] I sat in the dining car and a man opened the way, so I talked to him for one hour about the Lord. I had taught here the night before, on Tuesday, at Fundamental Bible Church. So when you read this, just remember that this is after all these hours of talking and teaching. I do pray that what we've been able to do this week in teaching the Word of God to the students will [help them] accomplish God's purpose in giving out God's Word.<sup>45</sup>

We ought to pray for one another and for everyone who is with the Grace Gospel Fellowship and other men who are preaching the gospel of the grace of God. Many of them are having a difficult time and many of them are being persecuted. We know this message is not a popular one. We remember how the Apostle Paul said to pray always with all prayer and supplication for all saints. Pray also for me that I may open my mouth boldly and preach the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in bonds. That's in Ephesian 6:18-21. Then in the 4th chapter of Colossians he prayed that we might all pray for open doors. And in the 1st chapter of Ephesians we are to give thanks to God and ask for the spirit of wisdom and knowledge and the revelation of him that the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we might know what is the hope of his calling, the riches of his inheritance in the saints, and the mighty power that he wrought in Christ when he raised him from and dead and placed him at the right hand in heaven where he is head over all things—all principalities and power—and made him head over all things under the church which is his body, the filling up of him that filleth all in all.<sup>46</sup> We haven't any option in this matter. God has given us this life and we'll have to go on teaching this wonderful truth; it's a real privilege.

This message of the dispensation of the grace of God and the dispensa-

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<sup>45</sup>The remainder of this sentence repeats its first clause, and so has been omitted.

<sup>46</sup>The quotations from Ephesians 6:18-21, Colossians 4:3 and Ephesians 1:17-23 in this paragraph are inexact and apparently from memory; therefore quotation marks have not been used.

tion of the mystery—this distinctive ministry the Lord gave to and through the Apostle Paul, is the greatest need of the age today. It is God’s answer to every ism and ill with which the church of Jesus Christ is afflicted. It seems to me that God is going to bring our fundamentalist brethren to their senses with a rod of fanaticism.<sup>47</sup> Everywhere we turn today people are going back and talking about a full gospel. Although they talk about a full gospel, their gospel is not very full, because they pick out a few things and include them in their programs. A full gospel means far more than that. If they’re going back to Pentecost, they ought not only to have their tongues and signs and healings and visions, they should have a kingdom communism and divide their property, they should have angelic visitation, they should raise the dead and cast out demons, and they ought to be able to go into the hospital where the veterans are, where those who are limbless and are in physical suffering [are], and they ought to be able to practice what they preach, which they call their full gospel.<sup>48</sup> And not only [pray] for that, but for the truth—to understand the Bible and know how to rightly divide the Word of Truth.<sup>49</sup> Surely we must interpret, apply and appropriate all Scripture in the light of Pauline truth as we call it, the dispensation of the grace of God and the dispensation of the mystery which are identical.

I mentioned the fact that the first Jew [mentioned earlier] was responsible for my going down to Louisiana where I was saved. Another Jew, meeting me in San Antonio, was responsible for my coming to the Chicago suburbs in 1917. I intended to come there just for two weeks and then return to San Antonio. But I returned to San Antonio to close up my business and move the family to Oak Park. The third Jew was a man who took over my mortgages and everything the very month in which I wanted to go into the Lord’s work; he relieved me of all that financial burden and trouble. And then there’s another Jew who meant so much to me and still does, although he got me into a lot of trouble. That fourth Jew was the apostle Paul. I believe with you that when we want to understand the Bible, we must realize that the Lord Jesus Christ by special revelation gave truth to

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<sup>47</sup>O’Hair uses this term for Pentecostalism regularly in his writings.

<sup>48</sup>About a dozen words have been passed over here since they repeat earlier words and phrases of this long sentence.

<sup>49</sup>[pray] has been inserted to explain O’Hair’s wording. In the first clause of the sentence the typescript reads “And not only for that, but for the truth . . . ,” but “for” does not fit anything in the preceding wording.

and through the apostle Paul called “the unsearchable riches of Christ,” that we are to be established by his gospel<sup>50</sup>—the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which was not made known or was kept secret from the foundation of the world.

Mr. Walmsley, the pastor of Fundamental Bible Church [here] has invited me to come again for the services this Thanksgiving (1955). They asked me last Tuesday when I was speaking for Mr. Hallman’s Bible class how many Thanksgivings [I had done this]. I think I have missed only one in the past thirty-one years. It’s always been a real privilege to come and I’ve always received a blessing. The Lord willing, I’ll be very happy to be here again; that’s about two weeks [from now], for today is November 10th. We don’t know what’s going to take place and we do not want to say this or that, but if the Lord will, that we will do. Surely as we see the condition of the world today, we see no hope except for the coming of the Lord to put an end to this terrible epidemic of death. Thank God for that wonderful truth.

I’m now writing, brother Baker, my 158th book; I’ve written 157.<sup>51</sup> The last one I wrote is entitled *The All Sufficient, Much More Abounding Grace of the God of all Grace*. I’m writing another one now entitled, *We shall Not All Die*. What a wonderful truth that is; it’s the only thing that will put an end to this terrible epidemic of death. When we stop to think that 100 people die every hour in the United States, and of these about ten drop dead suddenly every hour, [we are stunned]. And when we think of the statement where God says, “He that being often reprov’d and hardeneth his neck shall be cut off suddenly and that without remedy,” [we are saddened].<sup>52</sup> Surely the people in this country have had the wonderful, wonderful opportunity to hear the gospel of salvation and be saved. We do not want to try to set any time as to the coming of the Lord, but we do want to remember that we’re to come behind in no gift waiting for the coming of the Lord. We’re looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of

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<sup>50</sup>The typescript reads “gospels (plural).” We suspect this is the transcriber’s error; it seems atypical that O’Hair would use the plural here.

<sup>51</sup>What O’Hair meant by “book” is unclear. He may have had a number-of-pages standard in mind, perhaps ten pages, less than which he thought of as a “tract.”

<sup>52</sup>This quote of Proverbs 29:1 is exact. In this line and the second line above, we have added words in brackets to complete broken off sentences in the typescript.

the great God, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now as I sign off, remember those words in which we rejoice: “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God or the sons of God. Beloved, now are we the sons of God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>The quote is from 1 John 3:1-2; in his quote a few words were added and some words were dropped at the end of verse one.

DISPENSATIONALISM AND CHRISTIAN  
WORLDVIEW: COMPATIBLE AND COMPLEMENTARY

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INTRODUCTION

Christian Worldview and Biblical Worldview<sup>2</sup> are terms we hear more and more often during discussions, in presentations, at conferences and in the academic world. Although these terms seem to mean the same thing, there is confusion regarding what they really mean. For some, having a “biblical worldview” means that one can offer some Bible verse to answer every question. For others, the Christian Worldview is in opposition (or comparison) to the Muslim worldview, the Atheist worldview, or some other religious or philosophical viewpoint.

In the midst of this confusion, some individuals have reservations about the background of Christian Worldview thinking and resist studying such ideas more deeply. There are also many Christians (both lay people and leaders) who are unaware of the ideas of Christian Worldview and why they matter. Beyond these, in relationship to dispensationalism, there may

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<sup>1</sup>Author’s note: I had the privilege of studying Christian Worldview in depth with Charles Colson and many of the sharpest Christian minds today. As part of the Centurions Program (now called the Colson Fellows), I studied the ideas of Christian Worldview in an intense one-year program which included study, reading and cultural analysis on each of the three aspects of Creation, Fall, and Redemption. It is from this background, along with my commitment to the Mid-Acts Dispensational perspective, that I share these thoughts.

<sup>2</sup>Capitalization is used for the word “worldview” when it is in reference to a specific narrative as described later in this article. Small case is used when referring to a general idea of how someone views the world.

be concerns that the principles of Christian Worldview thinking are not compatible with dispensationalism.

In the context of this article, Christian Worldview (CWV) refers to the overall narrative of Scripture as found in the contour of Creation, Fall and Redemption. To demonstrate how CWV is compatible and complementary with dispensationalism, this article will address the following areas. The first section will give a definition and description of CWV, albeit in abbreviated form due to space considerations. The second section will trace the principles of CWV, including clarifying thoughts about what it is and what it is not. Finally, a section presenting ideas on why dispensationalism and CWV are both compatible and complementary will end the article.

### DEFINING CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

Most discussions about CWV start much more generically and ask, “What is a worldview?” Michael Wittmer, in his introductory book on the subject of worldview, notes that a common theme running through various definitions of the term worldview suggests, “A worldview is a framework of fundamental concepts or beliefs about the world. In short, a worldview comprises the lens through which we see the world.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, a worldview is how we see the world and includes all that we bring to that view: our upbringing, our cultural context, our education, etc.

Beyond the general idea of worldview, there are important elements of biblical thinking which are foundational as one builds an understanding of a specifically Christian worldview. For the purpose of this article, a distinction is being made between thinking biblically (what some might call a biblical worldview) and the narrative framework of the CWV as defined below. These two ideas are dependent upon one another, and the overall need for biblical thinking is foundational to building and understanding CWV. There are many good resources that explore a broader basis for thinking biblically and the specific elements of the CWV.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Michael E. Wittmer, *Heaven is a Place on Earth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2004), 21.

<sup>4</sup>For a complete discussion on Christian Worldview ideas following the contour of Creation-Fall-Redemption, the following titles are suggested in order, from primer to more advanced: M. Wittmer, *Heaven is a Place on Earth* and Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 2004). For more on biblical thinking, see: W.G. Phillips, W. Brown,

As a narrative concept, the ideas of CWV follow the contour in the biblical story of Creation, Fall and Redemption.<sup>5</sup> It is this structure that will be used in this article to discuss how it is compatible and complementary for dispensationalism, and clarifying these ideas is the place to start.

### THE CONTOUR OF CWV

Who am I? Why am I here? How did I get here? Where did the world come from? What's wrong with the world? Why is there so much suffering and pain? Isn't there some way we can fix the problems in the world? What's wrong with me, and how do I fix my problems? What's the future going to be like? Will it be better or worse?

These questions and others like them are universal. In one way or another they must be answered, and in one way or another, everyone answers them. The answers reveal a person's worldview. Wittmer's entire book is structured around four questions: What is this place? Why are we here? What is wrong with me and the world? What is God's plan for this world?<sup>6</sup> From there, he proceeds to explain how each of these questions is answered from the perspective of the CWV.

Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey also teach CWV using similar questions. They note that "every worldview can be analyzed by the way it answers three basic questions: Where did we come from, and who are we (*creation*)? What has gone wrong with the world (*fall*)? And what can we do to fix it (*redemption*)?"<sup>7</sup> While their presentation includes some analysis of non-Christian worldviews, it primarily builds a case for the CWV as the one perspective which answers these questions holistically.

For the Christian, the answers to these kinds of questions are wrapped up in the biblical narrative that describe Creation, Fall and Redemption.

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J. Stonestreet, *Making Sense of Your World: A Biblical Worldview* (Salem, Wis: Sheffield, 2008); J. Sire, *Discipleship of the Mind* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1990); H. Blamires, *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2005).

<sup>5</sup>Some include a fourth and final category designated "Consummation," however, the concepts of consummation are considered by this author to be part of the redemptive process and are included in the category of Redemption.

<sup>6</sup>Wittmer, *Heaven is a Place on Earth*, 9.

<sup>7</sup>C. Colson and N. Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 14.

This contour provides a unifying narrative framework for Scripture, and is the basis for the gospel itself. To follow is a very basic overview, which gives the sense of the holistic narrative that CWV provides as one views the biblical story.

*Creation* as described in Genesis and referenced throughout the rest of Scripture was an act God declared as “good” (Genesis 1 & 2). Goodness is inherently part of God’s creative activity; Christians recognize this fact. When God made the heavens and earth, the trees and the fields, the fish and the birds, and everything else, He regarded His creation and was satisfied (“It is good”). When He created humans, Adam and Eve, He was greatly satisfied (“It is very good”). Humanity was God’s glory in the Garden, and he was given dominion over all of creation – and this was good and right, for God made it that way. Man was to live with blessing and abundance.<sup>8</sup> This was to be “normal” for God’s creation.

The *Fall* describes both the action and the results when Adam chose to honor himself and his wife over and above God. Temptation came. Adam considered his own wisdom superior to that of God (autonomy and pride). He disobeyed God and sin entered the world. Using the term *Fall* is descriptive in that Adam at that time became separated from God. Adam not only subjected himself to death and separation, but he also subjected everything under his dominion (all of creation) was also subjected to the imprisonment of his sin. This is what Paul means when he says all of creation was “subjected to futility” (Rom 8:20). Adam’s sin affected everything, and now everything is askew. It is bent. It is no longer right. This is the common human experience. Mankind now experiences scarcity and difficulty. What we experience as a result of the *Fall* is no longer “normal.”

Thankfully, God provided a way to restore His original intention for His creation. This is what Christians call *Redemption*. It is more than Christ’s provision on the cross in taking man’s sin and giving believers His righteousness (2 Cor 5:21), although mankind’s restoration is certainly where redemption in this world begins. While it is vital to recognize Christ’s work is a key and the central part, *Redemption* provides more than salvation for the soul. It stretches into creation itself to restore it to God as He had first

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<sup>8</sup>The reality of blessing and abundance as part of God’s creation are discussed in John R. Schneider, *The Good of Affluence: Seeking God in a Culture of Wealth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002).

intended (Rom 8:18-23). The benefits of Christ's redemptive work are both present and future. The Christian is secure in God's grace now, and yet awaits the final redemption of his body, and ultimately the redemption of all creation. *Redemption* is God's great correction for the effects of sin and for returning, and glorifying, the "normal" He had initially planned.

#### A SHORT LIST OF WHAT CWV IS NOT

CWV is not proof-texting. One does not have a CWV nor understand the various aspects of worldview just because he can quote a verse to prove or disprove something. Rather, understanding CWV is knowing how to analyze the world through the over-arching story of Creation, Fall, and Redemption.

CWV is not a philosophy, although it contains elements of philosophical thinking. Philosophy is a distinct field of study, so there may be overlap but the two should not be confused.

CWV is not a study in comparative religions, although worldview issues will be part of this kind of study (such as David Noebel's *Understanding the Times*).<sup>9</sup> Rather, CWV is one of many worldviews that may be studied side-by-side with other religions.

#### DISPENSATIONALISM AND CWV TOGETHER

Some in Dispensational circles may fear CWV thinking is linked historically to Reformed Theology (i.e., Covenant Theology), especially as developed by Abraham Kuyper in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and then popularized in Francis Schaeffer's writings in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. Both Kuyper and Schaeffer were influential Reformed pastors, teachers and theologians.

Although this connection with modern Reformed theology is true, there is evidence of the three-fold contour of Creation-Fall-Redemption in theological writing long before the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. For only one example, one can look to Martin Luther in his Large Catechism. Although Luther is not teaching CWV per se, he uses this framework in his comments on the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed.

When we were *created* and had received all manner of blessings from God the Father, the devil came and led us into disobedience and *sin*, death

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<sup>9</sup>David Noebel, *Understanding the Times* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1994).

and all misery; so that we lay under God's anger and wrath, and were condemned to eternal damnation, as we had justly merited. No counsel, no help or comfort, was there for us until the only and eternal Son of God, in his unfathomable goodness, had pity on our miserable wretchedness and came to help us. Thus all the tyrants and oppressors have been routed, and in their stead is Jesus Christ, the Lord of life, of righteousness, of everything pertaining to our welfare and salvation; he has rescued us poor lost creatures from the jaws of hell; he has *redeemed* us, made us free and restored us to God's favor and grace; he has taken us as his own, under his shelter and protection, that beneath his government we may experience his mercy, his power and wisdom, his life and salvation.<sup>10</sup> (*italics added*)

This section of the creed covers the life and work of Christ, yet Luther begins this paragraph with the truth of the *Creation* of humanity having received "all manner of blessings" (in other words, we were created in goodness). He immediately moves into describing the *Fall* and the entry of "sin, death and all misery" into the human condition (in other words, goodness is broken and mankind is under God's wrath). Finally, he comes full circle and explains that Jesus Christ "has *redeemed* us, made us free and restored us to God's favor."

Some of the more recent and significant developments in CWV teaching have originated from non-Reformed teachers, as can be seen in a simple online search. Glenn Sunshine provides an excellent overview of worldviews in the history of Western civilization, and further details can be found in his book.<sup>11</sup> The fear that CWV thinking is too intertwined with Covenant or Reformed theology is not based on the historical evidence.

#### COMPATIBLE AND COMPLEMENTARY

The contours of CWV provide the overall narrative framework for Scripture (i.e., the story), while dispensational analysis of Scripture guides the interpretation of that story as it flows through time. These ideas are both compatible and complementary.

As one approaches Scripture from a mid-Acts dispensational hermeneu-

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<sup>10</sup>Martin Luther, *Luther's Large Catechism* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1935), 118.

<sup>11</sup>Glenn S. Sunshine, *Why You Think the Way You Do: The Story of Western Worldviews from Rome to Home* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2009).

tic, there are a number of areas that benefit from keeping a CWV framework in mind. Several suggested primary areas are discussed below, and there is no doubt further clarity on these and other aspects would come through further study.

#### CWV HELPS DEAL WITH SOME CRITICISMS REGARDING DISPENSATIONAL DISTINCTIONS

Anyone studying and teaching dispensational theology for a long period of time is well aware of the criticisms regarding the dispensational approach to Scripture. Charles Baker certainly understood the situation as he noted, “Considerable criticism has been leveled against this dispensational scheme, especially as represented on charts of the dispensations...”<sup>12</sup> When viewing such charts, it certainly creates a problem with seeing the full scope of the biblical story when each dispensation is cut off from the others by sharp distinctions (lines, circles, etc.).

In explanation, Baker states the issue clearly. He considers “the study of the Bible dispensationally will result in noting the differences or distinctions between these several systems or bodies of principles by which God has governed man, as well as in seeing the similarities. *The differences, however, are much more important* than the similarities from the dispensational point of view”<sup>13</sup> [italics added]. By focusing on the differences, many dispensationalists lose the balance needed to keep the similarities in focus (although Baker’s writings do not suggest such an imbalance). The result is criticism toward dispensationalism for “chopping up” the Scriptures.

However, as an umbrella concept for teaching from a dispensational perspective, the Creation-Fall-Redemption contour of CWV provides much needed glue to hold the Scriptures together. CWV can inform and clarify the distinctions created by a dispensational approach, creating a more balanced understanding of the Scriptures and the full story of the gospel (see below).

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<sup>12</sup>Charles F. Baker, *A Dispensational Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Grace Publications, 1994), 5.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid. 1.

CWV AS A NARRATIVE CAN HELP AVOID THE PITFALLS OF  
PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM

CWV and dispensationalism are compatible and complementary. It is important to note, however, that both CWV and traditional forms of dispensationalism may share some elements with progressive dispensationalism, but that does not draw them into the progressive camp.

For example, Charles Ryrie notes, “In general, progressives speak of a single, or unified, kingdom of God in both Testaments...”<sup>14</sup> Although some CWV discussion centers on the kingdom of God, there are differing views on this topic from different authors. In addition, the contour of creation-fall-redemption is not dependent upon retaining a view of the kingdom as an over-arching principle as proposed by progressive dispensationalists.

Another example also demonstrates this point: “Progressives do not see the church as completely distinct from Israel as normative dispensationalists have maintained. Neither do they consider the mystery concept of the church to mean that the church was not revealed in the Old Testament, only that it was unrealized.”<sup>15</sup> Again, the contours of CWV as described in this article do not require the rejection of this distinction between the Church and Israel. Rather, elements of CWV can raise awareness of this distinction as one studies the concepts of Creation, Fall and Redemption more deeply.

CWV IS THE STORY AND NARRATIVE FRAMEWORK  
OF THE WHOLE GOSPEL

For too long the modern evangelical church has preached an anemic gospel, rather than the fullness of the “good news.” The story of the gospel begins with creation, from which one can explain why the gospel is “good news.” God created all things in goodness, including mankind. His intent for man was that he be the God-appointed caretaker of His created realm. In other words, mankind was to stand in the place of God on earth as its ruler. Humans were to be His royal representatives and nurturers. Reading the first two chapters of Genesis gives a clear description how good this creation was, and the overall positive relationship that was to be between God, man and the created order.

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<sup>14</sup>C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago: Moody, 2007.), 194.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.* 205.

Only after establishing the goodness of creation can the fall of man into sin be understood completely. Sin thoroughly distorted God's intention for creation. As Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. explains, "The whole range of human miseries, from restlessness and estrangement through shame and guilt to the agonies of daytime television—all of them tell us that things in human life are not as they ought to be."<sup>16</sup> The reality that things are not as they ought to be is only in comparison to what we know from the creation story about how things should be. This part of the CWV story places the gospel into its proper context. The goodness of creation was infected (St. Augustine aptly refers to sin as a cancer), and everyone innately knows things are not right. Plantinga aptly uses the word "corruption."<sup>17</sup>

It is from this comparative stance between the goodness that once was and the corruption of sin that now is that one can appreciate the need for redemption, which is the final piece of the gospel narrative. Many Christians only understand redemption as "the gospel," but it only really becomes good news in the fuller understanding that God created in goodness and that goodness was altogether distorted, damaged and infected by sin. The "good news" is that God has entered into this situation to restore all things to His original intent. The fullness of the gospel stretches beyond the saving of human souls and expands to all of the created order (see Romans 8). God's good news is that redemption in Christ touches everything!

CWV ENCOURAGES THE DIGNITY OF WORK IN ALL AREAS OF LIFE  
AS REDEMPTIVE PARTNERS WITH CHRIST

Once there is a complete understanding of the gospel as told in the narrative framework of CWV, a foundation has been laid for the dignity of human work in all areas of life. As God restores the human soul, the Christian begins a journey of transformation. That transformation will touch others as they see a changed life. But how do people see a changed life unless believers fulfill God's calling in their lives?

The transformation within the believer sets him free. Life becomes the reality of being "living sacrifices" (Rom 12:1-2) as each serves God by serving others. As long as service does not violate the character of God,

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<sup>16</sup>Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., *Not the Way it's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995), 2.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid. 28ff.

one discovers that anything is, in fact, part of the redemptive activity of God in the world. It is not necessary to be in so-called “Christian service” to be involved in redemptive activity. Christians push back on the effects of sin in their homes, in their families, in their work, and in their play as they seek to restore order, goodness, truth and beauty. That means all sorts of labor are dignified for Christian engagement, and it is vital that Christians engage all areas of life.

Personal redemption makes the believer into a redeemer; the Christian is a co-redeemer with Christ. Sin broke man’s relationships: with God, with self, with other humans, and with the created order. Redemption begins to restore those relationships, and in many ways the believer can take an active role in this restoration. Wittmer notes, “redemption is both gift and responsibility...so those who understand that they are reconciled to God, others, and the earth will not rest on these laurels but will actively seek to live out this reconciliation.”<sup>18</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

In summary, it is clear the ideas of Christian Worldview and the contours of such thinking are both compatible and complementary with a dispensational approach to the Scriptures. Certainly, there are many aspects mentioned in this paper which just scratch the surface of the issues, and greater consideration of those areas is important. As culture continues to change, it is vital that proponents of the mid-Acts dispensational perspective continue to seek ways, such as proposed here, to proclaim the truth found in God’s word and rethink methods about how to explain a dispensational approach to the Scriptures.

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<sup>18</sup>Wittmer, 195.

## THE DEMON WHO WOULDN'T AND THE DISCIPLES WHO COULDN'T

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And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met Him. And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, 'Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is my only child. And, lo, a spirit takes him, and he suddenly cries out; and it tears him that he foams again, and bruising him hardly departs from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not" (Luke 9:37-40).

How different from the scene atop the Mount of Transfiguration whence they had just come! There Peter, James, John and the Lord had witnessed the vision where "the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:29-31).

Following a scene of such transfiguration glory it must have been a huge let-down to be so greeted by the demon who wouldn't. Not long before this the Lord had sent out "His twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick" (Luke 9:1-2). They had participated in a ministry of miracles such as the world had never seen. But now it was not going very well at all! They had met their match, more than their match!

Since Peter, James and John were with the Lord on the mount, this demonic problem was experienced by the nine apostles left behind. They had not been idle, having attended diligently to their miracle-ministry, but now had encountered a problem of major proportions. Something was missing

and they had no clue.

According to the lad's father these disciples had tried earnestly to dispel the demon vexing his son, but to no avail. Surely they had tried more than once. Surely several, if not all of the nine had "tried his hand." Their failure was complete. Try as they would, this demon would not budge! How they must have waited anxiously for the Lord's return from the mount. We have done this before with great success. What is different now and why won't this demon budge?

Helpless disciples and a grieving father greeted the Lord and explained their desperate situation and their fruitless attempts at healing. It was then the Lord answered, "'O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.' And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father."

"And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying" (Luke 9:41-45).

Matthew's record sheds the light we seek:

When they were come to the multitude, there came to Him a certain man, kneeling down to Him, and saying, 'Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falls into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him.' Then Jesus answered and said, 'O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to Me.' And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, 'Why could not we cast him out?' And Jesus said unto them, 'Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting' (Matt 17:14-21).

However, the Lord's answer was still perplexing. What did He mean by "this kind... etc." Was this a demon of a special kind, a demon with too

much resistance for the power granted thus far to the disciples? And what is the significance of “prayer and fasting.” What did “prayer and fasting” have to do with the situation? And what was it they did not believe that seemed to be a problem? And what was it the disciples did not believe? These questions represent several aspects of a very difficult situation.

Such perplexities bothered me for more years than I wish to admit. Furthermore, I could get no help from anyone I asked. Commentaries I consulted seemed to overlook the issues and shed little light, so I laid the problem aside but could not forget it.

One day while reading through my Bible I came upon the passage in Matthew 9:14-15 where

“Then came to Him the disciples of John, saying, ‘Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but Thy disciples fast not?’ And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.”

Here we notice the Lord defending His disciples for not fasting, when at that time the disciples of John and the Pharisees were fasting. Since fasting expresses sorrow, the Lord explained that His disciples could not be expected to fast and be sorrowful while in His presence. In His illustration the Lord pictured Himself as the bridegroom and added that the “days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them...and then shall they fast.”

That's it! Here is the clue we missed. Before the Mount of Transfiguration and yet immediately after the Lord had given Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven we read, “From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.” The Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus, would be taken from them. But did they believe it?

How did Peter take it? He was outraged and rebuked the Lord! “Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee.” Peter wanted no part with that message! “But He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matt 16:22-23).

How did the other disciples feel? They felt exactly like Peter! Had they

believed their Lord would soon be taken from them by crucifixion they would surely have been “praying and fasting” and having great success dispelling demons of every kind! Instead they were engrossed with gaining positions of prominence in His coming kingdom. How sad indeed.

“And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill Him, and the third day He shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry” (Matt 17:22-23). They seem to be catching on, but they are not yet taking this message of Christ’s impending death seriously. They are sorrowful but have not yet embraced the Lord’s words.

This explains the Lord’s words, “Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matt 17:20).

Would you say “Faith smaller than a grain of mustard seed” is mighty small faith! While refusing to believe the Lord’s announcement of His being taken away from them by way of the cross, they were not at all in harmony with His “change of program,” and were therefore helpless to continue their ministry of miracles, signs, and wonders.

Luke’s record makes clear to us what was still hidden to them, “And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered everyone at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, ‘Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.’” What had they learned from the Mount of Transfiguration? Did they not hear Moses and Elijah talking about the Lord’s death which He would accomplish at Jerusalem? Whatever they learned on the mount, their lips were sealed for “as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead” (Matt 17:9).

“But they understood not this saying ... and it was hid from them ... they perceived it not: and ... they feared to ask him of that saying. Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest” (Luke 9:43-46). While jockeying for positions of greater honor, they seem clueless and still have no idea of what the Lord has been trying to teach them? O ye of little faith... “O faithless and perverse generation...” (Matt 17:17). Don’t you wonder sometimes what He would say to us?

The real problem was not the demon who wouldn't. It was the apostles in unbelief who couldn't, and most sorrowful of all, they did not know why. Are not our thoughts recalled to poor dear Samson, shorn of the hair of his strength, who did not know "that the Lord was departed from him" (Judges 16:20)?



## GOD'S PURPOSE THROUGH THE AGES

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### INTRODUCTION

Today Christians can significantly benefit from recognizing God's primary purpose shown throughout His movements in the Bible; namely, during the course of time God brings glory to Himself through various interactions with mankind. As we study His Word, we can understand how He began to accomplish this goal by giving the Law, how He further achieves it under Grace, and how He will consummate this objective in the Messianic Kingdom. As believers identify the way in which similarities and differences within these programs are used to showcase His glory, many Scriptures make more sense. This increased awareness then helps us better determine which aspects of His revelation we should follow at the present time. When we internalize this knowledge, we can actually become a conduit for others to perceive the greatness of our God while they observe Him touching our lives.

### "GLORY" DEFINED

Before discussing how God brings glory to Himself, let us first consider what this word means. The noun "glory" (*doxa*) conveys the idea of an opinion or notion developed about something (Matt. 6:29; 1 Cor. 11:7; Phil. 3:19; 1 Thess. 2:6). In reference to God's glory, we can gain a perception about His greatness or splendor by grasping the tremendous, biblical realities concerning who He is, what He has done and what He will do (Matt. 19:28; John 2:11; Rom. 1:23; Eph. 1:6, 12, 14). As a result of comprehending the nature of God, we are able to conceptualize His Person, form a mental image of His character, and deepen our confidence in His reputation as the One who is worthy of absolute trust.

## THE LAW – GOD’S OFFER OF SALVATION

Having touched on the meaning of glory, let us observe how God displayed it by giving the Law of Moses to Israel. Under this Law, He offered the Jewish people “life” and entrance into the Land which was promised to their father, Abraham. These promises were conditional because they depended on whether the Jews would commit themselves to “obey” the Law (Deut. 30:1-6, 15-16, 19). The deal was both clear and simple. If they would keep the Law, God told them, “I . . . will be your God and ye shall be my people” (Exod. 19:5-6; Lev. 26:3, 12). Israel freely accepted these terms. For, when Moses presented the Law to them, they responded by saying, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do” (Exod. 19:8).

However, the Jewish people did not really keep His Law, which is a recurrent theme throughout the Old Testament. Then, Jesus’ time on earth came, and this same problem of rebellion emerged when He presented Himself as their Messiah (Matt. 23:37-39). They rejected Him and His message just as their fathers had rejected God’s prophets, beginning with Moses and continuing all the way through Old Testament times. Finally, Israel, as a nation, refused to accept Jesus when He was proclaimed to be their “Christ” in the beginning of the Book of Acts (3:12-4:22; 5:17-40; 7:51-60).

In Romans 3:19-20, God reveals His true intent for giving the Law when He explains it was so “all the world [Jew and Gentile] would be under judgment to God” and “through the Law is the full knowledge of sin.” These statements show the Law was given to demonstrate how no man can become acceptable to God by works. On the contrary, mankind is completely condemned by the Law (Rom. 7:9-11).

## THE CHURCH: SALVATION IS BY THE GRACE OF GOD

God uses the principle of man’s inability to be righteous by works as a basis to reveal His purpose today (Gal 2:21; 3:21-22). He does this through a program which was previously hidden but has now been revealed. It is described in the writings of Paul as the “administration of the grace of God” or “the mystery” (Eph. 3:2-3, 8-9; Col. 1:24 – 2:3). This revelation teaches men can have a righteous standing before God. But in contrast to obtaining this virtuous state by human works, this message presents the

Father as the One who Justifies men through His Son's shed blood on the cross – God's loving, gracious and merciful provision to forgive sin (Rom. 3:21-26; Eph. 2:1-9; 1 Tim. 1:12-16).

Now mankind has a way to become acceptable in God's presence by believing in what Jesus Christ accomplished on our behalf (Rom. 3:21-28; 5:1; Eph. 2:8-9). However, Scripture also teaches men are incapable of generating the kind of good within themselves which would empower any person to receive this reconciliation. The symptoms of this spiritual disability are conveyed by our lack of desire to admit we are sinners, recognize our need for a savior, or please God (Rom. 3:10-18, 8:6-8; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 John 1:8, 10). Therefore, if anyone is to be saved, God needs to take the initiative.

He does this by means of "election." The most comprehensive explanation of how this works is recorded in the Book of Romans, chapters 8 through 11. Concluding His purpose laid out in this passage, "God locked up all into the state of disobedience that He might show mercy on all" (Rom. 11:30-32, see also 8:28-30; 9:11-13). The "all" includes both Jew and Gentile as equals in our natural, degenerate state. And, the word "might," which occurs in the subjunctive mode, means God can choose to "show mercy on" whoever He wants.

The idea God saves men by mercy is first introduced in Romans where it says, "I will have mercy on whomever I might have mercy" (Rom. 9:15). Just like in Romans 11:32, the subjunctive mode, translated "might," is used to indicate God exercises the choice or the prerogative to bestow mercy on whoever He "wills" (vv. 16, 18). Also, the verb translated "I will have mercy" (elehso) is in the active voice indicating God actively exercises or initiates His will to bestow this mercy. Here, salvation based on the mercy of God is presented as having its foundation in the "will" (boulhmati), plan or intention of God alone (Rom. 9:16-19).

These thoughts follow a historical discussion concluding with how the birth of Jacob and Esau fits into God's purpose. This context teaches how God chose Jacob according to His Divine purpose and not according to this man's work. The proof Jacob's works had nothing to do with God's choosing him is illustrated by the fact He was chosen before he was born (Rom. 9:10-13).

Then, verses 19-24 contain the clearest declaration of how election is based on the sovereign action of God. In this passage, Paul answers someone who challenges God's fairness regarding the manner by which He has chosen to save men. For they criticize the Spirit's instruction about how God shows "mercy" on some and "hardens" others by saying, "Why does He still find fault, for who has resisted His will?" (9:18-19). Paul's terse response to this human-sourced thinking is, "Oh man, who are you who answers back to God!" (9:20). Then, he proceeds to illustrate how the Creator, like a potter, has the prerogative to do as He wishes with vessels He makes. Expanding on this thought, he concludes if God wants to display His "wrath" through vessels prepared "for destruction," or if He desires to glorify vessels previously prepared for "mercy" to "make known the richness of His glory," our Divine Artisan has the full right to do so.

A major biblical teaching which validates the need for "election" is all men are evil by nature and, therefore, unwilling to accept God's gift of redemption (Rom. 7:5; 8:6-8). The thought of God choosing men according to His will is difficult to grasp because it confronts the very fiber of human perception that unsaved men can make choices acceptable to God by their own free will. God does give mankind an open invitation to trust in the blood of Christ for salvation. Nevertheless, because of the spiritually dead state which all men occupy as a result of sin, none of us will choose to believe (Eph. 2:1-3; Col. 2:13). This leads back to the point, the "mercy" of God is required for anyone to be saved. "Mercy" means God will not repay our sinful actions with the wrath we deserve. In conjunction with this loving act of "mercy," His grace frees us from the Devil's bondage enabling us to receive the provision of righteousness in Christ (2 Cor. 4:3-6; Eph. 2:4-9; 2 Tim. 2:25-26).

Paul gives himself as an "example" of one who received saving grace in 1 Timothy 1:12-16. This passage explains how he as the "chief" or foremost of sinners was saved by the "mercy" of God. Since "mercy" is mentioned twice in this passage, it is the factor of emphasis involved in both saving Paul and making him the pattern of how all men come to "believe," resulting in "eternal life" (Acts 9:15; Gal. 1:15-16). This teaching correlates with Romans 11:5, regarding how "in the present time a remnant has come into being according to the election of grace." Paul includes himself in this group of individual Jews God chose to become His children (11:1). Then,

verse 6 says, "If by grace, it is no longer out of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace." When Romans 11:1-6, which connects election to the giving of grace, is tied with contexts detailing the extension of mercy, it is evident these three actions are interrelated aspects of how God carries out His purpose (Rom. 9:16, 18; 11:30-32).

Now, how do these elect ones receive God's provision of salvation? It is by "faith." And, the following contexts show how God gives this belief to the chosen, which we then utilize to place trust in the Savior (John 6:26-71; Acts 13:48; Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 1:21-31; Eph. 1:13; 2:8-9; Phil. 1:28-29; 1 Tim. 1:14). Each of these references cited help to clarify how God works to bring about this saving faith.

Historically, this "faith" materializes when God "calls," summons or invites those He has predestined for ultimate glory (Rom. 8:28-30; 9:11-12, 24). Paul's evangelistic ministry was influenced by his grasp of how God accomplishes this "purpose," for he says he endured "all things because of the elect, in order that they might obtain salvation in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim. 2:10). For, he knew God would initiate a faith response to the gospel within those He had chosen before the foundation of the world (1 Cor. 2:1-5; 2 Cor. 4:1-6; Eph. 2:4-9).

Summing up salvation under grace, God wants Christians to know He alone is righteous. And since Scripture teaches man cannot recognize his need for a savior, we should conclude no one would be saved apart from God's loving intervention of mercy and grace. Also, the extent to which God involves Himself in redemption is emphasized by how He spawns faith in our heart which enables us to accept the gospel. Believers should understand that apart from these divine actions we would have continued in the humble position of moral bankruptcy. And, in this depraved state, we were destined for a sentence of condemnation with no possibility of reaching the level of perfection required by a holy God.

The manner in which God saves men builds on His purpose to show how no one can be justified before Him by completing the works of the Law or any other humanly produced effort (Rom. 3:20). It also accomplishes His goal for the elect to "boast" in Him as the only One deserving "the praise associated with the glory of His grace, which He granted to us" (1 Cor. 1:30-31; Eph. 1:4-6).

## GOD'S PLAN FOR CHRISTIANS FOLLOWING SALVATION

After we are justified before God because He has placed us “in Christ,” the stage is set for the second part of His purpose concerning members in the Church (1 Cor. 1:30). He now expects us to put off our old man and put on the new man by submitting to the power of His Spirit (Eph. 2:10; 4:17-24). His intent regarding this is recorded in Romans 6, where we are taught how God identified us with Jesus Christ’s death on the cross, His burial and His resurrection “in order that . . . we might walk in newness of life” (v. 4). Then, later in this same context it says, “our old man was crucified with (Christ) in order that the body of sin might be rendered inoperative with the outcome for us to no longer serve sin” (v. 6).

Verse 6 explains the reason God crucified our old man with Christ. It was to take away the previous, unyielding grip sin had on our lives and put us in a position where we no longer need to be controlled by it. For, when we were “crucified with” Christ, the enslaving force of sin had already been “rendered inoperative” (*katarge*) or made to not work. Since this verb occurs in the subjunctive mode, translated “might,” the indication is we now have the potential “to no longer serve sin.” This same subjunctive mode, translated “might,” is also found in verse 4 meaning we have the potential “to walk in newness of life.” When the thoughts conveyed in verses 4 and 6 are combined, they teach that we have been effectively associated with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ – “crucified with” Him – resulting in the real possibility to live a new life rising above sin (Rom. 4:24 – 5:2).

Now, what gives us this ability? The answer comes in Romans 7:6 where it says, “but now we were rendered inoperative [same word as in Rom. 6:6] from the Law, having died by which we were being held, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.” Those who are in Christ were “caused to die to the Law . . . to be joined to another . . . in order that we might bear fruit to God” (7:4). So, believers can produce this fruit by using power God has made available to us through the Holy Spirit (8:9).

Continuing his explanation of why God has saved us, Paul instructs the Roman believers, “You consider yourselves to be dead ones indeed to sin, but living ones to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11). Christians who incorporate this positional truth are now able to utilize His Spirit in order to “not

let sin reign in” their “mortal body with the outcome to obey its lusts” (v. 12). At the same time, they can positively respond to the command, “Present yourselves to God as if living ones out of the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God” (v. 13). And the reason why “sin will not have mastery over” them is that they “are not under law but under grace” (v. 14).

Under the Law, without the indwelling Spirit, the Jewish people were asked to obey God by their flesh-produced ability. They failed miserably (Rom. 3:19-20; 5:20). Under grace, after receiving the Holy Spirit, we possess divine power which enables us to truly obey God and walk pleasing to Him. In Galatians 5:16-18, we are commanded to “walk by the Spirit” and not by our flesh. When we choose to be “led by the Spirit” we “will not complete the lust of the flesh.” Therefore, through this Divine enabler, we can begin to put on the qualities of our Savior while discontinuing our natural lifestyle of sinful rebellion (Rom. 13:11-14; Gal. 5:18-26; Eph. 4:17-24; Col. 3:5-15).

Returning to Romans 6, note that verse 18 says, “Having been freed from sin, you were enslaved to righteousness.” God’s purpose for us to glorify Him in our bodies by producing righteous fruit is made possible by His act of purchasing us with the precious blood of His Son (7:4; 1 Cor. 6:20; Gal. 5:22). As a result of this transaction we are defined as His “slaves” (doula – “servants” in the KJV). Also, every time the word “serve” appears in these chapters of Romans, it is the verb form of this noun. Before we were saved, our bodies were “slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness resulting in lawlessness.” After salvation, God wants us to “present” ourselves “as slaves to righteousness resulting in holiness” (Rom. 6:19).

Many believers struggle with the concept we are God’s possession, but this is the consistent picture painted in Romans 6. When we understand He gave us salvation by mercy and not because we merit it, this should cause us to celebrate our designation as “slaves.” Only in this position, as those redeemed from wrath, can we have both the possibility and privilege of serving our Creator (1 Cor. 7:21-22; Titus 2:9-10).

Although God purchased us to be His servants, He does not force us to walk in obedience to Him. However, there are ramifications which accompany how we respond to our Divine Owner. If we choose to walk by the power of His Spirit, we produce “righteousness” with the outcome of

“holiness” which ultimately results in “eternal life” (Rom. 6:16, 19, 22). When we choose to obey sin by acting out our flesh, the result is “death” (v. 16). Since, we already possess eternal life as we find ourselves firmly positioned in Christ, what is Paul speaking about when he uses the words “eternal life” and “death” in this passage (Rom. 3:21-26; 5:1)? These terms refer to the putting off of our old man, the putting on of the new man, and the character we gain as a result of these actions.

This process is encapsulated in Galatians 6:7-8, which says, “Whatever a man might sow, this also he will reap. Because the one sowing in the direction of his own flesh, out of the flesh will reap corruption, but the one sowing in the direction of the Spirit, out of the Spirit will reap life eternal.” The context of this passage does not support the idea “eternal life” is obtained by our works since this reaping is based on Spirit-generated fruit. For that reason, this activity must follow both salvation and reception of the Holy Spirit. In this Spirit-aided condition, we are now able to “put on” the qualities of “righteousness,” “holiness” and “eternal life.”

Paul again addresses this subject when he directs Timothy to “pursue righteousness, godliness, faithfulness, love, endurance, gentleness” in conjunction with the command, “take hold upon eternal life” (1 Tim. 6:11-12). Then, later in the same chapter, wealthier believers are instructed to use their resources in a way which pleases God “in order that they might take hold upon real life” (vv. 17-19). These Scriptures show when we implement godly qualities by His Spirit we can experience part of eternal glory during this life, which we will fully enjoy when Christ returns (Rom. 6:22; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:3-4; 1 Tim. 4:8).

When we do not seek to live under the Spirit’s power, we go into default mode – functioning according to our flesh. This routine promotes sin in our members (thoughts or actions) and results in spiritual “death” and “corruption” (Rom. 6:16; 1 Cor. 3:15-17; Gal. 6:8). If these designations are taken in context, the clear intent is they do not refer to eternal death and corruption, for we are already freed from these in Christ. But, they speak about the present death effect and corruption upon our moral character as we maintain the status quo of our old man. In this state, we yield the “works of the flesh,” causing an unhappy condition in which many believers feel trapped (Gal. 5:19-21).

This bondage to sin will continue to the extent we do not adequately have an understanding of His will or have not effectively applied these truths to improve our lives. Furthermore, all Christians are destined for the day we stand before our Savior and Judge when these evil works will be burned, causing us to “suffer loss.” This will happen at “the judgment seat of Christ” where the death sentence to our sin-producing old man will be carried out prior to the time we are transformed into glory (1 Cor. 3:13-15; 2 Cor. 5:10; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:3-4).

Concluding the purpose for our lives under Grace, God desires His children to be involved in understanding how He wants us to act. For, when biblical knowledge is put into practice by the power of His Spirit, we can gradually be transformed into the image of His Son and walk in a manner pleasing to Him. As we observe the Church today, there is an immense lack of holy living before our Holy God. All believers can help remedy this situation as we edify one another concerning His righteous standards and the benefits of applying these values to our lives. Also, we should warn fellow Christians of the ramifications associated with disobedience since the harmful effects are both present and future.

#### THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM: ISRAEL'S PROMISED SALVATION BECOMES A REALITY

Having taken a look at how God brings glory to Himself during the administrations of Law and Grace, let us consider His objective in the future Messianic Kingdom. This heavenly rule on earth has its roots in Genesis 12:1-3, where God promised Abraham his descendants would be “a great nation” and “a blessing” to other nations (Matt. 6:10). Then, Abraham's grandson Jacob was renamed “Israel,” which became the identity of the nation. Later, we see Joshua leading Israel into the land God had promised to Abraham. However, the Jewish people consistently disobeyed His standards along the way so they never fully occupied the Promised Land nor attained the stature of being a blessing. Their rebellion became increasingly evident from the time the Law was given until Christ came.

Then God sent Jesus as the Jews' promised King and Redeemer (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Jer. 31:34). He proved to be their Messiah by living a sinless life, which also qualified Him to pay the penalty of death for their sins (Heb. 4:15; 9:28). Because of His work, they could now be righteous before God

and have a Just Ruler. In contrast to this provision, the Gospel accounts show how Israel did not recognize Jesus as their Christ and ultimately conspired with the Romans to crucify Him.

Then, after His resurrection, the Apostles offered Israel a chance to accept Jesus as their prophesied Messiah. If they had received Him, Scripture indicates God would have sent Christ back to earth to initiate “times of refreshing” and establish the eternal Kingdom which “all His holy prophets” spoke about (Acts 3:17-26). But Israel’s rulers did not repent for their part in crucifying Jesus and rejected four separate messages which demonstrated He was the Messiah (Acts 2:14-36; 3:12-26; 5:29-32; 7:2-60). Their refusal concluded with the stoning of Stephen, which closed any window of opportunity for the Kingdom to be established at that time.

Evidently, this was not the designated time in God’s plan for the Jewish nation to receive their Messiah, or He would have caused it to happen. However, His purpose of giving Israel an opportunity to accept their glorified Savior, and the nation failing to believe in Him, completed His objective of condemning man under the Law (Rom. 3:20-21; 11:11-25). God can always count on one thing from men: we will sin and reject Him when left to our own volition. In addition, this final refusal laid a foundation for God to reveal His previously hidden “mystery . . . predestined before the ages for our glory,” which set in motion His program for the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 2:6-7; see also Rom. 11:25; Eph. 3:2-10).

Romans chapter 11 records the divine action resulting from Israel’s rejection of Christ during the early Acts period. Because of their refusal, God extended salvation to the Gentiles on an equal basis with Jews under grace (vv. 11-16). Also, Israel is described to be in a “partial hardening” at the present time as stated by the “mystery” revelation, which had been a secret before it was made known. This context shows God had already set aside working with Israel as a nation “until the fullness of the gentiles might come in. And, in this manner, all Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:25-27). In summary, after God saves enough Gentiles in keeping with His present plan of action, He will reestablish the Jewish nation according to promises made in Isaiah 59:20 and Jeremiah 31:33-34, the prophesies Paul cites here for support (Rom. 11:26-27). At that time, Israel will experience “fullness” and “life out of the dead” (Rom. 11:12, 15).

Prior to the events recorded in early Acts, the Bible never indicates God would abandon a national relationship with Israel or set aside the Law which gave them divine rights and privileges. However, both of these developments are disclosed in the previously unrevealed program of grace (Rom. 11:25-36; Eph. 3:2-10). So far, this suspended relationship has continued for almost two millennia. Although unbelieving Jews are temporarily enemies of the gospel, God will keep all the promises made to their fathers regarding their national triumph (Rom. 11:28-29).

When this comes to pass, it will fulfill the New Covenant He promised to the house of Israel in Jeremiah 31:31-34. This Covenant will not be "according to the covenant (the Law of Moses) that I made with their fathers . . . which . . . they brake" (32). The Law covenant was conditional, requiring perfect compliance to become effective, so it never enabled them to occupy the Promised Land. In contrast, the New Covenant will become a reality because God Himself will put it into effect. For He says, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (v. 33; see Lev. 26:12).

Furthermore, to transform Israel into a holy nation, God says, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:34). But, how will God, who is holy, be able to receive a sinful people as His children and at the same time retain His justice? The answer is this promise was made in conjunction with His plan to pay for Israel's sin through the Messiah. At the cross, the "blood" of Christ achieved the "passing over sins having been previously committed" by these Old Testament believers (Rom. 3:25; see also Heb. 9:11-15; 10:11-18). Therefore, God has already satisfied His own standard of perfection by this "display of His righteousness," which enabled Him to be the "justifier" of the Jewish nation and simultaneously maintain His "just" virtue (Rom. 3:24-26).

Ezekiel 36 further expands on what will come to pass when the New Covenant is put into effect. In this passage, God says, "I will take you from among the heathen and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land . . . A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." (vv. 24, 26-27). Just like in Jeremiah 31:31-34, the phrase "I

will” indicates God will make this happen by His own hand.

When this promise was in Israel’s hands, they did not attain it because they could not obey God’s Law. However, in the future Kingdom, the Jewish nation will attain righteousness since the Holy Spirit will cause them to keep the Law’s required statutes and judgments. Then, the divinely prompted outcome for Israel will be: “You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people and I will be your God” (Ezek. 36:28; see also Gen. 12:1-3; Lev. 26:3, 12).

In summary, the Jewish people will not enter the messianic kingdom by their own effort, but by the action of God in fulfillment of the New Covenant. At that time, He will gather His chosen remnant, return them to dwell in the Land for eternity with Christ their King, forgive their sin through the blood of the cross, place the Spirit within them, and cause them to keep the Law. They will not just be declared righteous before God as we are today; they will actually be made righteous – fully glorified into the image of God. As a result, they will never again be entangled in their former iniquities (Ezek. 36:31-33). Finally, God proclaims, “Not for your sakes do I this” (v. 32). So, God will once again glorify Himself by displaying sovereign power to the world when He transforms Israel into a holy nation.

#### CONCLUSION: GOD’S PURPOSE

God gave the Law to demonstrate the principle: When man is left to his own choice and ability, he cannot attain the necessary level of perfection to become acceptable to a holy God. Today, under grace, God’s sovereign power has placed us in Christ so we can be righteous before Him. Also, following salvation, we are able to live in a manner pleasing to Him with the assistance of the Holy Spirit. In the messianic kingdom, God will re-establish a relationship with Israel by exercising His “will” to make them His people.

By use of these different methods, God demonstrates how His initiative is required before any man can become acceptable to Him. His primary goal is for each of us to recognize that our relationship with Him as well as the foundation for living in a righteous manner was brought about by His action alone. Then, through studying His Word, each of us can come to understand this purpose and learn how to participate in it for His glory (Acts 16:14; Rom. 8:28; Gal. 1:15; Phil. 1:6).

When the Bible is interpreted within its historical context, believers are able to comprehend the distinct ways God brings glory to Himself. With this foundation, members of the Church can more accurately apply promises intended for us and not be swayed to follow truth given for Israel, whether it is part of the Law or in reference to their future Kingdom. Then, as we focus on His revelation of grace, we can more effectively serve Him according to His present will and exhibit His grandeur to others (Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 2:7). Centuries ago, the Westminster Confession expressed this same theme by stating, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." This declaration rings just as true today as it was then. Accordingly, when Christians champion the cause of broadcasting God's attributes, we embark on the satisfying adventure of glorifying our Maker while, at the same time, growing in our connection with Him (Rom. 15:5-6; 1 Cor. 6:20; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:9-10).

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## TWELVE- IN, TWELVE-OUT

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### INTRODUCTION

In his *A Dispensational Theology*, Charles Baker presents several cogent arguments for the idea the twelve apostles, as well as all believers, became members of the Body of Christ when it began to be formed.<sup>1</sup> When I first became a Christian in 1969, this was the viewpoint I heard and accepted. As I began to study and teach the Bible, I was comfortable with this view except when I taught the Hebrew Christian epistles (Hebrews to Revelation). The usual explanations for verses like Hebrews 6:4-6 or James 2:14-26, and many others, seemed more like exercises in avoidance rather than proper exegesis. It wasn't until at least 30 years later that I read a small book by Bob Hill<sup>2</sup> and began to see a solution for my discomfort. For me, the view that the twelve apostles and those saved under their ministry did not become members of the "Body of Christ" became the solution. The purpose of this paper is to present my view of the twelve-out position.

### QUESTIONS

I will begin with a number of questions directed at those who hold to the twelve-in position. If the twelve became members of the Body of Christ, when it began to be formed then:

Why, as late as twenty-two years after Saul's conversion, see Baker's

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Baker, *A Dispensational Theology*, (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1972), 510-15. All subsequent references to Baker are from this section of the book.

<sup>2</sup>Bob Hill, *The Big Difference Between the Two Gospels* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: BDTLB. 1999).

chronology<sup>3</sup> and some eight years after the Jerusalem council,<sup>4</sup> did the Jerusalem church have “...many thousands of Jews...which believe; and they are all zealous of the law? (Acts 21:20).

- Why did the same group, at this same time, insist that Paul take part in a Jewish ceremony? (Acts 21:21-24).
- Why did some from the Jerusalem church insist on Gentile circumcision and law-keeping for salvation? (Acts 15:1,5).
- Why, some years after the Jerusalem council, did Peter try to compel the Gentile believers at Antioch to “live as do the Jews?” (Judaizes, Galatians 2:14).
- Why did God allow the Jerusalem church to labor under the idea that they were still under the Law, at least until Acts 21:20, and probably even after?
- Why did the leaders of the Jerusalem church agree to a division of labor between themselves and Paul’s group? (Galatians 2:9).
- Why did these same leaders acknowledge that two different gospels had been committed to Peter and Paul respectively? (Galatians 2:7).
- Why didn’t Paul, at any time, tell the Jerusalem leaders that they were no longer under the Kingdom program, but were now under a new “grace” program?
- Why is there no revelation of this fact, either through Paul, Peter, or James, or anyone else?
- Why are there so many apparent discrepancies between what Paul teaches and what the Hebrew-Christian epistles teach? Romans 4:4,5 vs. James 2:24?

The obvious answer to me, to all of these questions and more, is that the twelve, as well as those under their ministry, never did become members of the Body of Christ, but continued with their own ministry, under their own teaching, until they all died out or until the destruction of Jerusalem made it impossible for them to continue with their religious program.

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<sup>3</sup>Charles F. Baker, *Understanding the Book of Acts*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Grace Publications), 11-12

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TWELVE-IN, TWELVE-OUT QUESTION

Question #10 above requires some expansion. Ernest R. Campbell, in his commentary of Hebrews says, “if the Jews and Gentiles are amalgamated into a single organism, the Body of Christ, Galatians 3:28-29, it logically follows that the message in this epistle (Hebrews) is also pertinent for the Gentiles.”<sup>5</sup> By “pertinent,” Campbell meant it was written to and for the obedience of Gentiles, as well as Jews (Hebrews). His logic seems correct. If the twelve apostles became members of the Body of Christ, then not only the book of Hebrews, but also all of the Hebrew-Christian epistles (Hebrews to Revelation) would be pertinent for the Gentiles.

Conversely, if the twelve apostles did not become members of the Body of Christ, then the Hebrew-Christian epistles would not necessarily be directly pertinent to the Gentiles. This is what makes the question of twelve-in, twelve-out more than just an academic exercise. The answer to the twelve-in, twelve-out question will determine how we approach and interpret not only the Hebrew-Christian epistles, but also other important portions of scripture.

## APPARENT DISCREPANCIES

In question #10 above “apparent discrepancies” was mentioned. Where did these “apparent discrepancies” come from? What is their source? In Galatians 2:7, Paul makes a distinction between the gospel committed to him and that committed to Peter. The gospel committed to Peter he calls “the circumcision.” Since the big issue that Paul is addressing in Galatians is circumcision and law-keeping among Gentiles for salvation and law-keeping among Jews, then perhaps this is why Peter’s gospel is contrasted with Paul’s and is called “the circumcision” Galatians 2:7. From Matthew 10:7, we can see that the core of Peter’s message was “...the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” This same basic message, which was first preached by John the Baptist, Matthew 3:1,2, was also preached by Jesus in Mark 1:15 and in vs. 14 is called “...the gospel of the Kingdom of God.” Thus, we can see that this gospel committed to Peter had something to do with circumcision, Galatians 2:7 and something to do with the Kingdom of God (heaven.)

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<sup>5</sup>Ernest R. Campbell, *A Commentary of Hebrews* (Silverton, Ore.: Canyonview Press, 1999), 6.

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The connection with the Kingdom of God (heaven) was fairly obvious. The King was among them, John 1:49; John 12:13,15. Therefore, the Kingdom of God (heaven) was at hand (near). God had promised that Israel would become a Kingdom of Priests, Exodus 19:6. This, of course, was conditioned on their obedience and keeping His covenant, vs. 5. This promise is referred to in I Peter 2:5,9 and is shown in fulfillment in Revelation 1:6 and 5:10. Part of the induction ceremony into the priesthood under the Law in Exodus 40:12-15 was a washing (baptizing) ceremony. Part of John the Baptist's ministry was to, "Prepare the way of the Lord,.." John 1:23. This preparation would have included preparing Israel to (potentially) become a Kingdom of priests. This would have included this washing ceremony (baptism) for induction into the priesthood.

Both of these aspects of Peter's gospel; circumcision in Galatians 2:7 and the Kingdom of God (heaven) are heavily dependent on the Law. Circumcision was mandatory for every male child, Leviticus 12:1-3. A prerequisite for Israel becoming a Kingdom of priests was and will be obedience to the Law, Exodus 19:5,6. This would help to explain, not only the "apparent discrepancies" between Paul's teaching and the Hebrew-Christian epistles, but also certain aspects of the Gospels and Acts.

## REPENTANCE

One other component of the gospel of the Kingdom needs to be mentioned. That is the concept of repentance. Since I have covered this subject in a previous issue of this *Journal*<sup>6</sup>, I will simply try to summarize here. First, John the Baptist in Matthew 3:2 then Jesus in Matthew 4:17 then Peter, Acts 2:38 used the concept of repentance as a part of their message. In each of these individual's messages, repentance is connected with remission of sins; John, Mark 1:4, Jesus, Luke 24:47, and Peter in Acts 5:31. The basic meaning of the word that is translated repentance in these verses is a change of mind, but this concept can be expanded by looking at a few portions of scripture that use this word. The first is Matthew 3:8. In this verse, John the Baptist is demanding more than a simple change of mind, but fruits meet (suitable) for repentance. In essence John is asking for a

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<sup>6</sup>"Repentance In The Old And New Testaments," *Journal of Grace Theology* 1.2 (2014): 96-100

change of mind, plus actions to go along with it.

The other portion of scripture is 2 Corinthians 7:8-11. Here Paul refers back to something he commanded them in a previous letter, 1 Corinthians 5:1-8; namely to ostracize a believer committing sexual immorality. In the 2 Corinthians verses, Paul commends them for their repentance in this matter (vss. 9, 10). He is not commending them for simply changing their minds, but also for their obedience. From these two portions of scripture we can see that repentance is a change of mind produced by Godly sorrow, which ultimately results in obedience. Thus, we can see that repentance, which ultimately included obedience, was an integral part of the gospel of the Kingdom, i.e., the gospel of circumcision. This would also help to explain the “apparent discrepancies” between what Paul teaches and what the Hebrew-Christian epistles teach.

#### KINGDOM SALVATION – A PROCESS

Perhaps the most important of the “apparent discrepancies” that I have spoken of concerns salvation itself. The idea of salvation being a process under the Gospel of the Kingdom is presented in a number of verses which mostly refer to the tribulation period. These verses have the same, identical phrase, “he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” Certainly “enduring to the end” describes a process. The first is in Matthew 10:22, where Jesus sends the twelve apostles out to preach. The other two are in Matthew 24:13 and Mark 13:13. Both of these are set in the tribulation period. It is noteworthy that Matthew 24:14 says that the Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached during this time.

Another group of verses, all in Revelation, use the word “overcometh” in the present tense. As most would agree, the present tense signifies continuous action, i.e., a process. Each of these verses promises a particular reward to the one overcoming:

- Revelation 2:7 – access to the tree of life
- Revelation 2:11 – no second death
- Revelation 2:17 – hidden manna, white stone
- Revelation 3:5 – white raiment, name not blotted out of the book of life.
- Revelation 21:7 – he shall be my son

- Each of these rewards, in one way or another, represents salvation or eternal life.

This idea of salvation being a process under the Kingdom Gospel can be seen in other parts of the Hebrew-Christian epistles (Hebrews to Revelation). For example; Hebrews 3:6 - being Christ's house is conditioned on holding fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. This would certainly be a process. Hebrews 3:14, being partakers of Christ is conditioned on holding our confidence unto the end. The same process.

- Hebrews 6:11, 12 – Inheriting the promises is conditioned on being diligent and patient until the end. Another process.
- Hebrews 6:15 – Abraham receiving the promise after patiently enduring, is set forth as an example. Another process.
- Hebrews 10:36 – Receiving the promise is conditioned on patience and having done the will of God. Another process.

It should be noted that receiving the particular promise in each of these verses is conditioned on successfully completing the particular process. Our reception of the promise of salvation is a one-time belief (Acts 16:31).

Perhaps a more appropriate question than; did the twelve become members of the Body of Christ, would be, did the twelve come under the Dispensation of Grace? Certainly some of the truths that began in the gospels and continued through the Book of Acts and into the Hebrew-Christian epistles are not compatible with what Paul teaches in his epistles. It is quite liberating when we recognize that Paul's epistles and the Hebrew-Christian epistles represent two different programs of God. Instead of trying to somehow interpret certain portions of scripture, such as James 2:14, 21-26, in such a way as to make them compatible with Paul, i.e., Romans 3:24-28, we are now free to take these portions of scripture to mean exactly what they say.

The view that I have taken in this paper; that the Jerusalem believers (under the twelve apostles) did not become members of the Body of Christ, is not without difficulties. However, I believe the evidence for this position far outweighs the arguments against it.

## BAKER'S ARGUMENTS

Charles Baker presents an analysis of both sides of this issue and presents what he perceives to be difficulties with the twelve-out position and arguments for the twelve-in position.

*Reigning With Christ.* Baker addresses the issue of both groups (The Twelve and the Body) reigning with Christ.<sup>7</sup> He cites 2 Timothy 2:12 to show that the Body will reign with Christ just like the twelve. The problem with this logic is that the twelve were specifically promised that they would sit on thrones and judge in His earthly kingdom, Luke 22:28-30; whereas, the Body is never promised that, but rather are told that they will judge the world (*kosmos*), a much broader realm than the earthly Kingdom, 1 Corinthians 6:2, and that they will judge angels in 1 Corinthians 6:3. This judging and or ruling would most likely take place in the heavenly realm, rather than on the earth.

*Two Programs.* I agree with Baker's understanding of Romans 11:29 as stated in #2<sup>8</sup> on page 512. In essence, this verse is saying that God will keep His promises (gifts and calling). Also on page 512, under #3,<sup>9</sup> Baker acknowledges that there are two religious programs going on during what he calls the "transition period." If, as Baker contends, the Jerusalem believers became members of the Body of Christ when it began, then they would have, from that point forward, been subject to the new program and there would not have been two programs going on during the "transition period." Baker also appears to class the Jerusalem believers with unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem when he says, in essence; that as long as the temple stood they would have, of necessity, observed religious rites. This is not true, if they had come under the new program when it began.

*Jewish Customs.*, Baker also argues since Paul observed some Jewish customs and yet was a member of the Body of Christ, therefore, so were the Jerusalem believers. Paul's observance of some Jewish ordinances was an aberration, and not the norm, as it was with the Jerusalem believers.

*Perfect Tense.* Baker tries to imply that because the perfect tense was used in connection with Paul's commission "committed" (perfect tense)

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 512.

<sup>8</sup>Baker, *A Dispensational Theology*, 512.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

Galatians 2:7, that it was therefore a permanent commission, while Peter's was temporary.<sup>10</sup> This is misleading since there is no verb before "Peter". The verb must be supplied from the context, i.e., "committed" (perfect tense). Thus, both commissions were permanent. If both commissions were permanent, then it logically follows that the twelve did not come under the new program.

*Conforming – Not Conforming.* Under this same point, Baker claims that the twelve should have conformed their ministry to agree to that of Paul.<sup>11</sup> This is true only if we assume that the twelve became under the new program. But this, after all, is the point of contention. The fact is that the Jerusalem apostles did not conform their ministry to agree to that of Paul. This is shown by the fact that some 14 years after Saul's conversion and a year after Paul's first missionary journey, the Jerusalem church agreed to limit their ministry to the circumcised, Galatians 2:9. This is also seen by the fact that some 8 years later there were many thousands of Jews in Jerusalem who believed, who were all zealous of the Law, Acts 21:20. In addition to this, at this same time, the leaders of the Jerusalem church tried to compel Paul to submit to a ceremony of the Law, Acts 21:21-24. Obviously, in this latter action, they, as well as Paul were wrong. But, what about their agreement to limit their ministry to the circumcised? If they had become members of the Body of Christ, then why shouldn't they go to both Jews and Gentiles, just like the apostle Paul? Should they, as Baker claims, have conformed their ministry to agree to that of Paul? Where is the record that God told them that they were under a new program? Where is the record that Paul told them that they were under a new Program?

*Different Hopes.* Baker's response to different "hopes" for the twelve and for the Body is partially true, since the word "hope" in Ephesians 4:4 should not be limited to only the Rapture.<sup>12</sup> However, the point concerning different spheres of reigning in the future is a valid point for the twelve-out position. The twelve were definitely and distinctly promised in Matthew 19:28 that they would reign with Christ in His Kingdom. No such promise was ever given to the Body of Christ.

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Baker, *A Dispensational Theology*, 513.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 511.

*Body Truths vs. Circumcision Truth.* In Baker's response to point #6, he seems to find it insignificant that none of the other apostles mention "body" truth.<sup>13</sup> Of course, this fact fits in perfectly with the twelve-out position. It logically follows that circumcision believers would write about circumcision truth. More importantly, they not only do not mention "body" truth, but also mention truth that, if not rightly divided, would contradict "body" truth, as I have previously shown.

*Crossover Believers.* Baker's positive arguments for the twelve-in position are, for the most part, good arguments.<sup>14</sup> His strongest arguments, in my opinion concern various individuals and groups of people who appear to have been saved under the Kingdom program and subsequently came under the new dispensation. He lists these people in point numbers 2,3,6,8,9 and 10. These include; Barnabas, Silas, Apollos, Paul, Andronicus, Junia, Timothy, Timothy's mother and grandmother, the church at Antioch, and various local churches. This point is indeed a difficult one to answer. I am open to possible answers from the readers. I will simply respond about some of the individuals mentioned in this listing.

*Paul Himself.* There is no indication that he was saved under the Kingdom program. No one came to him and preached the gospel of the Kingdom.<sup>15</sup> When he was saved, it was by a special, direct appearance of Christ to him. Referring back to that time, Paul says that it was in him first that Christ showed forth all long suffering, for a pattern to those who would believe after him, 1 Timothy 1:16. If Paul was not the first saved under the new dispensation, then what was he the first of? What was he a pattern of?

*Andronicus and Junia.* These two men were either relatives of Paul, or fellow Jews (kinsmen) and were believers (fellow prisoners), and were of note among the apostles and were in Christ before Paul.<sup>16</sup> All of this is contained in one verse, Romans 16:7. Here we need to be careful. Does the term "in Christ" mean in the "Body of Christ"? If so, then Paul is saying that the "Body of Christ" began before him. If the term "in Christ" here means "saved" then Paul is simply sending greetings to two fellow believers and this is irrelevant to this discussion.

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 513-514.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 514.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

*Timothy, His Mother and Grandmother.* As to Timothy and his mother and grandmother, we are not told specifically when or under what ministry they became believers.<sup>17</sup> It very well could have been under Paul's ministry in his first visit to Lystra as recorded in Acts chapter 14. As mentioned earlier, this is a difficult question, but one thing is clear to me; those saved under Paul's ministry became members of the "body church," and those saved under the ministry of the Jerusalem group became members of the "Kingdom Church". The exact interplay between these individuals (Kingdom and Body) is not clear to me.

*Confusion.* Baker makes the point that there would be constant confusion if there were two groups following two programs.<sup>18</sup> He says this even though he had already acknowledged on page 512 that there were two religious programs going on during the "transition period." This confusion that he is referring to actually did occur. Some of those from one group (the Jerusalem Church) tried to impose circumcision and Law-keeping on the other group (the Antioch Church) in Acts 15:1-5. Later, even Peter and Barnabas fell prey to this confusion, Galatians 2:11-14. This kind of confusion continues even today, with people picking and choosing whatever they like from other dispensations and applying it to our present Program of Grace.

*Peter and a Party Spirit.* Baker claims that if Peter was a member of the Kingdom Church and not a member of the Body Church, Paul should not have found fault with Peter's converts for joining themselves to Peter.<sup>19</sup> First of all, the verses in question, 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 say nothing about Peter's "converts." Secondly, Paul is not addressing a dispensational issue, i.e., Kingdom Program versus Grace Program, but rather an issue of division, or party spirit (vs. 10). This is seen by the fact that he mentions not only Peter (Cephas), but also himself and Apollos and even Christ, (vs. 12).

*All One Body.* One of Baker's strongest points, I have saved for last. This is #10n on page 513. In this point, he says that Paul, in Romans and I Corinthians, gives the impression that he considers all believers everywhere to be members of the Body.<sup>20</sup> He bases this primarily on those verses

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 514

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid. 513

in Romans and 1 Corinthians which say that all of his readers are members of the Body, Romans 12:5 and 1 Corinthians 12:13. In order to show that 1 Corinthians was addressed to all believers everywhere, he emphasizes the latter part of 1 Corinthians 1:2, “with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” This phrase can be understood differently, for example, Conybeare and Howson<sup>21</sup> translate the latter part of 1 Corinthians 1:2 “who call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord in every place which is their home – and our home also.” Pages 381-82. They then in a footnote, comment: “this is added to comprehend those Christians of the Church of Achaia who were not resident at Corinth, but in the neighboring places of the same province. Compare, 1 Corinthians 1:1.” When we look at 2 Corinthians 1:1, we see that this understanding of 1 Corinthians 1:2 makes it to be almost the same as 2 Corinthians 1:1.

Even a brief, cursory examination of this letter will show its specificity to the Corinthian Church:

- 1 Corinthians 1:4-7 – specific praise to them
- 1 Corinthians 1: 11-12 – condemnation for party spirit
- 1 Corinthians 3:1,2 – carnality among them
- 1 Corinthians 4:17-21 – Timothy and Paul coming to them
- 1 Corinthians 5:1-7 – immorality among them
- 1 Corinthians 6:1-7 – suing each other
- 1 Corinthians 7-8 - answers to specific questions
- 1 Corinthians 11:17-22 – abuses of the Lord’s Supper
- 1 Corinthians 15:12 – some denying the resurrection
- 1 Corinthians 16:1 – specific plans which include them

Paul’s mention of the collection that will be sent to Jerusalem clearly shows that he is making a distinction between his readers and the saints in Jerusalem, 1 Corinthians 16:1-3. I believe that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to the church at Corinth, and the region of Achaia, 1 Corinthians 1:2, which would include all those at Corinth who had believed the gospel of the Grace of God as delineated in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 as distinguished from those who had believed the Gospel of the Kingdom as delineated in the Gospels and early Acts. The same could be said of the church in Rome.

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<sup>21</sup>Conybeare and Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1971), 381-382.

Baker's point that Paul had not founded the church at Rome and didn't know all the saints that might be there is not a strong point, since Paul sent greetings to at least 27 individuals in chapter 16. This shows that Paul knew quite well the make-up of that church.

*All, Except One (Me).* In his last paragraph on this subject, Baker says all are agreed that once the Body of Christ began, then all believers became members of the Body.<sup>22</sup> Since I do not agree with this statement, then maybe all (except one) are agreed would be more accurate. I do not believe that the twelve became members of the Body of Christ at any time. Nor, did anyone saved under their ministry.

One final point in conclusion. Baker's discussion of this subject comes under the subheading "The State of the Saints during the Transition."<sup>23</sup> Leading up to this, he had discussed the transition period, stating "the transition involves two things; the completion of revelation concerning the dispensation, resulting from the writing of Paul's final epistles, and the passing away of those things which characterized the Pentecostal dispensation which are mentioned in the Corinthian letter." In the next sentence he refers to Paul's letters as "the scripture for the Body of Christ." I wholeheartedly agree! This means that Paul's epistles, from Romans to Philemon, are a complete body of truth written to, and about, and for the obedience of the Body of Christ.

This raises the question. What was the purpose of the Hebrew-Christian epistles (Hebrews – Revelation)? If these epistles were also written to, and about, and for the obedience of the Body of Christ, then that would mean that the body of truth for this dispensation would also include these books (Hebrews-Revelation). Based on Baker's description of Paul's epistles as being "revelation concerning this dispensation" and as "scriptures for the Body of Christ", this is a real problem.

This problem dissolves when we see that the believers headquartered in Jerusalem, under the twelve apostles never did become members of the Body of Christ and therefore did not write to the Body of Christ, but rather to their fellow Hebrew believers, as well as future Hebrew believers in the tribulation period. This view would keep Paul's epistles as the body of truth for the Body of Christ, and the Hebrew-Christian epistles as part of

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<sup>22</sup>Baker, *A Dispensational Theology*, 515.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 509-510.

the truth relating to the Hebrew Christian believers.

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, even though I believe that the answer to this question (Twelve-in, Twelve-out) is an important one, I do not think that it is important enough to cause a division among those of us in the mid-Acts dispensational viewpoint. This is one of those things wherein we can interact and hopefully learn from each other as the Holy Spirit leads.



## BOOK REVIEWS

Merrill, Eugene H. *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Chronicles*. Grand Rapids, Mich. Kregel, 2015. 637 pp. Hb; \$39.99.

Commentaries on 1 & 2 Chronicles are often painful to read. Since the books begin with nine chapters of genealogy there is little for most pastors to preach or teach and a great deal of textual work to be done in a serious commentary, which is frankly dry reading (For example, Gary Knoppers's excellent commentary on 1 Chronicles 1-9 will not win any awards for spiritual formation!) However, Merrill's new commentary on both 1 & 2 Chronicles is an exegetical commentary, yet he attempts to keep his eye on important theological issues in which pastors and teachers are interested.

A fifty page introduction begins with the historical and cultural setting of Chronicles. Merrill traces the return from exile and the political re-establishment of the Jewish people in Yehud. Here it focuses on data from Ezra and Nehemiah as well as the post-exilic prophets describing social and religious reforms. This includes the rebuilding of the Temple as well as a refinement of Temple worship. This post-exilic community is the world in which the books of Chronicles were written. Merrill is content to simply call the author "The Chronicler" rather than try to argue for Ezra or one of the post-exilic prophets.

Chronicles offers a rare opportunity in Old Testament studies since the book has made use of earlier canonical material and in many instances written the history to give a more favorable impression of some events or persons than the earlier Deuteronomic History (Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings). For Merrill, the Old Testament writers thought of themselves as conveying divine revelation, so the Chronicler thought carefully about

any departure from his sources (51). Yet the Jewish world in the post-exilic period was much different than that of the Deuteronomic Historian.

Merrill suggests the Chronicler was influenced by the eschatological hopes of Ezra-Nehemiah so that he attempted to answer the despair of the post-exilic community by re-writing history to point forward to an eschatological hope in a restored house of David (60). It is well known Chronicles minimizes David's sin, and for Merrill the motivation for this positive spin is to set the stage for a succession of Davidic kings fulfilling God's promise. David is the anticipated ruler of early canonical promises (62) and the focus of prophetic hopes for a future, eschatological kingdom (65). In fact, these hopes take the shape of a new temple as a symbol of God's reconstituted people (68).

The introduction is supplemented by twelve excurses which conclude many of the major units of the commentary. These are brief additional comments on a historical or theological issue in the unit. For example, at the end of the commentary on 1 Chron 15:1-21:30 (the exploits of David), Merrill offers a page on the Angel of YHWH, two pages on David and Royal Sonship, and about five pages on the Theological Ethic of Holy War.

Each of the nine units of the commentary covers a section of the history. Merrill breaks the units into subsections, usually covering about a chapter each. The commentary provides the NIV translation for each subsection followed by brief textual-critical notes. The text provided appears to be the 1984 text (compare 1 Chron 7:23 in the 1984 and 2011 versions). There is nothing in the preface or introduction explaining this decision, although there are fewer differences in Chronicles than in other portions of the Bible. A second observation is that not all textual notes are in the textual notes section; occasionally they appear in the footnotes.

After the translation and notes, Merrill offers "exegesis and exposition" of the section, usually covering several verses in each section. Given the constraints of the commentary, a phrase-by-phrase commentary is impossible so he focuses on particular problems in the text which need explanation. He comments on differences between the Deuteronomic Historian (DH) and the Chronicler, especially where the Chronicler omits something from the DH. Where there are clear parallels, he provides reference to the text in the DH. Hebrew is included in the main text, although most technical details are placed in the footnotes. Even though the Hebrew text is not

transliterated, most readers without Hebrew will have no problem following Merrill's comments. The footnotes interact with major commentaries and secondary literature on Chronicles.

After the commentary proper, there is a brief theological reflection on the section of Chronicles. These are conveniently indexed at the beginning of the volume. In the section on the "Exploits of David," Merrill comments that the Chronicler describes David as an "almost impeccable super-hero who does little wrong and is triumphant in nearly every undertaking to which he puts his hands" (251). From this observation, he briefly points to various Second Temple texts which express similar messianic expectations about David, including the New Testament.

Merrill has contributed a solid evangelical commentary on the often ignored books of 1 & 2 Chronicles which will help pastors and teachers work through the books as they present them to God's church. His emphasis on eschatological hopes is important since these continue to develop throughout the Second Temple period and are foundational for understanding the Gospels. My main criticism of the volume is the theology sections are less robust than I hoped given the introduction to the commentary. This intra-canonical reading has become popular in recent years and Chronicles is a worthy place to use the methods of canonical criticism. Nevertheless, this was not the goal of the commentary so it is unfair to consider this a shortcoming. Merrill's commentary is a worthy contribution to the Kregel Exegetical Commentary series.

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Wilson, Lindsay. *Job*. Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2015. 420 pp. Pb; \$28.

Suffering is one of the few constants of human history. The early twenty-first century has witnessed daily suffering because of war, human greed and natural disaster. Most people have wondered if some suffering is just and deserved or unfair and undeserved. It is difficult to hear stories in the media of innocent children suffering without asking how it is "fair" a child

starves to death while a despotic ruler grows even more powerful and wealthy. If God is really both ultimately righteous, just and all-powerful, how can he allow such suffering in this world?

Frequently Christians appeal to the book of Job for answers to these difficult questions, although Job does not always offer the answers we hope for when we study the book. Lindsay Wilson's contribution to the Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary series is an attempt to understand the book of Job in its proper biblical context and to sketch out some possible answers to these deep questions about God's justice and human suffering.

Wilson's twenty-eight page introduction asks a series of questions about the book of Job. Although the story of Job takes place in patriarchal times, it was written later, probably after the exile and a significant time after Proverbs. When the book was written does not matter for Wilson, only that it is a reaction to misunderstandings of Proverbs and other wisdom literature (5). In fact, whether the story "really happened" does not matter since the book may be something like a parable, a story illustrating important theological truths. Job is a protest against a "fossilized misunderstanding of retribution that had misrepresented the mainstream wisdom tradition of Proverbs" (8). In fact, Wilson suggests reading Proverbs is the first step in understanding Job.

The main issue in Job is retribution: Does God reward the righteous and punish the wicked? Based on their misunderstanding of wisdom literature, Job's friends think this is the case; yet the book of Job makes it clear not all suffering is a result of God's punishment, nor is every good thing in life a reward for righteous living. Although this is the most common theological use of Job, the book is also about God's relationship with humanity. Why should humans fear God? Does "fear of the Lord" cancel the need to question God? Ultimately, however, the book of Job is about the character of God. As Wilson comments, the theophany and Yahweh speeches make it clear God cannot be constrained by "narrow human categories," and the "majestic picture of God's power" is foundational for understanding the theology book of Job (10).

The Commentary is divided into four sections. Although it is minimal in the body of the commentary, Hebrew appears along with transliteration. Often difficult vocabulary is compared in various English transla-

tions (NRSV, ESV, KJV). Wilson uses footnotes for details of exegesis and interaction with major recent commentaries on Job. Occasionally textual variants appear in the notes. Although this is not a full exegetical commentary like Clines' 1200+ page WBC Commentary, Wilson provides enough detail to help read the text of Job with insight. This commentary section is necessarily brief, treating large paragraphs in summary fashion. Occasionally Wilson will focus on a particular word or phrase (Hebrew appearing with transliteration). He interacts with major exegetical commentaries in the notes, providing the interested reader a pointer to more in-depth discussions. The purpose of the commentary is not detailed exegesis, but a discussion of the theological themes of the book.

The prologue and epilogue are treated briefly. Wilson focuses on a few key questions the prologue asks which will illuminate the dialogues. Job is a man of unblemished righteousness, but we are not sure why he serves God. Does Job have a disinterested faith? Or does he serve God because of what blessing and protection he receives from God? The Dialogue (3:1-31:40) naturally makes up the bulk of the commentary section. As Wilson comments in his introduction, the dialogues are long and repetitive, they are in short a "talkfest" (27). Any commentary on Job must be selective in its exegesis, so this main section of the commentary summarizes larger units and only selectively comments on difficult exegetical issues. The Verdict section (32:1-42:6) deals with the divine speeches. Wilson observes "some of Job's problems are simply resolved by the appearance of Yahweh" (180).

As with other Two Horizon commentaries, the bulk of the book is a 172 page section tracing nine theological themes of the book of Job. The obvious theme in Job is of course suffering. Wilson follows David Clines in seeing three main questions concerning suffering which arise from the book: Why is there suffering? Why do the innocent suffer? What should I do when I suffer? The book offers some answers to these questions, but they are not always satisfying (especially those presented by Job's friends). As Wilson observed, not all suffering is linked to sin nor does an individual who suffers need to know why they have suffered (219). A related theme is "Retribution and Justice"— is all suffering deserved? Does life really work like the Book of Proverbs implies it should? Wilson traces retribution through the book and argues the book of Job ultimately agrees with

Proverbs, although Proverbs does not promise peace and prosperity as is commonly assumed.

Wilson covers several related topics concerning Job's questioning of God (litigation motif; lament and complaint to God; preserving faith). Christians are sometimes shocked by Job's questioning of God and his frank refusal to accept suffering as a punishment. Although he ultimately retains his faith in God, Job cries out bitterly to God and even demands his case be heard by the just and righteous God. Wilson has several pages describing the form of lament in the Hebrew Bible and wrestling with the disappearance of laments as a form of Christian worship. For Job, laments may question God, but the purpose of Job's lament is to restore and strengthen faith. "Job's complaints can never be understood as merely mouthing off to God" (252). Citing Tennyson, Wilson concludes "There lives more faith in honest doubt, believe me, than in half the creeds" (257).

The final section of the book examines Job's contribution to biblical, systematic, moral and practical theology. Under the heading of biblical theology, Wilson sets Job in a canonical context. In order to do this, he reads Job alongside of the rest of the wisdom literature. As he observes often in the commentary, Job is a kind of protest against misunderstanding the theology of retribution of Proverbs. In some ways Job goes beyond Proverbs by describing the righteous life of Job. Wilson traces the use of the rest of the Old Testament in Job (creation, Decalogue, God's kingly rule). He briefly examines the common view that Job is a type of Christ, concluding Job is not "all about Christ" in the sense Job prefigures Christ's suffering. The central theme of the book is God's kingly rule (320). Perhaps the most fascinating section in his biblical theology section concerns the New Testament use of Job. How should we read Job as a Christian? He rejects the search for Christ in every page of Job, arguing instead to focus on God as sovereign and to restore the kind of "robust, lamenting faith" demonstrated by Job (331).

Under the heading of systematic theology, Wilson rightly begins with what Job contributes to our understanding of God, especially what Job tells us about God's relationship with evil. Yet Job does not give a direct answer to the problem of evil, rather the book "seems content to leave the question of theodicy unresolved." (340). He also briefly discusses the contributions Job makes to a theological understanding of Satan, sin, justice, resurrection

and the nature of faith.

Under the heading of moral theology, Wilson attempts to create an “ethics of Job,” both in terms of sources for the book’s ethics and the ethical content of book. Scholars who do anything like this in Job usually focus on chapter 31 since it contains a clear statement of what integrity and righteousness looks like. Wilson goes beyond this by briefly touching on Job’s social ethics, including the book’s view of the environment and wealth. He includes a fascinating discussion of suicide. Job’s wife seems to think it is possible for Job to “curse God and die” and Job longs for death. Yet he continues to hope in God for justice and possibly restoration. As Wilson observes, suicide results from the total loss of hope in God (365); Job never seems to reach this point in the book.

Under the heading of practical theology, Wilson covers several topics which will appeal to anyone who wants to teach or preach from the book of Job. It seems strange to think of the book of Job as a source for pastoral care or a guide for prayer, but Wilson shows how the book contributes to these important areas of ministry. In addition, he includes a section on preaching the book of Job. Since it is unlikely anyone would (or should?) preach a lengthy series of expositional sermons based on the book, Wilson offers some practical advice on how to relate this difficult yet important book to Christian audiences.

Conclusion. Like other contributions to the Two Horizons series, Wilson’s book is an important contribution to a Christian understanding of the book of Job. It is a solid, albeit brief, commentary on the Hebrew text of Job with extensive theological reflection on how Job contributes to the overall theology of both the Hebrew Bible and the whole canon. The book is an excellent support for a pastor, teacher or layperson reading and wrestling with the book Job

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Walton, John H. and D. Brent Sandy. *The Lost World of Scripture: Ancient Literary Culture and Biblical Authority*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2013. 309 pp.; indices. Pb. \$24.

*The Lost World of Scripture* is exactly what its subtitle claims: an exploration of ancient oral culture and its potential impact on understanding the Bible. The book is divided into four major sections containing a total of twenty-one propositions which examine Old and New Testament literary cultures, corresponding literary genres, and subsequent conclusions concerning Scripture's origin and authority. John H. Walton and D. Brent Sandy challenge modern assumptions that written texts are more legitimate or carry more authority than "oral 'texts'"; rather, they argue oral texts conveyed equal or greater authority in the ancient Hebrew and Greek cultures in which the Bible originated. Written texts, then, were typically either secondary recordings of oral texts (and consequently reflect oral styles) or temporary measures when oral communication was impossible.

As such, a majority of the Bible (excluding the NT letters, for example) can be considered primarily an oral text, originally delivered, shared and preserved via the spoken word. While the precise wording likely changed in the years between original revelation and physical recording, the original intent was carefully preserved. And since preservation of exact wording is much less significant to oral cultures, this helps explain and alleviate some of the tension between differing manuscripts (195-196). Oral texts would have been repeated widely throughout Israel, and variations in local wordings would have influenced scribes who committed them to writing. Authority, then, was vested in the authority figure receiving the revelation and not the recorder(s) or even the written document so long as the oral text's original intent remained intact (60-62).

Two-thirds of the book (the sections on the Old and New Testament) is spent directly developing this idea based upon both internal and external evidences. Propositions 1-4, while focused on the Old Testament, effectively serve as a springboard for a lengthy section on the New Testament, toward which the book feels weighted. For example, Proposition 3 sets the stage for later propositions, as Walton and Sandy adapt the Speech-Act Theory to their study. Their premise is that the communicator uses locutions (words, language) to communicate the illocution (his intent) to

the audience and elicit a perlocution (response) (41). This is separate from meaning. Such a theory places greatest emphasis, then, on the illocution rather than the locutions. “We are not free to take the communicator’s locutions and use them to formulate our own fresh illocutions and associated meanings— authority is compromised at best or lost entirely when we do that” (42).

The authors go on to compare the literary culture of the Greeks and Romans with that of the New Testament (Section 2, Proposition 7), while also noting in Proposition 8 Jesus treated a majority of his audiences as hearing-dominant (114). Remaining space (Sections 3-4) is devoted to four propositions concerning Scripture’s literary genres (including Old Testament narrative, Law, prophecy and New Testament genres), and four concerning applications. There is more to be said on the subject of genre, but the section is adequate to outline and support Walton and Sandy’s thesis. Section 4 seeks to step back and tie together the doctrinal implications of Sections 1-3, clarifying and expanding on the issues brought up earlier.

The authors recognize issues raised by both historical critics and conservative evangelicals, while respectfully calling both out for imposing modern, textual lenses on a primarily oral culture. These issues include scribal additions or subtractions, the lack of original autographs and even the implications of the term inerrancy when applied to oral texts. Along the way, Walton and Sandy do challenge commonly held evangelical beliefs concerning biblical authority and inerrancy, but they do so in a legitimate search for truth. Ultimately, they call for a more accurate and nuanced understanding of the Bible and its cultural origins, leading to meaningful discussions about these terms by “competent,” “ethical” and “virtuous readers” (Proposition 21). They conclude by confirming their belief in Scripture’s verbal inspiration and authority.

*The Lost World of Scripture* is a dense read, requiring time and thought to do justice to the ideas it contains. However, it is worth the time spent, since its propositions present a literary world very foreign to the modern one. Questions remain, as the authors acknowledge, and they encourage readers to explore many “safe” gray areas (306-309). The book’s one shortcoming is its inability to clearly define a new view of biblical authority and inerrancy based upon their interplay with orality— something Walton and Sandy freely admit (309). Further work is needed, then, to continue the

discussion and its impact on evangelical faith. That said, *The Lost World of Scripture* has laid significant groundwork in this area and is a stimulating read. Though uncomfortable reading at some points, it clearly articulates the need to better understand the Bible's ancient literary roots and to re-evaluate our own understanding of it.

Zach Niles

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Edwards, James R. *The Gospel according to Luke*. PNTC. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2015. 831 pp. Hb; \$65.

James Edwards previously contributed the volume on Mark to the Pillar New Testament Commentary. It is unusual for a commentary series to assign two Synoptic Gospels to a single scholar. What is more, Edwards did not write the Acts commentary in the series, David G. Peterson did in 2009. This allows Edwards to read Luke without having a second commentary on Acts in mind. As a result, Luke is not merely a prologue for Acts. Edwards notes in the preface he has not paid attention to reception history in the commentary, referring interested readers to François Bovon's *Hermeneia* commentary on Luke.

At only 22 pages, the introduction to the commentary is brief, especially since it is divided into nine sections. Edwards accepts the traditional view that the author of both Luke and Acts was a companion of Paul and quite possibly a Jewish (10) native of Antioch (12), although he is less open to the suggestion Luke was a doctor (8). It is nearly certain Luke used the gospel of Mark, which Edwards dates about A.D. 65, suggesting a date for Luke's Gospel about a decade later. If Luke is dated after A.D. 70, then Luke 19:43-44 may be an allusion to the destruction of the city.

Edwards argues Luke used a Hebrew source along with Mark. In the introduction to this commentary he briefly summarizes the argument of his *The Hebrew Gospel and the Development of the Synoptic Tradition* (Eerdmans, 2009). There are, Edwards argues, a disproportionately large number of semiticisms in the Gospel of Luke, especially in the unique material in the third Gospel. Semiticisms are words and phrases which can be best explained as reflecting a Hebrew or Aramaic original, such as the "divine

passive.” Sometimes these phrases are called “Septuagintisms” because Luke sounds like the Septuagint. The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible is obviously based on a written Hebrew source and often reflects the style of the Hebrew original although it is written in Greek. Edwards finds many of these examples of semiticisms in the Gospel, especially in the prologue.

With respect to the sayings source (Q), Edwards remains unconvinced. Of the approximately 175 verses usually associated with Q, some are narrative and at least one is found in the Passion narrative. This so-called double tradition does not exhibit the semiticism found elsewhere in Luke (17). Edwards suspects the double tradition is the “skeletal remains” of one of Luke’s sources and it is likely Matthew received the sayings from Luke, although this cannot be stated with certainty (17-18). The body of the commentary is not overly concerned with matters of Source Criticism, and most references to Hebraisms appear in the footnotes.

There are eleven excurses scattered throughout the commentary. These brief notes cover key terms in the Gospel (“Son of Man”), literary features (“Elijah and Elisha Typology,” “Pairs in the Third Gospel”), and historical issues (“Pharisees in Luke,” “Pontius Pilate and Herod Antipas”). These are useful and placed at appropriate places in the commentary. When Edwards offers some additional detail on a historical, exegetical or geographical point within the commentary which is shorter than an excursus, the theme is identified in bold print (tax collectors, 3:11; slavery. 16:1-9).

The body of the commentary follows Edward’s outline of twenty-two sections, roughly equivalent to about a chapter of Luke per section. Each unit is divided into several pericopae with comments on groups of verses rather than words or phrase. All Greek appears in transliteration with most technical details relegated to the footnotes (textual variants, references to various theological dictionaries and wordbooks). Since there are few in-text notes, the commentary is very readable. Edwards has several memorable phrases, such as his description of perceptions of Jewish tax-collectors as “the husk of an individual whose soul had been eaten away by complicity with Roman repression” (169). He is able to use brief contemporary illustrations to make the text clear, such as comparing the shrewd manager in 16:1-13 to a CEO who says “you’ve turned your pink slip into a promotion” (455). Although this is an exegetical commentary which wrestles

with lexical and syntactical issues, Edwards finds ways to elegantly draw out meaning and present it in language appreciated by students and busy pastors who desire to teach the text of Luke in various contexts.

The commentary often provides cultural details drawn from Second Temple period practice. Commenting on 11:37-40, for example, Edwards explains the importance of ritual washing before meals, citing the work of Neusner (354). His observations about the piety of the Pharisee in 18:9-14 make it clear the Pharisee is “not to be denigrated for declaring his commendable record” (504) based on Tobit 1:6-8 and other early texts. His presentation of Jesus’ prediction of the destruction of the Temple refers to many Second Temple texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls (594).

In addition to the literature of the Second Temple period, Edwards draws on the insights of patristic writers throughout the commentary. There are numerous references to Origen’s Homilies on Luke and the writings of Justin Martyr, Jerome and Eusebius.

Conclusion. Each volume of the Pillar series has been a solid contribution to scholarship, Edward’s Luke commentary continues this legacy. There are more technical commentaries available, but this commentary is a pleasure to read and will serve pastors and teachers well as they continue to study the third Gospel.

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Lightfoot, J. B. *The Gospel of John: A Newly Discovered Commentary*. Edited by Ben Witherington III and Todd D. Still. The Lightfoot Legacy Set 2; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2015. 317 pp Hb; \$40.00.

Last year IVP released the first of three newly discovered commentaries by the late nineteenth century scholar J. B. Lightfoot. In the forward to that volume, Ben Witherington recounted how he discovered hand-written manuscripts of several long-forgotten commentaries by J. B. Lightfoot in the spring of 2013. IVP plans one more volume collecting Lightfoot’s notes on 2 Corinthians and 1 Peter.

When I reviewed Lightfoot’s Acts commentary, I asked ‘why would

anyone care to read a lost commentary written by a scholar who died in 1889?' For some modern readers, Lightfoot's legacy has been forgotten. But in the mid-nineteenth century, Lightfoot was considered one of the foremost scholars of his day. The editors of this book begin their introduction with the words of William Sanday: "No one could match Lightfoot for 'exactness of scholarship, with the air addition, scientific method, sobriety of judgment and lucidity of style.'" His commentaries on Galatians (1865), Philippians (1868) and Colossians (1875) are often reprinted, and his work on the Apostolic Fathers was the standard until the Loeb edition by Krisopp Lake.

The forward to Lightfoot's John commentary is nearly identical to the Acts forward, and the Editor's Introduction only adds three pages specific to Lightfoot on the Gospel of John. Witherington points out that Lightfoot had often lectured on John at Cambridge and was deeply concerned about the negative impact the higher criticism of F. C. Baur had on the study of John's Gospel. Although it was unusual for a British scholar to be too concerned with German scholarship, Lightfoot read Baur and others seriously and sought to defend the authenticity of John's Gospel against the Protestant liberalism of his day. For this reason the commentary includes a lengthy discussion of the external and internal evidences for the authenticity of John (pages 41-78) as well as two appendices reprinting articles published posthumously in *Bible Essays* (pages 205-66, external evidences, pages 267-325, internal evidences; Macmillan, 1904, reprinted by Baker, 1979). More than a third of this commentary is devoted to answering challenges to John's authenticity by the Tübingen school, popular in the late nineteenth century.

Unfortunately the body of the commentary only covers the first twelve chapters of John. After a short note on the meaning of Logos (pages 80-86), the commentary proceeds similarly to Lightfoot's other published commentaries. He begins with a brief summary of the pericope followed by short notes on Greek words and phrases of interest. After this commentary there are a few pages of notes on the Greek text itself, commenting on textual variants and suggesting solutions. Compared to modern commentaries (Keener on John, for example), the comments are indeed sparse. As Hengel comments in his appendix to this book, Lightfoot's academic method was based on the recovery of the text of early Christian writing (p. 333).

There are at least two reasons for this. First, this is an unpublished set of notes, not a full commentary. If Lightfoot had intended to finish this commentary, the notes would have been expanded, although not as much as demanded by modern commentary buyers. Second, commentaries produced in the latter part of the nineteenth century focused on helping a scholar to read the Greek text of the Bible. Notes on textual variations and translation issues were the stuff of commentaries, with little or no interest in historical background or theology. Lightfoot was not uninterested in those issues, but the commentary was not the place to deal with background or theological issues.

Perhaps the most interesting section of this commentary is a reprinted article by Martin Hengel on “Lightfoot and German scholarship on John’s Gospel” (p. 326-58), originally printed in the *Durham University Journal* (1989) on the occasion of the centenary of Lightfoot’s death. As Witherington points out, Hengel himself was a historian and linguist at Tübingen, although he was far more sympathetic to Lightfoot’s views than F. C. Baur. Hengel offers a brief history of David Strauss and F. C. Baur and their approach to the Gospels, especially John. Baur famously dated the book to about A.D. 170. For Baur, Valentianian, Montanism and Gnosticism were “historical background” to the Gospel of John (p. 329). By the time Lightfoot entered Osford’s Trinity College in 1847, the influence of the Tübingen School was at its height. Baur would outlive Lightfoot by 8 years. Lightfoot’s work on the Apostolic Fathers was considered a “nail in the coffin” of Tübingen (p. 336) and his excursus on Paul and James in his Galatians commentary is thought to be “the most important contribution to the Tübingen controversy” (337). Lightfoot did not engage in polemics but built a positive argument for the authenticity of John, as is evidenced by the detailed material in this commentary.

Hengel’s essay also includes an assessment of Lightfoot’s influence on scholarship in England. Some considered him a representative of unbelief on par with Voltaire and some compared him to the antichrist (p. 352)! Ironically his commentary on John is now published by an evangelical publisher and Lightfoot is presented as a premier biblical scholar who stood against the inroads of Protestant liberalism of his day. Hengel points out that Lightfoot not only remained a faithful member of the Church but also “wore himself out” serving as both bishop and scholar (p. 342). It is a

sad commentary on attacks on real scholarship done within the church by conservative Christianity in both the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries. Perhaps this is the best reason to read Lightfoot's commentaries today.

Conclusion. Like Lightfoot's newly discovered commentary on Acts, this commentary is a valuable contribution to the history of scholarship on the Book of John. In some ways it is dated since few scholars today would argue along with Baur that John is the product of the late second century. Yet Lightfoot's model of Christian scholarship is important for a new generation of students of the Bible.

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Wilhite, David E. *The Gospel according to Heretics*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2015. 304 pp. Pb., \$22.99.

I must confess I am no church historian. Like most Pastors I have been more concerned with the teaching of the Bible than the history of the church. However, I wanted to read this book precisely because of my lack of knowledge on the subject.

The author deals with ten heresies after introducing the subject of orthodoxy and heresy. In his introduction he reports to revise our view on the subjects. He states that he is attempting to revise or reinterpret the heretics in light of the postmodern condition (p. 7). He says the approach is that of impartialness, although true objectivity is impossible (p. 10). He admits the terms orthodoxy and heresy are both contested and illusive terms, and do not give precise definitions.

Two factors must be considered: first, we must remember many of these heresies were formed before the books of the biblical canon were fully established. Second, the claim of the heretics was that they were orthodox. His purpose is to look at how each heretic and teaching came to be seen as unorthodox (p.17). At the end of the book he makes a good concluding observation: orthodoxy is a response to heresy, and heresy is an attempt to be viewed as orthodox (p. 247). Is this not true today? He tries to get beneath the embellishments of the opponents of these labeled heretics, which is the

source of most of what we know of these men and their views. At times he seems a little too dismissive of the orthodox defenders' writings against these heretics. He views the heretics as mistaken more than spiteful, that their views were more inadequate views of the gospel (p. 248) and not necessarily a denial of it (although that is the case as well).

He endeavors to boil the early heretics down to their primary errors. There are ten early heresies he examines:

1. Marcion and the doctrine of Supersessionism, with the God of the New Testament superseding the God of the Old Testament.
2. Ebion and the doctrine of Adoptionism, which viewed Jesus as simply human.
3. Gnostics and the doctrine of Docetism, that Jesus is God simply looking like man.
4. Sabellious and the doctrine of Modalism, holding that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are just costumes of God.
5. Arius and the doctrine of Subordination, that Jesus is almost God.
6. Apollianaris and the doctrine of Subhumanism: Christ has a human body, but a divine soul or mind.
7. Nestorius and the doctrine of Dyoprosopitism: God the Son is a different person who inhabits the man Jesus.
8. Eutyches and the doctrine of Monophysitism: Jesus is half God and half human.
9. Iconoclasts and the doctrine of Antirepresentationalism, holding a non-incarnate Jesus.
10. Muslims and the doctrine of Reductionism, that Jesus was a prophet, not God.

Forms of these heresies are with us today. Thus, it is important to know and see their roots are longstanding in the history of the church; they rarely go away. Heretics are good at mixing the truth with what is false or inaccurate. Wilhite holds that which heresies presented was an inadequate gospel; they did do a service to the church in that heresies helped the formulation of what was orthodox (This seems to be the underlying thesis of the author). Heresies may not be equal, but they are equally dangerous in perverting Christ and His gospel.

I found the book informative and interesting. There are times I felt the author was a little too hard on those who stood against the heretics and a little soft on the heretics. It is reader friendly and will give an insight both in understanding these heresies and the development of orthodoxy in the early church. It is a helpful work.

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Berean Advocate  
Maricopa, Arizona

Berding, Kenneth and Matt Williams, Editors. *What The New Testament Authors Really Cared About: A Survey Of Their Writings*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Academic, 2015. 304 pp. Hb., \$32.99.

The moment one picks up this volume, one cannot help but be impressed. From the production standpoint it is a beautiful presentation. The layout is balanced but not as well as the companion volume on the Old Testament. This may be due to the fewer photos compared to that of the Old Testament. However, the photos and charts are top quality. The layout is the same in both volumes, which gives consistency and helps the ease of reading.

As to content, the book begins with historical background leading up to and including the first century. The points are somewhat brief, but still enough to give one an impression of the first century. He supplies enough to give the reader a feel for the conflicts of the time, both outside and within Judaism. He captures the feeling of Jewish expectations. From there he goes on to the books of the New Testament and the authors.

In each book of the New Testament there is a consistency of presentation. He opens with a brief background page answering who, when, where and why. These maybe too brief, but they give the reader the gist of the background of the text. Each chapter gives an overview in chart form, and then the text goes on to add meat to the skeleton. He captures the basic teaching of each book well and aids the reader. There needs to be some caution because his presentation has debatable areas not all will agree with. Each chapter is well presented with charts, out-takes, and summary. Included at the end of the chapter is a list of key words and concepts, with a

few key resources for further study (although they are not necessarily ones I would recommend).

One unique feature different from most surveys of the New Testament is that the books are arranged by author, not in the order they appear in the New Testament. Thus, they present John and his works (Gospel, 1-2-3- John, and Revelation) together. I happen to like that. It helps one grasp what the authors really care about in one sitting. It brings cohesion to their views, instead of breaking them up by sections. However, the emphasis is not simply the thoughts of the author, but the content of the books themselves; content does reflect the view and thinking of the author. However there are a few places in which I believe the book's authors missed the mark, especially in regard to Paul. While they are correct that he is concerned about unity in the church, they miss Paul's thought about the uniqueness of the church. They miss the importance divine revelation played as an important part of Paul's thought. The work on Ephesians is weak to say the least.

The book has a conservative evangelical view of the Bible and a decidedly Calvinistic point of view at times. There is an absence or acknowledgement of critical theories, although the authors give focus to the reader by presenting the books in relationship to each other and their relationship with Christ.

The book is clearly written for laymen and undergraduates, but I find it too basic and brief in parts. It is written as a textbook, but I would not use it as a main text for a course, but maybe parts of it as supplemental reading. I find it an okay survey. However, it is helpful in drawing one's attention to the thought and care each writer displayed in the biblical text. It is very readable and understandable.

James R. Gray  
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Durst, Rodrick K. *Reordering the Trinity*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Academic, 2015. 384 pp., Pb., \$22.99.

This is a refreshing study of a complicated subject. Durst's thesis is that the normal order of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is somewhat limited according to the biblical text. There are six orders to the Trinity in the biblical text, and that has gone almost unrecognized by scholars and students. Thus, there is a need to reawaken the doctrine. His purpose is to search out and explore "each triadic order in a specific chapter to sound out the relationship (if any) between order and context and to distill the application of that order within our lives as disciples and our life together as the church" (p. 18). This is commendable to say the least. His approach therefore centers upon a practical theology method rather than exegetical or theological. His motive seems to be worship centered. This is important to keep in mind and is a distinguishing feature of the book.

The book addresses a number of issues. First, the status question looks at the history and status of the doctrine today. It deals with the contemporary theology of the Trinity. It is somewhat critical of past work on the subject. It is long and one of the most dense chapters of the book. However it is worth getting through to get to the essence of this book.

Durst then examines the "Data Question." His intent is to supply biblical data against the misinformation about this doctrine. The data gives us a diversity in expression of the triune order in the New Testament. The data reveals a multitude of order: Father-Son-Spirit / Father – Spirit-Son / Son-Father-Spirit / Son-Spirit-Father / Spirit-Son-Father / and Spirit-Father-Son. He identifies seventy-five such instances where such forms are used. He gives the data on each order, not only in text form, but in chart forms as well. He also marks what we lose in the usual order of Father-Son-Spirit by overlooking the other data, and the harmony we gain by bringing in the other orders.

Durst then examines the "Antecedent Question." This deals with the triadic Presence in the Old Testament. The Old Testament is much more than mere monotheism. He takes us on a journey of the Old Testament's hints and statements that are the root of the doctrine in its recognition of the plurality of God and the Godhead. The Historical Question considers

the Trinity in tradition. The historical tradition has been describing God as one in three.

The second part of the book centers on identifying the function of the diverse formula orders. Here he deals with the contextual concepts of the formula. First, the Sending Triad (Father-Son-Spirit as the missional order), the Saving Triad (the regenerative order is reflected in the Son-Spirit-Father order), the Standing Triad (the sanctifying order in the Spirit-Father-Son formula), the Shaping Triad (the Father-Spirit-Son order reflected in Spiritual formation) and the Uniting Triad (the ecclesial order in the formula of Spirit-Son-Father).

In the final chapter Durst deals with the “Application Question.” How does a functional Trinitarian belief effect worship, life, and ministry? This chapter reveals Durst’s heart for a practical, functional Trinity for the believer and the church rather than a purely academic Trinity. Throughout the book are sermon ideas for the pastor to consider. Durst ends with a number of Appendices that are helpful. I especial enjoyed the one on teaching the Trinity to Children.

Overall, this is an excellent work. It goes beyond the proof-text approach common in this field of study. It is well written and makes the reader question and engage with views on the subject. However, I am not sure the author has connected all the dots clearly to his formulas. Some connections seem arbitrary and unclear to me. Also, he does not deal with partial formulas such as the Father-Son (1 Cor. 8:6; 15:20-26). Where do these fit in his scheme? Or do they have no connection? Regardless of this lack, the book is well worth reading. There is no question Durst has made a contribution to the study of the Trinity, with interesting insights.

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Aniol, Scott. *By the Waters of Babylon: Worship in a Post-Christian Culture*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Ministry, 2015. 216 pp. Pb.; \$15.

Scott Aniol serves as assistant professor of ministry and worship at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. His purpose in this book is to answer the question, “How should churches today worship considering the increasingly pagan culture around them and their biblical mandate to reach that culture with the gospel of Jesus Christ?” (p. 15). His answer is that “biblically regulated, gospel-shaped corporate worship that communicates God’s truth through appropriate cultural forms will actually have the most missional impact in a post-Christian context” (p. 16).

Aniol proceeds to unpack that question and his answer by looking directly at the “missional” movement of church engagement with culture. Because missional theology promotes a practice of evangelistic worship, Aniol appropriately begins his discussion by defining terms and analyzing the theological foundation for the missional church approach. I found this to be an excellent overview and critique of missional theology and the resulting implications.

He readily admits the missional church movement has done well to identify a number of critical issues with the contemporary church, seeking to correct those issues by rethinking how the church approaches culture. However, he also analyzes several assumptions missional theorists make and finds them lacking and unbiblical. Specifically, he notes errors in identifying the mission of the church, the assumed neutrality of culture, and the suggested modes of engagement through incarnational ideas and contextualization. The errors are based on faulty anthropological definitions as well as lack of adherence to biblical doctrine (i.e., the total depravity of man).

After completing his analysis of the foundational assumptions of the missional church movement, Aniol simply draws lines of connection between the errors in those assumptions and the practice of evangelistic worship. He states, “I have argued that the worship philosophy of the missional church movement is rooted in a particular errant view of culture and contextualization” (p. 85).

From that point, Aniol turns to a study of key Scripture passages to build a biblical framework of culture and contextualization, including an analy-

sis of Acts 17 (Mars Hill) and 1 Corinthians 9 (“all things to all men”). His reasoning is sound and structured, and points out the flawed interpretation associated with these passages as taught by missional church advocates, as well as by many evangelicals today.

A full discussion of the concept of worship as “drawing near to God” follows. Aniol finds this as an overarching theme in the book of Hebrews, and draws parallels with other passages throughout Scripture as far back as Genesis 1. In so doing, he is seeking to demonstrate the pervasive idea that the nature of true worship is in the relationship between man and his Creator, in keeping with God’s Person and expectations. Worship, in other words, is defined by God – not by the culture.

As Aniol begins to close his treatment of the subject of worship, he challenges one final idea of the missional church movement: that of “authentic” worship. In so doing, he once again traces the error of missional assumptions and replaces it with a biblical perspective.

Finally, he discusses the practical implications of his framework. Having dismantled many of the false assumptions of the missional church movement and then building a biblical case for cultural engagement and worship, Aniol suggests the proper response is the “regulative principle” of worship. He defines this by saying worship “should be regulated by Scripture...rather than a simplistic motivation to ‘contextualize’ to the surrounding culture” (p. 162). At this point he seems to lose steam and reverts to quoting the London Baptist Confession and other historical documents rather than Scripture. After building such a strong biblical case in previous chapters, I found this odd. Although he does turn to some Bible passages, it seems to be in a proof-texting mode to justify his commitment to regulated worship.

In a footnote, Aniol refers to another of his books for greater detail on the practical implications of this book. That was disappointing, since the framework he built did have some holes in it. Specifically, he never references or treats one of the central passages for corporate worship in Paul’s epistles: Colossians 3:12-17.

Overall, I would recommend Aniol’s book in light of the solid analysis of the missional church movement and his corrective ideas based on the biblical material. The ideas of the missional church teachers have influ-

enced many churches, and there are some hints in this analysis that problems in corporate worship today stem from those ideas. Although the missional church movement has produced positive influence, this book helps to show some underlying cracks in its foundational assumptions.

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## BOOKS RECEIVED

Reviewers interested in a particular book should contact the editor via email. Notice here neither implies nor precludes review in subsequent volumes.

Baker, Mike, J. K. Jones, and Jim Probst. *We Speak: Proclaiming Truth in and Age of Talk*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2015.

Borthwick, Paul. *Great Commission, Great Compassion*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2015.

Johnson, Patrick. *The Mission of Preaching: Equipping the Community for Faithful Witness*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2015.

Jamison, Bobby. *Church Basics: Understanding Baptism*. Nashville: B&H, 2016.

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Mason, Eric. *Beat God to the Punch: Because Jesus Demands Your Life*. Nashville: B&H, 2014.

Moore, Russell. *Onward: Engaging the Culture without Losing the Gospel*. Nashville: B&H, 2015.

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- Niringiye, David Zac. *The Church: God's Pilgrim People*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2015.
- Olson, Roger E and Christian T. Collins Winn. *Reclaiming Pietism: Retrieving an Evangelical Tradition*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2015.
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- Pelton, Randal. *Preaching with Accuracy*. Grand Rapids, Mich. Kregel, 2014.
- Phillips, Susan S. *The Cultivated Life: From Ceaseless Striving to Receiving Joy*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2015.
- Rainer, Thom. *Autopsy of a Dead Church*. Nashville: B&H, 2014.
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