Editorial

This issue of the Journal of Grace Theology features several articles from younger scholars along with a few well-known writers. As the editor of JGT, it has always been my intention to encourage younger writers to share their work with a larger reading community. I have had the pleasure of having three of this issue's contributors as students and look forward to their continued participation in the future.

The first article in this issue is a lengthy piece by Pastor James M. Shemaria, "The Practice of Preaching." The article is an edited version of his recently defended Master's thesis, the first thesis defended in the new Master of Ministry degree at Grace Bible College. Shemaria begins with a summary and critique of the works on preaching by James K. A. Smith and Karl on preaching to suggest "the faithfully prepared and delivered sermon is an essential and powerful act of Christians worship." In this challenging article, Shemaria suggests the goal of preaching is to "bring praise to a God who is both above and among the community."

Dale DeWitt finishes his four part series on salvation in the Old Testament, focusing his attention on the prophets in this article. In this series, DeWitt has surveyed seven verbs used for salvation in the Hebrew Bible along with a few related nouns. This vocabulary was first used in the rescuing event of Israel's salvation from Egyptian slavery (Exodus 1-18). In the previous articles in the series DeWitt has shown how this language was used in the Pentateuch, the historical books, the Psalms and now in the prophets. DeWitt concludes "the Exodus established Israel's relation with its God Yahweh as an act of grace." There is also a Christological aspect to this vocabulary: "at the first advent its central spiritual-moral-ethical blessings became operational in believers, while its physical, social and geo-economic benefits to the world are delayed until Israel's future repentance, and Christ's second advent and earthly reign."

Kymberly McFadden offers some analysis of Dietrich Bonhoeffer ("Bonhoeffer and Participating in the Sufferings of God"). In the article she suggests Bonhoeffer's participation in the sufferings of God gave him a deep insight into the true cost of discipleship. Therefore McFadden asks, "should Christians be encouraged to do the same?"

A recent graduate of Grace Bible College and now a PhD. candidate at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, Adam Renberg contemplates how modern church technology impacts worship ("The Church and Surveillance"). Renberg suggests that technology has a place, but Christians "are called to enter into the reality of God." Does intrusive and ubiquitous technology such as closed-circuit television hinder true worship?

Craig MacDonald, the author of the popular Understanding Your Bible,

asks "Is There a Dispensational Aspect to Prayer?" He suggests "prayer, like salvation, is what we sometimes call a horizontal truth, unaffected by the changes from one dispensation to the next."

In honor of five-hundredth year since Luther posted the ninety-five thesis on the door at Wittenberg, Germany, Mark Sooy explains "Why We All Should Read Martin Luther." Sooy argues "reading Luther leads to a deeper spiritual walk with Christ." In fact, when Luther points to the Scriptures, he understood he was "pointing to Christ Himself."

In a survey article, Jan Schregardus, examines popular interpretations of the scriptural references to homosexuality. Schregardus approaches this extremely divisive topic carefully, examining the diverse and often contradictory approaches found in recent publications, including both traditional and non-traditional viewpoints.

Finally, the book reviews in this issue include several recent publications of interest to pastors and Bible teachers.

As always, I want to encourage pastors to consider sharing what they are doing in their teaching and pulpit ministry. Each issue of the JGT has included a few shorter articles on a particular text or a theological observation. For many readers, a short book review written from the perspective of a pastor or teacher in a local church is an important contribution and is always appreciated by others in the ministry.

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The Practice of Preaching: The Role of the Sermon in Practice-Based Formative Worship

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Introduction

Since its foundation in the first-century, the Christian church has prioritized the meeting together of local believers for worship, encouragement and fellowship (Hebrews 10:24-25). However, in the nearly two-thousand years since the early believers began to meet, the philosophy and practice regarding the specific shape and form of worship has shifted. Though there have been several key points of change throughout church history, perhaps the most significant for the late twentieth and early twenty-first century community is the movement from a "high-church" liturgical practice to the conversational and casual approach observed in many contemporary Protestant churches. In this transition, the emphasis is often shifted from the congregational practices of communion, responsive readings and benedictions and towards congregational choruses which focus on the worshiper's personal relationship with Jesus, along with a sermon aimed to engage and even entertain the listeners. However, it must be recognized that there is much more than preference and musical style behind their implementation. Rather, whether it is recognized or not, the philosophy which shapes and is put on display in any particular form of congregational worship plays a crucial role in the actual formation of the community. In other words, worship styles are not neutral vessels simply filled with the things that really matter, but rather serve as practices which shape a local church's identity.

This essay represents a portion of a larger project which aims to explore the way corporate worship is formative for the practicing community while focusing specifically on the role of the sermon within these gatherings. To do so, it will primarily rely upon the work of James K. A. Smith and Karl Barth to suggest the faithfully prepared and delivered sermon is an essential and powerful act of Christians worship.

Information and the Enlightenment

Because the idea of humans as primarily *thinking beings* was one of the lasting outcomes of the Enlightenment's obsession with knowledge, Smith (2009) believes many Christians (including preachers) often assume human existence and spirituality is primarily nourished by "a steady diet of ideas, fed somewhat intravenously into the mind through the lines of proposition and information" (p.42). As a result, generations of preachers have viewed the sermon as the main course in which their congregation is fed the intellectual knowledge they need to live faithful, Christian lives. Because it was assumed humans are almost exclusively affected by intellectual acquisition, this worldview creates "a picture of human beings that look like bobble heads: mammoth heads that dwarf an almost non-existent body" (Smith, 2009, p.43). In other words, humans are what they think. Thus, when Christian worship begins from this premise, it aims primarily to offer adequate opportunity for the congregation to acquire knowledge *about* God. Because Christians need merely to change the intake of their mind in order to effectively follow Jesus, there seems to be little need for anything besides this intellectual stimulation within Christian worship. In this view, proper worship enables Christians to know more about God so they can properly serve God. As a result, for many, the sermon logically reflects this bias. The dissemination of information about God, the celebration of the lives of the biblical heroes and teaching on the great Christian doctrines which takes place in the sermon becomes the pinnacle of the gathering. Though some preachers approach the sermon as a time of practical exploration of the biblical text while others seek to engage with a rich, public exposition, for many the goal is ultimately the same: to help Christians gain more information about God. Thus, every aspect of the worship service—music, greeting, reading of Scripture, even the sharing of communion - is undertaken in preparation for the congregation to be *truly* fed during the sermon.

The Problem with Information

The problem with this approach, however, is it might not actually be effective. As preachers around the world can testify, it is possible for one to faithfully and exhaustively fill the minds of their congregation with good, correct and true information yet see little change in their spiritual growth. In 1980, The *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* published the results of an experiment in which 82 members of a Southern Baptist Church served as subjects to test the effectiveness of preaching in five areas—including knowledge and behavioral change. The main goal of this study was to understand if there was any benefit to holding group discussions in addition to a sermon, but the results speak directly to the whether or not an information-heavy sermon leads to real behavioral change. After the 82 participants listened to a 10-sermon series, it was concluded "such knowledge and behavioral changes evidently did not occur," (Price, Terry and Johnson, 1980, p.196) though the groups who held discussions did score higher in the knowledge surveys. In other words, the sermons helped the congregation members know

more, but did not affect their behavior.

If the information-about-God method of formation was correct, how could this possibly be? If the acquisition of knowledge was *the* indispensable key to discipleship, preaching should have been enough to encourage real, sustainable change. But, alas it was not. Consequently, there must be something more.

Though there is certainly some merit to emphasizing the role knowledge plays in formation,[1] the Enlightenment-influenced preoccupation with intellect seemingly dismisses the place of the tangible, participatory, aesthetic aspects of human existence. In his reaction to what he refers to as *thinking-thingism*, Smith suggests rather than starting from the assumption humans are primarily thinking beings, it is entirely more helpful to understand humans first as *lovers.* Discipleship and formation, he suggests, are primarily dependent not on how much people *know* about something, but rather are the result of what it is that they *love.* As the wisdom of the proverb warns, humans must guard the heart "for everything you do flows form it" (Proverbs 4:23). When Smith speaks of the heart, or of love, he is not, however, talking of relationships or interests but rather of something deeper and more powerful. For Smith, loves are the end point of the deepest cravings and desires and thus drive human existence. In his model, all of humanity is essentially occupied with moving towards these loves. Whether they recognize it or not, humans have embedded within their being a deep set understanding of "the good life, an implicit picture of what we think human flourishing looks likes" (Smith, 2009, p.52). While each person will ultimately have a distinct perspective as to what this end point of happiness and flouring is, the concept is inescapable. People shape their lives—though sometimes without much cognitive effort—in hopes of eventually arriving at this goal. Smith refers to these targeted desires as *telos loves* which serve as the aim at which each person is intending to ultimately move towards. Sometimes these goals are held with clarity and awareness, but in many cases they are shaped without recognition. For example, Smith often points to the persistent and unrelenting presence of consumerism within Western culture as a primary *telos*. While most people would not admit to being driven by a need to constantly buy-consume-throw away-repeat, there is a sense of allegiance to this system which drives the actions and decisions of many people. Smith suggests this allegiance is developed by something as seemingly innocent as a trip to the local shopping mall. Far from being philosophically neutral ground, malls are desire factories and "are loaded with a particular vision of the kingdom, a particular take on what constitutes the good life" (p.94). From the happiness permanently fixed on the faces of models in the advertisements, to the constant favorable (though artificial) lighting, to the messages that shoppers are virtuous if they purchase items on sale, the mall provides numerous points of contact between one's desires and consumerism without letting off the slightest indication of what is at stake.

Thus, in Smith's paradigm, because the desires at the end these *telos* loves can (and often do) form and shape without the one even being aware this is taking place, it follows these desires cannot simply be turned on and off at will. In other

[1]Smith (2016) notes "to recognize the limits of knowledge is not to embrace ignorance. We don't need less than knowledge; we need more" (p.6).

words, humans cannot choose when they are or are not being shaped, and as a result, they are unable to simply *think* their way to right virtue, character or worship.

How to Train Your Desire

Smith suggests the engine driving and compelling human action and existence cannot be changed or adapted by more or better information, thus creating a problem for the classic Enlightenment approach. However, rather than assuming because they cannot think their way to changing their desires humans are simply passengers forced to go wherever their craving take them, Smith offers an alternative. While he is adamant one cannot simply think their way to a refocused *telos*, these loves are, in fact, moldable when the power of imagination and practice are understood. First, the reorientation of one's vision of "the good life" can only happen when a compelling alternative is presented in a way which captures the imagination. Since humans "aren't really motivated by abstract ideas or pushed by rules and duties" (Smith, 2016, p.11) this does not happen primarily through the bullet points on PowerPoint slides. Instead, the way to the heart is through story as "some panoramic tableau of what looks like flourishing has an alluring power that attracts us…and we thus live and work towards that goal" (p.12). When a particular version of the good life is presented in a way tells a captivating, compelling story, human desires begin to cling to these narratives.

This is perhaps most clearly illustrated within the advertising industry where companies are focused not simply on selling a product, but on telling a particular story of the good life (centered on their product!). Nike, for example, is one of the world's most popular brands, yet Prewitt (2003) suggests it "has done everything it can to avoid talking about product features" (p.393)[2]. Rather, it focuses on creating advertising which creates a story of the type of life its customers could obtain once they become identified with their brand. In other words, because the reorientation of desire is directly linked to imagination, Nike is attempting to tell a story that does not simply inform minds regarding of how a pair of sneakers work, but rather reaches into its audience's hearts by displaying the life of fulfillment which the people associated with their brand possess. As a result, these stories attempt to

[2] In this article, Prewitt engages with a shift in the advertising industry from a focus on selling products to creating a brand. The result is an even sharper desire to capture imaginations through creating a *telos* of a good life. He notes "Almost everything that an advertiser does is aimed at building loyalty to the brand. If, in the process, factual information is conveyed that helps the consumer make a reasoned choice, fine. But that is simply not what the advertising is trying to do, in almost every case. Advertising practitioners now look at their advertising as just one of a complex set of impressions that a product, service, or company makes with its customers over time. Rather than produce an ad that describes a product and its features in isolation, advertisers know that the advertising is experienced in a context with many other "texts." How is the stock performing? Have any senior managers been accused of insider trading? …Does anybody wear the logo of the product or company on their uniform? Are any stadiums named after the company? What television shows does the product or company sponsor? If the product were a person, what kind of person would it be?"

retrain the desires, but also the buying routines of potential customers. Thus, while the Southern Baptist Church found the sermon to have essentially no impact on formation, by leaning on story, narrative and imagination, the advertising industry has found a way to regularly shape the habits of its audience. Formation is therefore possible, but comes about through different means then often assumed.

Liturgy and Formation

However, while imagination and story are powerful, it must be recognized they are still essentially cognitive, and for Smith, that is not enough. Because he is working from the postmodern prioritization of tangible experience, his work pushes beyond this focus of narrative to the engagement of embodied practice. Thus, since "the way to our hearts is through our bodies," (Smith, 2009, p.58), once a vision of the good life is obtained, reorientation happens as a result of physical, tangible action. Thus, true formation can only happen when one moves from the realm of simply thinking and towards action and practice. In other words, it is not the possession of knowledge but continual engagement with rituals, habits and practice, which over time "mold and shape our precognitive dispositions in the world by training our desires" (p.59). It is this concept which lays at the very heart of Smith's project. Humans are not primarily thinkers but lovers and the objects of their love can be refocused through targeted, consistent and repeated practice. "We learn to love, then, not primarily by acquiring information about what we should love" Smith (2016) states, "but rather through practices that form the habits of how we should love" (p.21). Put simply, the deep set desires that drive human existence are shaped and formed by practices. Thus, directly opposed to the claim made by Descartes that thinking defines existence, Smith presents an alternative which demands tangible, embodied engagement with not *only* the mind, but also the heart, and thus the whole being.

Worship and Formation

The impact this model has on the shape of contemporary Christian worship is profound, as Smith is suggesting the worship gathering must intend to give Christians a chance to reorient their desires towards God by creating a space for focused, persistent, formative practice. It is in this the role of *liturgy* is presented. While many within the contemporary American church may immediately attach to this term the baggage of the Reformation and a desire to avoid empty practices in favor of "authentic" worship, it should be noted that to some degree, all Christian worship is liturgical "in the sense that it is governed by norms, draws on tradition, includes bodily rituals or routines, and involves formative practices" (Smith, 2009, p.152). Or, to put it another way, liturgies are any set of embodied rituals which are "aimed at a specific end, or goal; and their repetition and practice has the direct effect of making them more and more automatic such that they have become part of the very fiber of our character" (p.86). While many contemporary churches make no use of a Psalter or prayer book, the simple acts of beginning each weekly service with a congregational song, having a set time to greet one another or praying before taking the offering carry the same sort of shaping power. Thus, even in a

low-church context, worshipers are regularly invited into any number of formative practices. It is better for pastors and ministry leader to wonder not *if* the hearts and desires of their congregation are being formed by the actual shape of the worship service, but rather to seek to understand *what* they are being formed towards. As Aniol (2017) notes, "How a church worships week in and week out forms the people—it molds their behavior by shaping their inclinations through habitual practices, because the shape of the liturgy transmits its values" (p.101). Thus, liturgical worship practices—whether in the sanctuary of the downtown cathedral or the auditorium of the suburban megachurch—are a profound agent of formation.

To add even more depth to the power of liturgy, because human desires can often operate below the surface of intellect and cognition (as takes place in the shopping mall), the formation and reformation of these loves can (and perhaps most often do) take place without one being explicitly aware. Formation seeps into the hearts of practitioners at a slow and sometimes—unrecognizable pace. As Chittister (2009) notes regarding the observance of the Christian liturgical year "simply by being itself over and over again, simply by putting before our eyes and filtering into our hearts the living presence of Jesus…it teaches us to do the same" (p.10). The power of intentional worship, therefore, is over time it tells an alternative story - sometimes with words, sometimes with song, sometimes with bread and cup—which captures the imagination and offers corresponding practices to retune the heart back towards its Creator. Smith (2009) suggests when they are functioning properly, worship practices "are best understood as the restoration of an original, creational desire for God" (p.88) which offers a vision and corresponding practices pointing towards the good life for which all humanity was ultimately intended—to live in right relationship with God (2 Corinthians 5:16ff). Christian worship, then, is both proactive and reactive as it "functions as a counter-formation to the mis-formation of secular liturgies into which we are 'thrown' from an early age" (p.88). At it is best, the liturgical movement of worship reorients, reforms, and reshapes the longings and desires of the church.

Practice-Centered Worship and the Sermon

To recap, Smith presents a new (though also ancient) model of Christian worship in which he recognizes human existence is more than just in the mind. People are driven by desires which often operate below the surface of awareness but are nevertheless shaping and directing human action and formation. Reorienting these desires, therefore, requires more than simply downloading more or better information, but by capturing the imagination by offering a vision of human flourishing—the good life. Even still, real, sustainable change that gets below the surface of the brain only comes about through embodied, intentional and repetitive practice. Thus, Christian worship which seeks true discipleship must not have the sole objective of providing adequate information about God, doctrine or even Christian living. Instead, Smith suggests the worship services must exists as a type of practice ground where Christians gather to sing, share communion, hear the story of God, give and fellowship in order to shape their desires away from the messages of the good life which are offered by Western culture. Christian worship, then, seeks to intentionally reform and reorient the worshipers' hearts towards their original,

created intent—being in right relationship with God.

While Smith's model is compelling, the impact it has on the role and function of the sermon within church life is profound. Working from the assumption that the goal of corporate worship is to create a space where the story of God can seep into the hearts of the worshipers, Smith's standard for what is and is not effective must be run through this filter. While he does affirm that "the proclamation of the Word in preaching is the most intense or explicit moment for articulation of this (the Christian) story" (Smith, 2009, p.195), the tendency for sermons to be purely cognitive homilies causes him to seemingly diminish the role they can play in this regard. Without fully rejecting the place of the sermon, his emphasis is on what he considers to be the more embodied practices of communal worship (singing of hymns, communion, responsive reading, and confession). Thus, in his reflection on the contribution of the specific worship forms, he spends minimal time arguing in favor of the sermon. Rather, he focuses on the proclamation of Scripture[3] as a means of allowing worshipers to absorb the story of the gospel. Noting the end goal of the practice of proclamation must be to enable Christians "to become a certain type of people" (196) rather than to simply help them know God better, it seems difficult for a prioritization of preaching to find much of a foot-hold. Thus, while Smith understands the proclamation of God's story (via Scripture) to be a central player in the liturgical reshaping of hearts and desires, he seems to suggest the traditional sermon is simply too top-down and cognitive to be much more than a supporting player.

In contrast, many contemporary, Protestant worship services are fundamentally shaped around the primacy of the sermon. For example, Hughes (2002) speaks for a vast number of American churches by declaring "music to be the servant of preaching" and thus "the entire service is built around the sermon" (p.167). Therefore, within a wide tradition of Protestant worship, the proclamation of the Word in the form of an extended sermon is not, as Smith suggests, simply one-of-many practices which *may* help worshipers learn the story of God. Rather it serves as the primary, dynamic and prioritized moment of engagement with God. For many, a worship service without a large portion of time dedicated to the sermon would feel empty. Smith may say this is simply a side effect of an Enlightenment-mentality that values information over practice, but perhaps there is something more going on here. Perhaps rather than being strictly a dumping ground for information the faithful, humble proclamation of the Word by way of the sermon actually serves to form the desires and reshape the hearts of its hearers in a more dynamic way than Smith's model allows. However, while a critique of this approach is helpful, moving to the extreme of solely emphasizing the sermon at the expense of the all other worship practices may be an equally challenging mistake. Thus, it is important to approach the subject of Christian worship—and specifically the sermon—from a

[3]It can sometimes be a bit unclear if, in this critique, Smith is envisioning the public reading of Scripture or a more traditional expositing of the text via sermon. Either way, there does not seem to be much difference in Smith's evaluation of the two. It may even fit his model to do away with sermons entirely as long as Scripture is being publicly read (Smith, 2009, p.194-197).

slightly different, albeit more traditional angle. This will be done by interacting with another perspective on preaching in which the sermon serves as *the* critical event in which the living and active Word of God is proclaimed within the gathered community. To do so, attention will now be turned to the contributions made by Karl Barth on the purpose, role, and power of homiletics.

Sermon as Event: Karl Barth's Theology of Preaching

The Value of a Barthian Perspective

As one of the most influential Christian figures of late-modernity, Karl Barth's engagement with theology is nothing less than exhaustive. His writings, lectures, and sermons cover an extensive amount of ground while making substantive contributions to several key areas including Trinitarian thought, the authority of Scripture and the role of the church. Because of the expansiveness of his work, when taking up the task of engaging with Barth for a particular project, it is important to limit the scope and scale. Thus, in the interest of continuing an exploration of the place of sermon within the context of worship, the focus in the present section will be fixed on Barth's engagement with the sermon. While his thought in this area is shaped by the larger scope of his theology of the Word and the witness of the Scriptures, the practical outworking of these concepts is perhaps most succinctly displayed in his work in the area of homiletics. Therefore, this thesis will attempt to stay within these parameters by focusing on his essays contained in *Homiletics.*

Barth is especially relevant to this discussion as he operates from within the framework and context of modernity yet offers a critique of the Enlightenment-influenced theological trends of his day. However, despite this starting point, there are many ways in which Barth's work anticipates postmodernity and thus allows him to stand with Smith in his suspicion of an ecclesiology based primarily on intellectualism and empirical observation. Barth's theology of the sermon provides a persuasive counterpoint to the model developed by Smith, and therefore offers an important perspective for the project at hand. Additionally, along with being a theologian, Barth maintained a regular ministry in the pulpit throughout his life, rendering his engagement with the sermon particularly interesting. As a result, his concentration on the constitution, role, and power of the sermon comes not simply from a theoretical or even philosophical perspective, but from the regular and consistent practice of praying over, preparing, and delivering sermons within the context of the community. Thus, in an effort to provide an alternative perspective to Smith's under treatment of the role of homiletics within communal worship, attention will now be turned to Barth's contribution to the theology of the sermon.

The Sermon and Revelation

To begin to understand what Barth means when he uses the word *sermon*, one must first scratch the surface of his theology of revelation—which for Barth, refers to much more than the words of the prophets or even of the inspiration of Scripture. Instead, *revelation* is the beginning, purpose and end point of Christian existence as "the theologian must wait upon the high majesty of the divine Word,

which is God himself as he speaks in his action" (Barth, 1963, p.184). Without *revelation* there is no way to know God, no theology, and therefore, no opportunity for obedience or formation. For Barth, *revelation* is the *sine qua non* of the Christian's understanding of human existence. Significantly, this knowledge comes only from God as "he cannot be known by the powers of human knowledge, but is apprehensible and apprehended solely because of his own freedom, decision and action" (Barth 1959, p.23). That being said, because *revelation* is the event in which humans are given knowledge of God, both human and divine parties must be involved. For Barth, the fact God has made something about himself known (through the words of the prophets or the inspiration of Scripture) is in itself not enough. Rather, *revelation* is the twofold event[4] in which what God has made known about himself is received by the people whom God intends. Revelation is from God but takes places in the presence of His people. As Hart (1995) puts it, the "term revelation refers not to the objective self-manifestation alone, but equally to the act of faith in which it is heard and received and obeyed" (p.85). For the event of *revelation* to take place there must be both the *proclamation* (or announcement) and the *receiving* of the Word which is revealed in three distinct yet interwoven forms, namely "Jesus of Nazareth, the text of Scripture, and Christian preaching" (Hart, 1995, p.85). While the relationship between these is complex, their dependency on one another "begins with Christ whose saving economy in due course calls forth Scripture as a witness, and this in turn leads to the preaching ministry in the church" (p.86). In sum, the only way mankind can know God is through the Word of God which was most clearly manifest in the person of Jesus, faithfully witnessed by the authors of Scripture and then proclaimed by the church.

Along with this, the event of revelation of the Word is a twofold event which has its origin in God and exists in the hearing of the community. While foremost, revelation of the Word of God was in the person of Jesus (John 1), God continues to speak to his people through the witness of Scripture and its subsequent proclamation. While for Barth all three of the forms (Jesus, Scripture and sermon) are worth in-depth consideration, most relevant to the current discussion is the way in which the practice of Christian preaching engages with this powerful and indispensable event. However, before exploring this in detail, it is wise to hear Barth's warning for the preacher who sets out to invoke any divine revelation.

For Barth, *revelation* cannot be confused with a sort of new, authoritative *rhema*—or freshly inspired spoken word—as is valued within Third-Wave Theology, but rather any attempt at faithful proclamation must be in submission to the establish revelation events of Jesus and the written witness of the biblical authors. Along with this, Barth's high view of the sovereignty of God causes him to see both the announcement and hearing of the Word to be solely acts of God himself. It is therefore not up to the servant to dictate how and when this *revelation* event will occur. For example, if this event were to take place within the sermon, it must without question be understood that any power, formation or revelation which may result is entirely the work of Spirit rather than that of the preacher. God may act

[4]Barth prefers the term *event* as it indicates revelation is a twofold occurrence of God's speaking and his community hearing.

in the sermon, but that is no result of smooth preaching or effective planning. Just as "the wind of the Spirit blows where it will" (Barth, 1963, p.57), even the most faithful sermon is subject to God's sovereignty. This is in line with the Pauline approach, as the Apostle claimed he intentionally came to the Corinthians not with oratory skill, "but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power" (1 Corinthian 2:4b-5). Barth recognizes Paul's faith was not in his presentation but in the unique movement of God which took place from the context of his preaching. It is therefore not the sermon but the sovereign power of God that is the essential factor in allowing the congregation to know something about the divine. In this, the preacher must continue to fully depend on God's movement.

The Criteria of Sermon

However, while it should be acknowledged there is no formula or method—no matter how well intentioned or prayed over—that guarantees to serve as a venue for revelation, this does not negate the role the sermon should play within church life. Returning to Paul, it should be noted while the Apostle approached the Corinthian community from a place of servitude, in his preaching he did in fact offer the environment for formation, reminding the Corinthians "I proclaimed to you the testimony about God." While it may not have fully taken root in all who heard, it must be recognized through faithful and humble preaching something about God was in fact made known. Thus, while there can be no guarantee any particular the sermon will allow for something to be known about God (as this is fully dependent on his divine sovereignty), because the faithful preparation and proclamation of God's Word through the sermon *has* historically been the site of this event, the Spirit must be trusted to once again move in this arena. As Hart notes, "We can only live in faith, recollecting that it has happened in the past, and trusting God's promise that it will happen in the future" (p.86). Because God has used the sermon, the local church must be committed to cultivating an environment in which the proclamation of the word is prioritized. In addition, faithful preaching must be understood to be more than a preacher standing in front of their congregation to expound on the Bible. For Barth, the extent to which a preaching can be used by God is dependent on nine criteria (revelation, church, confession, ministry, heralding, Scripture, originality, congregation and spiritually)[5] which must be present for a sermon to truly function as a formative event. It must be stressed Barth understands all nine of these to be essential for public preaching to serve as faithful sermon. As opposed to the type cognitive lecture Smith avoids, Barth's view of preaching is a robust and active community event. To further understand how these criteria specifically impact the role of preaching, the remainder of this section will focus on three areas of particular interest: community, Scripture and originality.

Community

First, Barth (1991) suggests "preaching must be done within the sphere of the

[5]For a full treatment of these criteria of the sermon, see Barth, *Homiletic* (Louisville: WJKP, 1991), 47-90.

church" (p.56). While one can identify the church as the universal community who does not exist together in a physical space, Barth (1959) warns against this, suggesting it is better for Christians to avoid speaking in these terms as many are inclined to think mostly in the manner "in which the Christians are united inwardly and invisibly, while the visible Church is devalued" (p.142). Thus, when speaking of the community, Barth always has in mind "the concrete form of the congregation in a particular place" (p.142). By this, he is not making a claim the brick, mortar or steel of the local church building are in some way a magical conduit of revelation but rather, he assumes the intentional gathering of believers serves as an environment in which the "the call of revelation goes out and people hear it" (Barth, 1991, p.57). This congregation is united primarily by their union with Christ. Specifically by acknowledging their shared identity of being in Christ, the congregation is united not only to him but to one another as well. Thus, by their submission to the will and power of God to make himself known among them, the gathering of the local church becomes a unique environment which serves as the primary place where believers encounter the faithful proclamation of the Word. As Barth claims, when Christians become "aware of our impotence regarding [the ability to produce knowledge of God], we see that we are directed to a place which we have not first to discover…since it is the only place at which we can stand" (p.56). The regular gathering of the local church is necessary to Christian identity as it is the only true site of proclamation. Therefore, the coming together of the community should not be viewed simply as a time for believers to fellowship and refuel before returning to the trenches of "real life." Rather, as Smith (2009) suggests, "worship is a site of God's action, not just God's presence" (p.71). In gathering together to worship and receive the proclamation of the Word of God, the local church operates as more than a community gathering place. Instead, it is the primary site in which faithful, formative preaching can exist.

Because of this dependence, it follows there must be a deep prioritization of preaching within the gathering of the local church. However, as much as the sermon needs community, Barth, argues the very identity of community is equally tied in to preaching. This is made most clear by Barth's (1991) claim that "both sermon and sacrament belong to worship in the full sense" (p.63). Barth understands the very *identity* of church to be marked out by its identification with Christ in baptism and faithfully moving towards the hope of restoration as proclaimed in communion (1 Corinthians 11:26). Along with this he suggests the addition of preaching, noting any sermon can only hope to properly function from within the context of these two (community identity and hope). These practices are not only indebted to one another, but by linking the sermon to baptism and communion, Barth makes the claim preaching is, in fact, one of the crucial identifying marks of the church. While much can be said here about sacramental theology and the role it plays in ecclesiology, simply acknowledging this claim reveals Barth's profound commitment to the sermon as an integral part of church life. Therefore, for Barth preaching is not only at home within the church, it is essential to the community's very identity.

Interestingly, as Barth connects preaching with the more tangible practices of church worship, he both agrees with and expands on Smith's model. First, he sug-

gests the tangible nature of the embodied practices are essential because they point towards the event of revelation "in a way unlike preaching and all else the church does" as they are "not just a matter of words but of visible, bodily action" (p.58). In line with Smith, Barth claims intentional, consistent engagement with worship practices is not a secondary option. Rather through participation, worshipers are formed in a way is unique from anything else (namely, preaching). However, as has already been noted, Barth argues that on their own, these tangible practices are only one part of the whole. Instead he claims "the sacraments bear witness that the event has occurred, while Scripture (via the sermon) bears witness to the content of the event" (p.62). In other words, both the sermon and the practices of Christian worship are not only profoundly linked to the identity and function of the church, but are equally essential and deeply formative—but only when joined to one another. Thus, for Barth emphasizing the role of the sermon within the worship of the local church does not prioritize cognitive information over practice but serves as a faithful response to the presence of God which is actively at work in the gathering of believers.

Scripture

Next, Barth's model of the sermon has no room for anything other than expository preaching which is entirely focused on *Scripture* itself. In doing so, the preacher both avoids the temptation to promote their own pet theological points or expound on "what they think they know about their own lives, or human life in general, or society or the state of the world" (Barth, 1991, p.75). By committing to preaching solely from the authoritative and inspired text of the Bible, the minister operates from within established and proven limitations.[6] Scripture, Barth claims, must be held with full confidence as the exhaustive and reliable record of the revelation manifest in the person of Jesus, and thus there is nothing beyond Scripture which can set the table for this event. In other words, because there can be no revelation apart from what God has already revealed about himself through Jesus as recorded in Scripture, the sermon must therefore be entirely centered around proclamation of this text. Barth recognizes there may be some push back to this from preachers who claim the Bible does not fully address the problems and issues of the contemporary world. His response to this opinion is simply that ministers must have confidence in the completeness of the biblical witness and thus preachers who insist on moving beyond the text "do not have this confidence, this *pistis,* and they do not really live by faith" (p.76). Though this commitment will require preaching to be modest and limited, for Barth, exposition is the only acceptable approach if one truly seeks to know something about God and thus submit to the formation and obedience which may result.

Therefore, since Scripture itself is the authoritative witness of God's revelation, the pastor who seeks to offer faithful preaching must commit themselves to working solely from and with the biblical narrative. As a result, when Barth

[6]That is, Scripture itself. For a concise presentation on Barth's theology of Scripture, see his chapters on "The Word" and "The Witnesses" in *Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans), 15-36.

thinks about the role preaching may play in *revelation*, there is no place for topical sermons as these, by nature, begin with an idea which is then worked through the filter of Scripture. Instead, as Robinson (2005) notes, when expository preachers approach the text, they "do not come to argue, to prove a point, or even to find a sermon" but rather with "a childlike desire to hear the story" (p.22). In this way, when the preacher seeks to proclaim the text, the sermon functions as an essential tool for telling this story as an alternative narrative to the formative liturgies of culture. While Barth demands that a sermon must not be boring—suggesting that "if a sermon is biblical, it won't be boring" (p.80)— the primary concern for the preacher is not to entertain but to exposit upon the unique revelation of God as recorded by the witness of Scripture. When this is done, formation may occur. If Smith is correct in his claim desires are shaped by being told compelling stories of "the good life," the sermon, when it is formed by Scripture itself, will serve as a meaningful conduit of this narrative. Thus, just as the sermon must exist within community, for Barth it is necessary for preaching to operate from a confidence in the completeness of Scripture alone as God's choice to make himself known. As a result, one of Barth's primary criteria for faithful preaching is an exclusive commitment to the expositing of Scripture.

Originality

Thus far, it has been established that for Barth, a faithful sermon must consist of the faithful proclamation of Scripture within the context of the community. However, it could be argued both of these criteria would be fulfilled when Scripture is simply read, and not expounded upon within communal worship (1 Timothy 4:13). However, a third requirement which is of particular interest to understanding Barth's model of a faithfully prepared and presented sermon is the claim the preacher must exposit the Scripture with some degree of originality. Barth (1991) understands ministers are to humbly approach the Scripture not as those who have been granted a unique measure of inspiration by which "certain thoughts are given to preachers that they otherwise would not have" but rather "it is as the persons they are that preachers are called to this task" (p.81). By this Barth understands the sermon to be anchored in Scripture while also coming about as a result of the personal history, experience and characteristics of the preacher. Putting it another way, Barth reflects on his own role as preacher suggesting "having heard myself, I am called up to pass on what I have heard" (p.82). Thus, rather than either just reading Scripture (though there is ample place for this within Christian worship) or presenting a disconnected exegesis of the text, the sermon will be infused with originality of expression and application. To put it in even clearer, Barth claims "The task is this—to repeat in our own terms for our people what is there in the text" (p.109). That being said, it must again be emphasized it is not the creativity or personality of the preacher which causes the Word of God to be known to the congregation. Rather, as Hart notes, "what must be recognized is that this human aspect as such, in and of itself, does not reveal God, but conceals him" (p.87). Thus, the considerable task of the preacher is to find a way to actively present the truth of Scripture by way of their own personality without putting their own personality before the truth of Scripture!

It is at this point one begins to understand the complex nature of the sermon in which the minister is both active and passive in an attempt to offer an opportunity for something to be known about God. To do so, a sermon must be completely faithful to the text (as it stands in direct authority over the preacher) while also speaking to the unique context of a community which exists thousands of years after the original writing of these Scripture. As such, when Barth considers the composition of the sermon he expects there must be some sort of application within. This claim stems from his twofold understanding of revelation in which the Word is both made known and heard. To him, exegesis of the text—even if publicly read—may simply be a confirmation God has spoken. It is when the story of Scripture is brought into the realm of application the fullness of its formative power can result in the event of revelation. Thus, Barth (1991) claims "an exposition, no matter how true to the text, will die away ineffectually in a vacuum if there is no possibility of a response echo from those who hear it" (p.111). It is because the faithful application of the text is so essential to preaching that it is critical for the preacher to be so deeply formed by the story and witness of Scripture they can easily, as Barth puts it, "follow this way of witness into the present" (p.111). Originality, therefore, is central to a Barthian theology of the sermon and thus differentiates it (from the reading of Scripture) while also enabling it to function as a faithful context in which God's sovereign choice may allow something to be known about himself.

This is Not That

While there is much more that could be said about Barth's criteria of preaching, even this quick summary of his view of community, Scripture, and originality presents a compelling picture of the sermon as much more than simply a time to dispense information about God into the minds of a congregation. Rather, faithful preaching serves as the primary form in which God makes known something about himself to his people who have, in faith, gathered in worship. Just as the Word was made known through the person of Jesus and preserved through the witness of Scripture, the sermon is a vehicle in which the Word can be brought forward into the lives of the believers. In doing so, Christian preaching actually functions alongside, though in submission to, the biblical text as, according to Barth, "the words of Scripture and those of the preacher do not cease to be fully human, but enter into a union with the Word of God who speaks through them" (Hart, 1995, p.88). This enables one to appreciate how high Barth's view of the sermon is and thus how formative, valuable and essential a role it plays within Christian worship. As a result of this model, preaching is not simply one worship practice among many but rather it is one of *the* primary ways God speaks to his people.

For Barth (1959), "knowledge of God takes place where divine revelation takes place" (p.24) and revelation may, if God wills it, take place in Christian preaching. Thus, the sermon is one of the primary modes of knowing God. As a result, when attempting to understand the place of the sermon in Christian worship, the Barthian view does not disagree with Smith's practice-as-formation model but rather claims the faithfully prepared and delivered sermon functions in an entirely different way than anything else in the service. It is in Christian preaching God may choose to

make himself known in a way unique to that particular form. While working in unity with, but not superseding, the authority of Scripture or of the person of Jesus Christ, the sermon, according to Barth, is the single most important act with which the church can engage—not as a means for cognitive development but as a vessel in which the event of revelation may take place. As Hart (1995) summarizes:

> Barth encourages us, therefore, to think of the task of preaching as a human task, to be sure; as a response to the prior word of divine grace, certainly; but much more than this, as that which is possible only on the basis of its objective and subjective conditions, the self-giving of the Son as Jesus Christ, and the presence here and now of the Spirit of Christ at work in the hearts and minds of both preacher and congregation. (p.102)

Therefore, if Barth is at all correct, to think of the sermon primarily as an occasion for the congregation to gain more knowledge *about* God is to rob this practice of its profoundly formative power in the life of the church. Rather, the sermon functions as a spiritually-rich event in which God may make himself known and in doing so operates outside the limitations of cognitive practice. As a result, it is fully possible to affirm the model of practice-based worship presented by Smith without rejecting the central role which faithful Christian preaching must play. The following sections will attempt to bring these two concepts together to create an alternative model which equally values practice and preaching.

Practical Implementation of the Sermon and Formative Worship

This thesis has sought to dialog with James Smith's suggestion humans are primarily shaped by their loves and desires, and since these loves and desires are formed through practice, the gathering of believers in communal worship must primarily serve as a venue in which this formation can take place. Thus, if this is to occur, practices which are primarily cognitive—such as information-heavy preaching—should not have a significant role within Christian worship. However, it has also been suggested this is not the only, or even proper, approach to the sermon as Karl Barth holds the faithfully prepared and presented sermon must function as a primary event for the community. While one may not fully embrace Barth's theology of revelation, there is much to be appreciated about his high valuation of the sermon as more than a cognitive practice.

Thus, when thinking about the place of preaching within Christian worship, it is helpful to engage with *both* Smith and Barth. With these two views firmly in hand, the remainder of this thesis with explore the practical implication of worship services which are both practice-oriented and sermon focused. To do so, it will first suggest several ways in which local churches of all traditions can implement formation-focused practices in their regular gatherings. Next, the thesis will offer guidelines for sermon preparation and delivery which will allow preaching to operate from the standpoint of an event in which community formation may occur. Finally, the thesis will conclude with a brief personal reflection on six-months of implementing these suggestion within the context of a mid-sized, contemporary

American church. This case study will engage with both the challenges and encouragement which arose from this approach.

Embracing Practice: In Defense of Liturgy

When seeking to develop a culture of practice-based worship, it would be helpful for the contemporary church—specifically those from traditions which arose from the Church Growth Movement of the 1970's-1990's—to revisit the concept of liturgy in communal worship. There are two major objections that may be raised when contemporary, Western churches engage with liturgical worship forms. First, for many this word alone represents the stodgy, off-putting worship services that drive "seekers" away from church and as a result, from the Christian faith itself. The acts of communal standing, singing, reading, praying, and eating are found in very few places outside of the church and thus, it may be assumed the non-initiated will be wholly put off by being asked to join in these practices. As Senn (1995) notes, many who advocate for the various manifestations of the Church Growth Movement's approach to worship do so with an assumption "that unchurched Americans are incapable of appreciating or participating in the historic liturgy, the content of which is determined by the historic liturgical year" (p.208). In other words, Christian worship is rooted in Christian history and tradition and therefore those who are not familiar with this history are not able to participate. As a result, the foreign nature of traditional liturgy had led to its rejection and replacement with "a focus on congregational needs, self-congratulatory occasions, and the sanctification of civic life" (p.208). Thus, when a church hopes to be welcoming to outsiders, they often seek to model their gatherings after cultural events outsiders would be comfortable with. As Smith (2009) observed, these seeker-sensitive congregations "have to de-emphasize certain aspects of Christian proclamation and worship in order to front-load those aspects of the gospel that are more affirming" (p.104). As a result of this mindset, many forms of worship which reflect traditional, liturgical and counter-cultural church practice are rejected.

Second, it can often be assumed because these forms of worship are not *natural* for many contemporary Christians, those who "force" themselves to participate are simply encouraging a culture in which participants are not acting in ways which are truly "authentic." In other words, creating an environment where unfamiliar forms of worship practice are emphasized only serves to bring about the type of pharisaical behavior Jesus often identified and critiqued (e.g. Matthew 23:23, etc.). Thus, it may be argued if worshippers have to force themselves to engage with worship practices which they are not comfortable with, something must be wrong! Along with this, one of the central claims of the New Testament is Jesus himself is the true priest of God (Hebrews 7-10) and thus, the center of worship has moved from a sacred place (temple/cathedral/church) to wherever his Body is present (1 Cor 3:16, 2 Cor 6:16, Rom 12:1-2). As a result, it may follow the emphasis should be moved from structured worship as suggested by clergy and towards a freedom to worship as one feels led. In other words, it is the values, feelings and preference of the individual - not the community - which should determine the shape of worship. If one does not "feel" like participating in prayer, reading or greeting, to do

anything else would be hypocritical and inauthentic.

Both of these objections are indeed worthy of engaging with, though a full rejection of traditional church practice may not be the most edifying result. First, while there must always be points of contact between culture and church practice, to allow the former to determine the latter is backwards. For example, Smith argues the contemporary church's discarding of the practice of confession followed by a proclamation of being forgiven in Christ may *seem* to be outsider-friendly, but in actually its absence is robbing the outsider of something they truly crave. He points to cultural artifacts of film and television in which the character's longing to confess serves as a window into the hearts of humanity. Smith (2009) asks "What if the opportunity to confess is precisely what [humans] long for? What if an invitation to confess our sins is actually the answer to our seeking?" (p.104). Thus, the assumption seekers will be driven away from church because of these strange practices may actually be keeping people from finding what they are looking for!

However, one may still argue if the church seeks to be welcoming and hospitable to outsiders, they must create environments in which non-believers will feel at home. This is the perspective of megachurch pastor Andy Stanley (2012) who appeals to the example of his Audi dealership as a model for church, claiming, "regardless of the type of (ministry) setting, it needs to be appealing to the target audience" (p.164). However, as an alternative to the church-shaped-by-culture model, Smith offers a counter example of staying as a house guest in a foreign country. While one is an outsider in this country, their expectation would not be for the hosts to adapt everything about *their* lives and culture in order make the visitor feel as if they never left home. Rather, it would be more helpful for the host home to be warm and engaging in a way that enables the outsider to feel welcomed in a place different from their own. In the same way, he suggest "seekers are looking for something our culture can't provide. Many don't want a religious version of what they can get at the mall" (Smith, 2006, p.78). Thus, to conform church practice to the image of culture robs it of its unique and appealing contribution. Congregational worship—and the congregations which have gathered to worship—should therefore not be intentionally off-putting to outsiders, but the unfamiliarly of certain worship practices should not lead to their rejection. Worship should be governed by an intent to encourage formation of the church rather than simply by a desire for sensitivity to unbelievers.

Second, in response to the claim authenticity in worship should be the primary goal, it may be helpful to consider which values this springs from. While certainly the warnings of Scripture should be heeded (Isaiah 29:13ff), it may not be the forms of worship which are to be fully called into question but rather the worshipper's desire for personal preference over community formation. As Hughes (2002) warns, in many settings "corporate worship has taken the form of something done *for* an audience as opposed to something done *by* a congregation" (p.148).

In addition, because it is often thought the *content* of worship is the only thing important, it can essentially be disconnected from its *form* without consequence.[7] However, Smith's model argues every form worship takes becomes a practice which in actuality shapes and forms the desires and loves of the worshiper. Thus, while one may seek to jettison unfamiliar practices for others which feel more "authentic" they are, in fact, forming their desires in a new way. Primarily, by forming practices according to one's own preference, worshipers establish a paradigm which "makes *us* the primary actors in worship. In other words, expressionism breeds its own kind of bottom-up valorization of human striving that slides closers to works of righteousness" (Smith, 2009, p.77). Smith suggests ironically, in an effort to avoid a worship context which prioritizes works over true faith, this approach promotes exactly what it intends to avoid! As Hughes (2002) puts it, "there is an intrinsic downward gravity in human-centered worship" (p.150). Therefore, rather than seeking to create "authentic" worship forms it may be more helpful for church to embrace some of the practices which have been handed down through church tradition. This may involve worship which calls participants to move beyond their "comfort zone," but this is in itself an act of submission which becomes a formative practice, leading worshipers to enact the commitment "that God is the primary actor or agent in the worship encounter" (Smith, 2016, p.77)—not us. Believers don't gather to express themselves but to "worship because in this encounter God (re)makes and molds us top-down" (p.77). Thus, while it may not be helpful or even necessary for contemporary churches to completely reshape their worship services, there may be value in becoming open to the inclusion of some unfamiliar practices into their regular gatherings. For churches removed from traditional worship forms, the following three practices (call to worship, intentional community prayer and regular practice of communion) offer an entry point to formative, practice-based worship.

First Steps towards Practice

Call to Worship

In an effort to create formative worship environments which are God-focused, rather than worshiper-focused it is helpful to consider who determines when, how and why the service itself begins. The consumer values of western culture tend to allow the individual to create the parameters. Retail companies are continually seeking ways to empower people to shop exactly how and when *they* want. Smartphone apps invite individuals to buy their products without even leaving their couch! However, as has been established, the church should operate from an entirely different set of values. Thus, in communal worship it is God who ultimately dictates the terms, even to the degree of when worship should commence. To begin each service, therefore, with an intentional *call to worship* forms believers

[7]This is another ramification of the thought humans are primarily cognitive beings. If it is what one cognitively knows that truly matters, the related practices (forms) are essentially neutral and thus can be changed without impacting the content. See Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 2009, 74-81)

to understand their faith something happening by way of submission. The worshipers do not determine when or how the worship begins, but rather they are called to place themselves under the authority of God. While it must be acknowledged the order of practices within worship are set by the ministers who are leading, the intent is to convey a deeper reality of God's presence and action. Cherry (2010) notes worshipers often think of the "call to worship as people calling one another to worship to God, but in reality, *God* is calling *us* to worship" (p.54). Beginning each service with this call, therefore, establishes purpose and intent which then shapes the hearts of the worshiper towards a God who is worthy and able to call upon his people to worship him. By regularly responding to this call, worshipers are formed into people who proclaim God, and the gathering of the community is different than the other activities fill their week.

Along with this, Smith suggests responding to the call to worship is a proclamation of the very identity of the church. This is not simply a social club with the intention of fellowship and edification, but rather a people who have been *called* by God. Thus, this act serves to shape the theological purpose of proclaiming God's sovereignty in establishing a people for himself as even "the neighbors and strangers we pass on the way also remind us that God's particular people is also a *chosen* people (1 Peter 2:9)" (Smith, 2009, p.161). Therefore, by faithfully beginning each service with the practice of a call to worship, the desires of the congregation are formed to recognize the intent of worship is not in individual fulfillment but consists of praising a sovereign and powerful God on *his* terms, as a response to *his* call, because he has created a chosen people for *himself.* Thus, the first act of the worship service is powerful indeed.

Prayer

While nearly all Christian worship gatherings feature the act of prayer, the specific role it plays varies. While high church expressions may retain prayer as a central liturgical practice, in some contemporary churches it has been relegated to a "filler" role. Howard (1972) believes that, while there is some variance, in many contemporary worship services "prayers are simply ways we have of starting or stopping, or pious means of giving everything else in the service a sacred reference and divine sanction" (p.56). Perhaps a pastor may pray before a special music number or in preparation for the offering. In some cases, prayer may even be used as a "set change" device to allow time for the band to set their instruments up—not dissimilar to the darkening of lights during a scene cut in a play. It is unlikely any pastor would dismiss the general importance of prayer in worship, but, as Howard observes, "we have relegated prayers to no better than an incidental place in the arrangement of our service, and third or fourth place in the matter of time allotted to them" (p.56). In response to this anemic implementation of prayer, Smith (2009) calls for a return to understanding this practice as a robust part of Christian worship and theology. As a result, he sees prayer playing several formational roles in the shaping of Christian belief. First, intercessory prayer makes a statement about the *others-focused* nature of Christianity. In this act, Christians are reminded they "are called…as a people not for (their) own sake but for the sake of the world"

(Smith, 2009, p.193). As the concerns, needs and joys of the community are shared in public prayer, the outward-focus of the people of God is expressed.

Second, the practice of prayer in worship serves as a lament against the curse, which serves to "make us hunger for the kingdom" (p.194). As the church prays for healing from illness or the restoration of relationships, we are reminded this is *not* the way things should be, while also calling God to enact *shalom* in our lives. Finally, prayers for illumination—often coming before the preaching of Scripture—are a statement of reliance. In this act we recognize "in order to see things for what they really are…we are dependent on a teacher outside of ourselves" (p.194). As Osborne (2010) states, the act of prayer "is not primarily asking God for material things but relinquishing control of our earthly things entirely to him" (p.262). As the church appeals to God's intervention through this practice, it is shaping believers to see themselves as finite people of a loving and interactive God. The shaping power of communal prayer is also seen by Miller (2001), who understands it to be "among the most visible and unambiguous testimonies to the reality of God that we can make" (p.62). As a result, to simply use prayer as a "filler" in the worship service runs contrary to the core of the Christian faith. Instead, it must be understood as a practice critical to shaping the church. Because worship is deeply formative, it is crucial for church leaders to understand and implement prayer as reminders of the transcendence, immanence and illumination of God—proclamation not only of God's presence among them, but also of his ability to intercede powerfully in their lives.

Communion

Finally, when considering ways congregations of all traditions can develop an emphasis on practice, a regular engagement Communion should become a priority. Because of its connection to sacramental theology, the role of Communion is often dependent on the tradition in which it is practiced. Again, there is much that could be said in this regard, but for the sake of this thesis, Communion will be understood as the ordinary act modeled by the early Christians (1 Cor 11) in which believers share in the simple elements of bread and cup in order to remember the death of Christ and proclaim his coming victory. As Grenz (1994) notes, the Christian's participation in Communion is "a symbol of spiritual truth and a reaffirmation of loyalty to Christ" (p. 540). While many may agree with this definition, in an effort to distance themselves from what may be viewed as "works-based" or formulaic worship, it is possible some contemporary congregations have taken a diminutive view of the role of Communion. To be sure, while "the Supper is explicitly ordered for the church in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians" (Waltz and DeWitt, 2011, p.229), there is no indication of how frequently this practice should take place. Thus, while some congregations make a point to participate in Communion on a regular, scheduled basis, others approach it from a much more casual and loose perspective. However, as one of the most tangible, as well as perhaps the longest-standing, Christian practices, engagement with Communion should become a central part of regular congregational worship.

Waltz and DeWitt argue Paul's view of Communion is one which repurposes the Jewish Passover celebration in ways that celebrate and emphasize the new existence of the Body of Christ. By joining together in eating of the bread and drinking of the cup, the congregation makes several symbolic and formative statements. First, the act of sharing this meal serves as *proclamation* of the death of Jesus as it is "the dominant way Christians have re-lived the event, and in their re-living and remembering, the gospel is proclaimed" (Waltz and DeWitt, 2011, p.346). A second result of the regular practice of Communion is the formation of certain *hope in the coming victory of God*. As Paul himself states, communal partaking of the bread and cup is a proclaiming of the gospel "until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26). Thus the acts of eating together not only celebrates the coming victory but also recognizes its assured reality has present implications. As Grenz (1994) notes, "In the supper we not only anticipate communion with the Lord as a hope for the distant future. We also experience the future proleptically in the present" (p.359). Third, Waltz and DeWitt see the practice of Communion as an embodied act which declares the *unity of the Body* of Christ. As Paul indicates (1 Cor 10:17), the symbolism of a diverse community of believers sharing from a single loaf is needed, both for the diverse community of believers he wrote to, as well as to the "cultural or economically or generationally conflicted churches in our own world" (Waltz and DeWitt, 2011, p.351). As Paul indicates, the symbolism of a diverse community of believers sharing from a single loaf (1 Cor 10:17) "is an easily recognized parallel to cultural or economically or generational conflicted churches in our own world" (p.351). In other words, by regularly participating in Communion, the local church proclaims the truth that despite several external factors which reinforce perceived divisions in the church, all members of the body "are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). The practice of Communion, therefore serves to cultivate and form this mindset among the congregation.

Adding even more significance to the regular participation in Communion is the embodied nature of eating and drinking with the community. Smith notes it is the uniquely tangible qualities of this practice which enables it to be powerfully formative. He suggests "The tangible display and performance of the gospel in the Lord's Supper is a deeply affecting practice. Its sights and smells, its rhythms and movements, are the sort of thing that seep into our imaginations and become second nature" (Smith, 2009, p.198). Therefore, because human formation happens most effectively through embodied practice, an emphasis on the sharing of Communion plays a powerful role toward this end. However, while the sharing of Communion is a rich practice actively forming the hearts of the congregation in several ways, for many local church communities who do not, for whatever reason, participate in this regularly, the challenge of regularly incorporating (or *re*incorporating) it into the worship service may be considerable. While many congregations find significant value in a weekly participation in Communion, it may be better for others to ease back into practice. Perhaps this could be as simple as doubling the frequency of its observance (if a church practices communion quarterly, move that to every six weeks). However, there may be the view that offering Communion *too* regularly robs it of its significance. To this objection, it may be helpful to remember the primary goal of worship is not "authenticity" but rather seeking

to glorify God and be formed in the process. A regular and repeated emphasis on the act in and of itself is a formative practice—and its "oddness" forces the participant to take note of what they are doing and thus, only adds to an awareness of what is being proclaimed within. While pastors and worship leaders may approach Communion with some degree creativity,[8] "care should be taken not to disturb the symbolism by temptations to mere novelty" (Waltz and DeWitt, 2011, p.245). In other words, while the act of communally eating a small bit of bread and sip of juice may be wholly unfamiliar outside of the context of the local church, ministers should not feel the need to either avoid it or make this practice fresh or new each time. While the exact form of this practice will shift depending on the context of the specific community, it is clear a focus on the regular participation in Communion is an important aspect of congregational formation.

One of the beautiful realities of the global Body of Christ is its diversity. This is found in the unique gifting of its members as well as the various expressions of the local church and should therefore be celebrated. As a result, one should follow the lead of the early church by avoiding the temptation toward calling for uniformity in worship in all contexts. Thus, while it is prudent for every local community to put serious thought and prayer into the ways in which their worship is forming their congregation, there is room for variation of emphasis and practice. The previous suggestions, therefore, may be helpful entry points for churches who wish to move towards practice-centered worship. That being said, it may be more helpful to think in terms of parameters rather than prescriptions. While not every church needs to administer Communion at the same frequency, or even in the same manner, the formative power of practice-based worship should compel all churches to be regularly engaging with communion. In the same way, while the call to worship and pastoral prayer may look completely different from church-to-church, or even from week-to-week within the same congregation, the importance of its inclusion should serve as motivation to prioritize it on a weekly basis. What is suggested, then, is each church should embrace the considerable freedom they have in order to cultivate expressions of worship effectively for their unique context while staying within the limitation that have been passed down from through church history. In his book *Leading from the Sandbox*, Addington (2010) employs a helpful metaphor to describe this sort of freedom-within-limitation model. He suggests ministry leadership should function as a sandbox in which a child is given considerable freedom to build, create and design in a variety of ways as long as they stay within the set boundaries and limits of the box itself. As with all analogies, this will eventually break down, but it may be helpful for pastors and worship leaders to think of their worship within the local church in similar terms. There are unique characteristics and circumstances that will lead each particular expression of worship to be unique, yet some of the historically valued forms of Christian worship,

[8]Waltz and DeWitt believe "that the practice of the Supper [can] be enriched for believers through thoughtful and creative means of conveying the several meanings found in the Pauline passages" (p.356). One example of this is the suggestion "Pastors and worship leaders might consider using two loaves occasionally, one left whole for visualizing the unity of the body, the other broken for visualizing the brokenness of Christ's body" (p.352).

as well as the concept of practiced-based formation, serve as parameters within which this creativity takes place. In this way, the Body can celebrate its diversity while also proclaiming its unity through formation-focused community worship. It has therefore been suggested a helpful "sandbox" for the planning and preparation of congregational worship operates within the boundaries of implementing a call to worship, congregational prayer and communion.

Moving forward with this concept of freedom-within-limitation in hand, it is now time to turn to what should serve as a central aspect of Christian worship. As the primary event through which the revelation of God is proclaimed, the faithfully prepared and delivered sermon must play a prominent role, but must do so from within a general set parameters. The following will attempt to present a practical philosophy of preaching which focuses on the limitations that must be recognized for the sermon to function as a formative event for the gathered community of God.

Towards a Formation-Based Philosophy of Preaching: The State of Preaching in the Contemporary Church

Before attempting to define the parameters of a faithful sermon, it is helpful to briefly survey various perspectives within the contemporary church regarding the approach to and purpose of preaching. On one end of the spectrum is megachurch pastor Andy Stanley's (2012) philosophy of preaching which is driven by his desire for "the audience to be so happy about being there that they come back the following week" (p.234). While Stanley's goal is to preach from Scripture, this method leads him to value presentation over content, to the point of intentionally selecting (and not selecting) certain texts in order to meet the needs and interests of his community. Another, though perhaps somewhat related philosophy, comes from Hadden Robison's classic text of expository preaching. While presentation, or shape, is important to Robinson his model nuances this by suggesting the starting point must be Scripture (content) rather than the attention span of the congregation (presentation). Thus, he notes faithful preaching takes place when preachers "shape the sermon so that it communicates the central biblical concept in a way that is meaningful to (their) hearers" (Robinson, 2001, p.30). Stanley intends the sermon to be a tool to bring people into other areas of ministry while Robinson hopes to engage with his audience by bringing application from Scripture.

Somewhere between these, Keller (2016) emphasizes the importance of both content and presentation, but points to the work of the Holy Spirit as "the difference between good preaching and *great* preaching" (p.11). His model calls for Scripture to be presented in a way that transforms lives in the congregation, but this can only happen when the preacher serves as an accessory rather than "the main event." Returning once again to Paul's defense of his ministry before the Corinthians, Keller appeals to Paul's assertion that though he was clearly a gifted preacher, it was not his oratory accolades that made his preaching effective. Rather:

> Paul indeed wants to reshape the foundations of listener's hearts - he wants to change what they most fundamentally love, hope, and put their faith in. Yet he insists that this change must *not* come about through human ingenuity but *only*

> through a 'demonstration of the Spirit's power' (1 Corinthians 2:4)…Paul is likening himself to the Holy Spirit, whose job is, like a floodlight, not to point to himself but rather to show us the glory and beauty of Christ (Keller, 2016, p.17).

It would be unfair to claim there is no crossover in these three models[9], but nevertheless, they serve as a sample of the variety in approaches to faithful preaching as held by prominent Christian leaders. Some prioritize content, others focus on presentation, while others rely primarily on that which is ultimately beyond their control. It therefore must be acknowledged that the question of what makes faithful preaching *faithful* is seemingly dependent on which approaches one adheres to. However, in an effort to suggest an alternative which fits within the claim of this thesis, it is necessary to filter the sermon through the grid of practice-based worship.

Preaching from the Sandbox

As it has been shown, Smith's model of practice-based formation under-treats the place of the sermon within Christian worship. While he does not dismiss the idea the sermon should play some sort of role in the local church, it is secondary to the various forms of worship which are more tangible and embodied. The reason for his skepticism is the assumption sermons are, by nature, cognitive presentation in which a pastor provides thirty-five minutes of information about God, doctrine or the Bible to a stagnant congregation. To be fair, within Smith's project, this type of preaching would in fact be unhelpful, if not counter-productive! Thus, when thinking of the role of preaching in practice-based worship, one must reject the view of sermon-as-lecture in favor of something more robust. Instead, if the sermon is to function in any meaningful way, it must be understood as *a unique practice in which God's revelation as given in Scripture is proclaimed in the presence of the gathered community.* When understood and approached along these lines (by both the preacher and the congregation) the sermon, under the sovereignty of God, exists primarily as a *formative* rather than merely informative event.

However, even with this definition in hand there remains much to explore regarding how precisely a sermon moves from cognitive to formative. To fill this out, it may be helpful to return to the previous discussion of the sandbox. In the previous section (*Embracing Practice)*, the construction of the worship service was defined by a sense of freedom within limitation in which it was suggests every worship service, in every local context, does not—and in fact *should not*—look and sound exactly alike. Rather there should be an acknowledgment of standard parameters which enable this liberty to effectively flourish. In the same way, for the sermon to be more than a lecture, it must find its form from within the sandbox. It is critical each preacher allows their own humanity and personality, as well as the unique context of their congregation, to be involved in the preparation and presentation of the sermon (freedoms). At the same time, there are several boundary markers (limitations) which help to ensure a sermon is moving closer to a formative event than an informative lecture. The following four aspects of preparation

[9]Stanley and Robinson would also affirm the critical role of the Holy Spirit in faithful preaching.

—and delivery will be suggested as the sandbox walls in which the sermon should be freely constructed.

Preacher

As this thesis attempts to demonstrate, the ultimate effectiveness of a sermon is entirely dependent on God's work and will. As Barth (1991) suggests it should be recognized "Preaching is not a neutral activity. It is not an action involving two equal partners. It can mean only Lordship on God's side and obedience on ours" (p.50). However, while it is true God does use "foolish things of the world to shame the wise" (1 Cor 1:27), the minister who seeks to be faithful to the task of preaching must be one who has personally been shaped by the Word. Thus, because God may use a preacher's preparation and delivery to form the community, the character and spiritual formation of the minister is critical. The New Testament epistles bear witness to the need for ministers to ensure their own lives are being shaped by the Gospel. Though it may be argued not every overseer is given the regular ministry of preaching, it should be assumed every preacher is qualified as an overseer. Thus, Paul's qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 serve as indication the human source of faithful preaching must be one who is faithfully seeking to live in line with the story of God. While Barth (1991) is correct to emphasize in preaching "a pardoned sinner is called upon to proclaim the Word of God" (p.73) it is important in submission to God the preacher seeks to offer the "action of the slaves that have a master" (p.74). Thus, an active and continual submission by the preacher to The Master is an essential *boundary* of the sandbox of a faithful sermon. As a result, it is necessary the preacher is consistently, faithfully and humbly running the race of sanctification according to "the power that is at work" within the Body (Eph 3:20). Knowing and engaging with the gospel is indispensable for the one who seeks to have their preaching do the same for others. Just as faithful proclamation must go beyond cognitive understanding of the Scripture and theology, the spiritual formation of the preacher must also be embodied and incarnational.

Along with this general focus on spiritual formation, preachers must also allow the specific text of each sermon to confront, shape, challenge and be at work within their own heart. As Barth claims, if a minister seeks to "undertake the exposition of Scripture, they must themselves have been listening previously to Scripture, and they must listen to it over and over again, and do so in a very personal repentance and thankfulness before God" (p.89). In other words, a faithful sermon is one which has taken root within the heart of the preacher who then seeks to communicate the things that they have learned from Scripture. In order to do this, it is important for the preacher to not approach the task of sermon preparation as a static job to be performed weekly for the congregation. As a result the Bible can never be relegated to simply another text to be used as a tool for study. Rather, the preacher must seek to enter each week of preparation with a desire to be shaped by the Word of God. This is one of the most unique and challenging aspects of the call to regular preaching as it is necessary for the minister to establish and maintain a desire to be personally formed by Scripture. As Peterson (2006) implores, preachers must cultivate a hunger for the Bible that forces it to be much more than

a manuscript; "we open this book and find that page after page it takes us off guard, surprises us, and draws us into *its* reality, pulls us into participation with God on *his* terms" (p.6). Thus, the task of preaching begins long before the community has been gathered and the pastor enters the pulpit. Rather, the faithful sermon begins with the formation of the preachers as they seek to be shaped by the text from which they preach.

Text

Clearly, the role of Scripture in faithful preaching is central, yet there are various approaches to the precise extent and manner in which the text is used. As noted earlier, some suggest while the content of preaching is important, it is ultimately secondary to presentation in determining the effectiveness of the sermon. At the same time, even a philosophy of preaching which seeks to prioritize content is faced with several options. While some seek to use Scripture to support preaching that is essentially topical and focused on issues at the forefront of culture or politics, others lean solely upon expository preaching in which the text serves as the origin of any application which may result. While it is important for the preacher to move beyond simply exegesis towards some sort of application, it must be recognized since the goal of formative worship is for the community to be shaped by the story of God, it is essential for this preaching to be anchored firmly in text of the Bible. As Barth (1991) notes, because Scripture is the authoritative account of God's revelation "The act of those who live by justification, then, can be no other than that of understanding and expounding the scriptural word, and to that extent repeating it" (p.75). For preaching to operate as a formative event within communal worship, it must be entirely grounded in the text. Certainly, in the process of preparation and study, preachers may have their minds opened to very particular ways in which the chosen text applies to the unique context of their congregation. However this aim towards specific application must not be *a priori*. To avoid the temptation to expound on the thoughts, topics and ideas of the preacher, faithful preaching must be expository.

It is amply possible for one to approach the sermon from an expository commitment while still selecting and avoiding particular passages which lend themselves to one's own designs. In this, the dangers of subjectivity which are to be avoided in topical preaching are equally present. As Barth (1991) warns, "We should be on guard against picking a text that we can simply exploit. The text itself must always be master, not we" (p.93). Attention must be given, therefore, to ensure selection of the text is as unbiased as possible. There are various ways in which this can happen, but perhaps the most common is the use of some sort of preaching schedule or *lectionary*. Briefly, a lectionary is a series of texts which have been selected and organized in an effort to guide the church through Scripture in an ordered and uniform manner. While the use of the lectionary may be associated with the same sort of hesitancies the contemporary church brings to traditional, liturgical practices, the benefits this method offers are substantial. First, a commitment to allowing one's texts to be selected by a previously established system, rather by the will of the preacher, avoids the danger of specifically-selecting passages that fit one's own agenda. In the same way, being guided by the lectionary removes the burden

and temptation for the preacher to rely their own on creativity in selecting sermon series and topics. Second, many lectionaries are constructed in a way which promotes a broad survey of Scripture throughout the year, including the Gospels, Law, the epistles, the prophets and the Psalms. In this way, the community is confronted, challenged and comforted by the entire scope of the biblical writings.

Finally, committing to this manner of text selection is a practice that deeply connects the local congregation with the greater Body of Christ. While it is possible for a similar preaching calendar to be created and used by an individual church, following an established system—such as the *Revised Common Lectionary*—alongside a plethora of churches around the world helps the individual congregation to recognize the realities the Body of Christ, though diverse in its expression and doctrinal emphasis, is one. Along with this, because most lectionaries are structured around the church year, the observation of the major Christian celebration (specifically Advent and Easter) become the landmarks for the congregation. Rather than ordering the year by nationalistic and civil observation, the church year is marked by the divine, cosmic events of the incarnation and resurrection. As Smith (2009) notes the peculiarity of the church calendar is the recognition "time here revolves around a person—Jesus of Nazareth…the church is not gathered by abstract ideas or teachings or ideals; it is a people gather to the historical person of Jesus Christ" (p. 157). Along with this, by regularly ordering church life in this way, the local body performs on a large scale what the worship service does on a weekly basis as it becomes a formative practice shaping the hearts and desires of the community. Chittister (2009) is once again helpful here in her assessment of the liturgical year as "the process of slow, sure immersion in the life of Christ that, in the end, claims us, too, as heralds of that life ourselves" (p.13). She goes on to note that following the Christian calendar "is not an idle discipline, not a sentimentalist's definition of piety, not an historical anachronism. It is Jesus with us, for us and in us as we strive to make His life our own" (p.14).

Barth sees much value in seeking guidance from a lectionary, but does note while this can be helpful "it is not absolutely necessary…to stay on the path suggested by church" (p.94). As important as it is to approach the task of preaching from an established commitment to Scripture, it is possible too rigid of an adherence to the any preset plan may hinder God's leading of a particular community's engagement with the text. For example, because of the objective of moving through a large selection of text during the year, lectionaries do not leave much room for the benefits which come from an extended study of a particular biblical book. Therefore, being careful to not fall into the trap of preaching the minute, informative details of exegesis, a preacher can remain equally faithful to the Scripture by embarking on an in-depth book study, in which the entirety of the text is addressed over an extended period of time (perhaps spending several months of sermons in a single epistle or Gospel). In light of this, while a lectionary may serve as a helpful tool, the preacher should always approach text selection with a prayerful awareness of the moving of the Holy Spirit and the corporate needs of the congregation. If, however, one does choose to avoid the lectionary for whatever reason, it is advisable the major annual markers of Advent and Easter (perhaps the entire Lenten season, but at least Palm Sunday and Good Friday) remain as significant and celebrated points of focus for

their role in ordering the life of the church. As a result, when the preacher is committed to engaging with the will of Scripture, rather than their own creativity, the sermon moves towards a faithful event of formation.

Delivery

Thus far, it has been suggested the faithful sermon begins with the formation of preachers and is focused on expositing a selection of text which does not primarily serve the agenda of the preacher. However, it is in the sermon's delivery that preaching differentiates itself from either lecture or a direct reading of Scripture, therefore making this criteria critical within any philosophy of preaching. From the onset, when seeking to prepare and deliver a sermon that is both faithful and formative, it is necessary to remember all effort and skill which the preacher offers is entirely secondary to the work of God. Thus, even the most eloquently delivered sermon is hopeless without God's faithful action in making something known about himself to the community. However, this does not mean the delivery and composition of the sermon has no bearing whatsoever. While the primary actor in the sermon is God himself, the preacher must seek to deliver the sermon in a way which hopes to create the environment and context in which God may act —all while being fully aware the success or failure of this delivery is neither coaxing nor preventing God from working. Thus, as the delivery of the sermon is both essential and redundant, the preacher is forced to confront the paradox of the mysterious way the foolish and broken are used for God's own glory.

In order to work with—rather than against—this paradox, Barth (1991) cautiously calls the preacher to understand the role of originality, noting "conformity to Scripture is not a hood behind which we cannot see the preachers" (p.81). In fact, rather than attempting to remove themselves from sermon preparation, those called to this task should recognizes that:

> It is as the persons they are that preachers are called to this task, as these specific people with their own characteristics and history. It is as the persons they are that they have been selected and called. This is what is meant by originality. Pastors are not to adopt a role…they are simply to be themselves, and to expound the text as such (p.82).

In other words, a pastor has been called to the task of preaching not as a disembodied speaker, but as an individual and therefore, it is their individuality that must be called upon in the sermon. Because faithful preaching requires this sort of personal engagement, this point serves to again reinforce the importance of the pastor's own journey of being formed by God through a commitment to Scripture.

Since the personality and experiences of the individual pastor are to be called upon in faithful preaching, it follows, therefore, each minister's delivery should be a unique expression of their person and context. Thus, if a preacher is a naturally gifted storyteller, this should come across in their preaching. If their God-given skill is in diatribe or persuasion, their preaching may reveal these characteristics. However, in yet another effort to guard against the sermon's content being dictated by the preachers own agenda and skill, it must always be remembered that deliv-

ery is meant to serve the text. Thus, Barth (1991) reminds preachers "simplicity is needed in a sermon" (p.83). By this, Barth not only means the sermon must be organized in a way which speaks to the specific situation of the gathered community, but that the preacher should deliver the message in the language of these very people. Robinson (2001) affirms this call to simple language noting "no matter how accurately a phrase or word expresses a speaker's meaning, it is worthless if the listeners don't understand what it means" (p.191). While the term *conversational* may carry with it a degree of informality, it is in this stream faithful preaching should flow. If the sermon is to be an event in which the people are formed by God, there must be a sense of intelligibility and an eye towards engagement with its delivery. Thus, while a faithful sermon must avoid becoming a showcase of the oratory skills of the pastor, the fact the preacher has been called as a unique and uniquely gifted member of the Body of Christ demands their gifting be applied to the delivery of the sermon in a way that is submissive to the text, but active in the context of the specific community.

Along with this, in order to move the sermon from the realm of cognitive information and towards formative event, it is essential for its delivery to emphasize some sort of direct application. The danger in this, however, is the preacher becomes too focused on *creating* a point of application, causing them to betray the intent of the text. It must be remembered "Scripture does not need 'to be made relevant'; it is already relevant. Often, however, that relevance must be demonstrated rather than assumed evident to the audience" (Willhite, 1992, p.356). It is not the task of the preacher to animate a static text so it can be useful for their congregation, but rather to guide the community to a place where they are confronted with the living and active revelation from God. As a result of recognizing the relevance of Scripture may in fact be disruptive and challenging to the congregation, Barth (1991) refers to the taking up of this task as "a certain ordinary courage…that simply wants to help the content of the Word to find expression in all circumstances" (p.114). Because of this, it may be better to not think of the application of the sermon as something must be created, but rather an essential aspect of the faithful sermon that must simply be delivered by the preacher to the congregation. Again, in order to effectively engage with this task, the preacher must be so formed and embedded within the story of the God that these points of application are evident as a result of prayerful study and preparation. When thinking of the parameters which mark out faithful preaching, one must approach the delivery of the sermon as a task that is essentially submissive to God while also being a simple, understandable, humble and active reflection of the gifting of the preacher in an effort to proclaim the direct application of Scripture to the lives of the community.

Community

The three criteria of faithful, formative preaching which have been addressed thus far (the preacher, the text and the delivery) can all be seen at work for the pastor in the quiet moments of preparation and study. However, because the goal of formative preaching is to create an environment in which God himself will shape the hearts of the entire congregation, it must be understood the community which has been called to worship on any particular Sunday also plays a role in

this. Before going further, it should be recognized the power of the Word of God has previously and will surely continue to take root in the hearts of hearers who encounter preaching without any expectation and pretense. As a result, as is frequently displayed in the account of Paul's missionary journeys, even those who hear the message of the gospel for the first time—who up until that moment were simply going about their daily business—can be formed in divinely-ordained and powerful ways. Nevertheless, the focus of this thesis is on the role of the sermon amid the regular gathering of believers, thus the final boundary of the "sandbox" of faithful preaching is the faithfulness of the community.

Just as the preacher humbly begins the sermon from a place of expectation God can use their own simple words as a tool for divine transformation, it is equally important the congregation receive the sermon with the same faith. In this way, listening to a sermon ceases to be a passive experience and instead becomes an active practice in which the congregation trains themselves to engage the exposition of Scripture in a way which affirms the reality the texts themselves are adequate, reliable and powerful witnesses of God's revelation. Faithful preaching is nothing less than a transformative event through which God works, and therefore it is necessary the congregation learns to think of the sermon in these terms. By doing so, participation, practice, and formation takes place even as the congregation remains seated and silent. Just as it has been suggested the power of liturgy is primarily in the way it seeps into the worshiper, the regular act of approaching the sermon with this intention and expectation shapes the congregation to embrace the Word of God as a regular, applicable and practical part of their existence.

Barth (1991) notes this sort of faithful expectation is rooted in the congregation's understanding of their very being, because "the church is not humanity in general relation to God. It is humanity gathered around the one event. The church is the church based on *this* Scripture" (p.62). The congregation must be aware the testimony of Scripture is at the core of their communal identity, and thus God and their relationship with him is knowable through the faithful preaching of Scripture. Along with this participatory-orientation towards the proclamation of Scripture, the congregation also plays a role in cultivating an appetite to hear the preaching of God's story in the form of the sermon. When preaching is approached with an intent to faithfully tell the narrative of God by making the congregation aware of its intersection with their lives, the congregation begins to relearn how to be the people of God. As Smith (2016) notes, the formation of one's heart "happens when God's Word becomes the orienting center of our social imaginary, shaping our very perception of things before we even think about then" (p.85). While this may take place to some degree at an unconscious level (through the simple act of repeatedly participating in Christian worship), when a congregation begins to approach the sermon with this aim, the act of preaching becomes even more transformative. Interestingly, for congregations not accustom to approaching the sermon in this way, preaching itself serves as a guide. In other words, in order to bring the congregation to the place of expectation and engagement, preaching must be intentionally leading in this direction. As such, the commitment and engagement of the pastor to a particular community in critical. This type of shift in approach must be cultivated over time, thus the longer a particular preacher invests in the life of their congre-

gation, the more effective this development will be.

Therefore, the relationship between the congregation and the sermon is critical but not in the way suggested by Stanley who assumes the goal of preaching should be primarily to establish an engaging presentation in order to retain the interest of the congregation. This is essentially backwards as it places the burden on the preacher to coax the congregation into paying attention rather than calling the community to value the manner in which regular engagement with the faithful sermon is shaping them. Cultivating this culture of faithful-expectation for the sermon is therefore a task of church leadership. The preacher must be cautious to not "market" themselves or their dynamic, creative approach to preaching as the reason for the congregation to engage with the sermon. Rather, the focus must remain fully on the Word of God and the event of transformation which may take place in preaching—regardless of the pastor's skill! In this way, Paul's defense (1 Cor 2) takes root in the regular preaching within the local church. Establishing this dependence on the power of God may be as simple as beginning each sermon with a prayer affirming the living and active nature of the Word of God. It may also be helpful for pastors and leaders to look for opportunities to have personal conversations with their congregation in which they are able to dialogue about the dynamic role of Scripture and sermon. The community, therefore plays a vital role in faithful preaching as their orientation towards this event aids them in being aware of its reformative function.

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to bring together an emphasis of practice-focused communal worship and a high view of the sermon as a unique event of the gathering of the local church. To do so, it has relied upon James K. A. Smith's claim that human existence is ultimately driven by love and desire and formed through regular, intentional practice. Thus, for Christian worship to be formative, it must move beyond being a place in which people *learn* things about God and instead become a training ground that shapes its participants through tangible forms of worship. However, it has also been argued this model is only complete when the role of the sermon is elevated; not because of its informative power, but because when faithfully prepared, delivered and received the sermon is a *unique practice in which God's revelation, as given in Scripture, is proclaimed in the presence of the gathered community.* To make this point, the work of Karl Barth (on this particular topic) has been suggested as a guide to understanding the critical role which the sermon must play in the life of the community. Practically, this thesis has offered two "sandboxes" which provide opportunity for churches to approach the worship service from the perspective of freedom-within-limitation. While adopting this model and its equal emphasis on practice and sermon may present significant challenges to some contemporary congregations operating from a very different starting point. However, the benefits are numerous as it seeks to establish a culture that calls the community to engage with the presence and revelation of God in very real ways. Regardless of the specific shape and expression of Christian worship

or whether it comes from a high or low context, the shared goal remains to bring praise to a God who is both above and among the community and thus can powerfully work through the submission of his people. It is towards this the desire of worship is aimed.

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Salvation In The Old Testament
Part IV: Exodus Salvation Terms in the Prophets

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The present article concludes a survey of seven verbs for salvation in the Hebrew Bible. These verbs, some with significant related nouns, are first used together for a rescuing event in the narratives of Israel's "salvation" from Egyptian slavery in Exodus 1-18. Having discussed these verbs and the related vocabulary in earlier portions of the Old Testament, we turn to their uses in the Prophets. Most of these verbs appear in their Greek equivalents in the New Testament.[1]

Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel

The two most-used terms for salvation in the Old Testament—*yasha`* save, deliver, and *natzal* snatch, rescue—have different bearings in each of the three major prophets. Isaiah uses the *yasha`* root (1 verb, 2 nouns) about 58x with varying thematic emphasis on salvation from God's wrath, disease, blindness, troubles, and sin, and in chapters 40-66 in repeated passages on salvation as a future revelation of God's own righteousness; Isaiah uses *natzal* about 23x for various divine rescues. Jeremiah uses the *yasha`* root 18x and the *natzal* root 11x. In Jeremiah, six of Exodus' seven salvation verbs appear repeatedly, concentrated in the new covenant promises of chapters 30-33 and in New David messianic texts. Jeremiah's use of Exodus' salvation verbs, like Isaiah's, focus on an internalized salvation of repentance and cleansing of the human heart and mind with a newly available righteousness opposed to Israel's false

[1]The symbol "x" means "times" when used for comparative statistics. All biblical quotations are from the NIV; in a few cases prose lines have been changed to poetic lines by the author.

gods who *cannot save* (an unusual negative use of *yasha`* ). Jeremiah concentrates three uses of *yasha`* in chapters 34-37, all three in contexts about David's coming restoration and kingdom—its freedom from plunder, uncleanness and backsliding. Instead of *yasha`*, Ezekiel uses *natzal* (15x) stressing Israel's potential and actual future "rescue" from the grip of idols, magic charms, false shepherds, and nations of Israel's dispersion by hostile invaders like Assyria and Babylon.[2] He uses *yasha`* only 3x for salvation from uncleanness. Thus Ezekiel includes righteousness or cleansing as the main quality of Israel's future salvation from sin and foreign captivity. All three Major Prophets tie Israel's final renewal with the presence of the messianic New David and his righteousness. Hence a major aspect of the future salvation is removal of sin by a new revelation of God himself as in some Psalms.

The major prophets also refer to the original Exodus salvation with variations in frequency—Isaiah has the fewest direct allusions (4) while Jeremiah and Ezekiel both have more; they saw the Exodus as Israel's founding salvation event and the origin of Yahweh's saving relation with the nation.

> There will be a highway for the remnant of his people that is left
> from Assyria
> as there was for Israel when they came up from Egypt (Isa 11:16).

> You brought your people Israel out of Egypt with signs and wonders,
> by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great
> terror (Jer 32:21).

> On the day I chose Israel, I swore with uplifted hand to the descendants of the house of Jacob and revealed myself to them in Egypt. With uplifted hand I said to them, "I am the LORD your God." On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of Egypt (Ezek 20:5-6).

Language like "I chose Israel," "I revealed myself to them," and "I am the LORD your God," shows that for these prophets the Exodus was the origin of Israel's national union with Yahweh—a tie which also became the model for the New Exodus after the exile, most notably in Isaiah 40-66.[3]

Isaiah uses the seven Exodus salvation terms 185 times in aggregate; forms of *yasha`* save (52x), *ga'al* redeem (24x), and *natzal* rescue (22x) are prominent. These terms attract other concepts to the idea of salvation. In Isaiah 12 and 24-27, several *songs of the redeemed* appear. Isaiah and the believing remnant could already sing such songs in anticipation of Israel's coming salvation

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[2]On these nations (and Persia) ruling the Levant, see E. Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible,* Vol 2: *The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods, 732-332 B. C. E.* (New York: Doubleday, 2001).

[3]B. W. Anderson, "Exodus Typology in Second Isaiah," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage* (ed B. W. Anderson and W. Harrelson; New York: Harper, 1962), 177-195.

("in that day" [12:1, 4]). In outlook and thought these songs are also akin to portions of chapters 28-35 where, though mixed with prophecies of woe, they project saving blessings for Israel, the nations, and all creation after a horrific world judgment. In the same of chapters (28-35), blessing prophecies follow judgments in more or less alternating fashion, even within a single prophecy (Isa 24, 27, 30, 32, 33, 34-35). The salvation songs of Isaiah 12 and 24-27 are similar to those of 28-35 in that they focus on blessings for the human spirit: freedom from God's anger; comfort; freedom from fear; joy and song; and satisfaction (Isa12). In 24-27 demonic powers are bound (24:21-23), refuge comes to the poor and needy who feast, prosper, enjoy abundant life, and even look to resurrection (25:7-8; 26:19); they gain happiness, release from disgrace (25:7-8), peace of mind (26:3, 12; 27:5), removal of sins, (27:9), and rest. These blessings extend to a New Israel's prosperity and power, and to a waiting world.

A striking feature of Isaiah appears in chapters 40-66 where salvation and *God's own righteousness* are repeatedly set in parallel poetic lines and in a few cases with a verb of revelation (*galah* reveal, unveil, make known) or conveyance (*qarab* come near) where God himself is the subject. Some of the more striking are:

I am bringing my righteousness near; it is not far away;
and my salvation will not be delayed (46:13)

My righteousness draws near speedily,
my salvation is on the way (51:5a).

But my salvation will last forever,
my righteousness will never fail (51:6c).

.My salvation is close at hand
and my righteousness will soon be revealed (56:1c).

Thus in Isaiah, salvation will become available as God's own righteousness and at his initiative—a work of grace, not of human merit.

Another sustained connection of the coming salvation in Isaiah is with the *New David* promised to the original David in 2 Samuel 7. All three major prophets have multiple passages on the future Davidic successor, sometimes spoken of as the first David resurrected (Jer 30:9), as dynastically multiplied (33:15), or as "restored" (Amos 9:11). Isaiah and Zechariah call the New David a "sprout' or "Branch" from David or from his father Jesse (Isa 11:1); this language maintains the dynastic continuity of the original promise of 2 Samuel 7. Jeremiah 33:15-16 calls David's son "the righteous Branch" in whose days Judah and Jerusalem will be "saved" (*yasha`)* and he[4] will be called 'The LORD Our Righteousness.' In another Branch text (Isa 4:2-4), the "beautiful" and

[4]See NIV footnote "a", p. 737. The note suggests "he" while the NIV text has "it."

"glorious" Branch is tied with the final cleansing and holiness of Zion. One future Davidic Branch passage in Zechariah (13:1) similarly predicts that a fountain will be opened to the house of David "to cleanse them [Jerusalem] from sin and impurity." Hence in these thematic texts "salvation" attracts to itself a related series of details on the themes of righteousness and holiness in which a righteous son of David redeems Israel and Jerusalem from sins and hostile enemies. No future finalized salvation can exist without a new revelation of God's own righteousness initiated by him in grace and not based on prior good except his will.[5]

Similarly, the prophets persistently cite a *new covenant* associated with the New David or what are called, "the sure mercies" (AV)" or "unfailing kindnesses promised to David" (NIV), guaranteed already in the original Davidic covenant as an endless, righteous dynastic line (2 Sam 7:12-17; Isa 55:3-5). Covenants, treaties and other human-sphere agreement formats are quite frequent in the Hebrew Bible—international political agreements, marriage and slave agreements, and covenant lawsuits for example. The salvation of the new covenant includes the same Law as followed the Exodus of Israel from Egypt (2 Sam 7:22-24; Jer 31:32), but different enough to be characterized as "not like the covenant I made with their forefathers . . . ." Some examples are Isaiah 42:1, 6; 49:7-9: 59:20-21.

> Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight;
> I will put my Spirit upon him and he will bring justice to
> the nations
> I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold
> of your hand.
> I will keep you and make you to be a covenant for the people,
> and a light for the Gentiles. (42:1, 6).
>
> This is what the LORD says [to the servant]—
> the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel—
> to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation,
> to the servant of rulers:
> Kings will see you and arise,
> princes will see and bow down,
> because of the LORD who is faithful,
> the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you
>
> This is what the Lord says:
> In the time of my favor I will answer you,
> and in the day of salvation I will help you;

[5]In a very few biblical texts, something like "prevenient (preceding, foregoing)" grace can prepare for salvation, but these are not examples of salvation by works; see Acts 10:1ff.

I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people,
to restore the land
and to reassign its desolate inheritances,
to say to the captives, 'Come out,'
and to those in darkness, 'Be free' (49:7-9)!'

Several further observations seem pertinent. (a) The servant is the messianic figure who appears in several passages of Isaiah 40-53, where he is both Israel (Isa 49) and a single, unique *individual* who suffers vicariously for the sins of Israel and the world (52:13-53:12. (b) The same righteousness as in the texts cited above is visible. (c) The covenant is universal in effects. (d) Three of the seven original Exodus salvation terms are re-used: salvation (*yasha`* ), Redeemer (*ga'al*), and "Come out" (*yatza'*). (e) "Help" (*`azar*, 49:8) may be added (though not an original salvation term, but see Exod 18:4), and perhaps by allusion, "restore" (*qum,* 49:8c, "restore" or "re-establish" the land). Isaiah 59:20-21 may also be cited:

'The Redeemer will come to Zion,
to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,
declares the LORD (59:20).'

'As for me, this is my covenant with them,' says the Lord. 'My Spirit, who, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of their descendants from this time on and forever,' says the LORD (59:21; prose, NIV).

A few further observations can be added. (f) The passage includes repentance—an aspect of Israel's prophesied spiritual changes. (g) "Redeemer" uses the Exodus salvation term *ga'al* redeem. (h) The covenant reference is to a future work of the Spirit—setting God's words on the mouths of his servants' and their descendants into the future. The coming redemption is a multi-aspect future completion of salvation.

Jeremiah cites the Exodus salvation from Egypt more than 10x in chapters 1-33; after chapter 33 Jeremiah's references to Egypt are to Jeremiah himself and the group who went to Egypt after Babylon's attack of 597 B. C. As elsewhere in the prophets, some uses of "salvation" are to physical deliverance from personal or national enemies including idols and false gods who cannot save the nation (11:12). The spiritual deepening of Psalms and Isaiah's salvation descriptions is also present here: "wash evil from your heart and be saved (4:14)," although this too includes salvation from Babylon's invasion and destruction of Judah. Spiritual turning to God is also here and throughout the book a condition of safety, blessing and all forms of prosperity, spiritual and material.

Chapters 30-33 are a unique salvation portion of Jeremiah. Not only are six of the seven Exodus terms reused here—*yasha`* most often—but six references to David and the covenant of a righteous dynastic kingship in Israel occur in these four chapters as well, all but one in chapter 33 as though the chapter were intended to be climactic.[6] Salvation motifs in these Davidic promise texts include the New David as Israel's king (30:9) under whose reign Israel will be saved (vs 10b, *yasha`* ) to serve the LORD. The righteousness of the Davidic king (33:15, 16) is complemented by the words, "This is the name by which [Jerusalem) will be called 'The LORD Our Righteousness (NIV),'" following another appearance of *yasha`* in vs 16a. A further reference to the new covenant appears (33:21) with a note of multiplied Levites to minister before the LORD (33:22, 25). The full Davidic passage from Jeremiah 33:15-16 reads:

> In those days and at that time
> I (Yahweh) will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line;
> he will do what is just and right in the land.
> In those days Judah will be saved (*yasha`)*
> and Jerusalem will live in safety.
> This is the name by which he will be called:
> 'The LORD Our Righteousness.'

Israel's salvation from foreign powers, famine and insecurity does not mean there is nothing spiritual in this redemption; its contexts never abandoned forgiveness of sin and actual internal power to overcome by implantation of the law in the human heart (Jer 31:31, 33-34), and some consequences of that implantation:

> "The time is coming," declares the LORD,
> "when I will make a new covenant
> with the house of Israel
> and with the house of Judah . . . ."
>
> "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel
> after that time," declares the LORD.
> "I will put my law in their minds
> and write it on their hearts.
> I will be their God,
> and they will be my people.
> No longer will a man teach his neighbor
> or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,'
> because they will all know me

[6]On the unity of Jeremiah 30-33, see G. L Keown, P. J. Scalise and T. G. Smothers *Jeremiah 26-52* (WBC 27; Dallas: Word, 1995), 149, 167-169, 175; similarly B. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2007), 841.

from the least of them to the greatest,"
declares the LORD.
For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more (31:31, 33).'

A major aspect of the coming salvation appears and reaches a new human depth where the dynamics operate to produce glorious descriptions of Israel and the world's future righteousness; nothing else is quite like it in the prophets.

Ezekiel is on the same track as Isaiah and Jeremiah, although he prefers *natzal* rescue, seize [from], save, over *yasha`*. The reason for this avoidance of *yasha`* is not obvious; perhaps he preferred the priestly language of "cleansing" instead of Isaiah's more social-political and military vocabulary. Ezekiel also has significant references to Israel's need for the promised divine righteousness which, however, lies in the righteousness of one's *individual* relation with God— righteous attitudes and behaviors:

> . . . when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before him, he will die. Since you did not warn him, he will die for his sin. The righteous things he did will not be remembered and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the righteous man not to sin and he does not sin, he will surely live because he took the warning, and you will have saved yourself (Ezek 3:20-21).

> Or if I send a plague into that land and pour out my wrath upon it through bloodshed, killing its men and their animals, as surely as I live,' declares the Sovereign LORD, `even if Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, they could save neither son nor daughter. They would save only themselves by their righteousness (Ezek 14:19-20; prose, NIV).'

These are difficult passages for those who live on this side of the cross in the dispensation of grace under the new covenant; we do not need to discuss the difficulties here, however. The reason for citing them is Ezekiel's emphasis on the *individual's* righteousness with God. The texts show how central the individual's righteousness with God really is.

The Minor Prophets

The twelve Minor Prophets do not often use the seven Exodus salvation verbs when considered as individual books. The most extreme omissions are of *ga'al* (two of the twelve prophets—Hosea and Micah—have only one use each) and *qanah* (only two use the verb, Amos (1x) and Zechariah (2x). On the other hand, *`alah* go up and *yatza'* go out, fair the best, with 41x and 40x respectively through the twelve books. One might expect this apparent minimal usage from a comparison of the more frequent use of these two verbs in other Old Testament sections and from the Minor Prophets' relative brevity. Isaiah's most common salvation verb (*yasha`*

) alone is used 58x in Isaiah, but occurs in the combined sixty-three chapters of the twelve minor prophets only 20x. This portion of the article will cite salvation texts from the four minor prophets who use the seven salvation terms the most in aggregate—Hosea (aggregate, 18x), Amos (19x), Micah (16x), and Zechariah (37x). (Daniel is not counted here as a minor prophet.)

These four prophets allude to Israel's deliverance from Egypt either directly or indirectly—Hosea 5x, Amos 7x, Micah 2x, and Zechariah 2x.[7] The four use at least some Exodus salvation terms, showing they were in living contact with traditions of Yahweh's rescue of Israel from Egypt. Sometimes the Exodus' sequel events—desert journey, conquest of East Jordan Amorites, crossing the Jordan, and gaining Canaan—appear with the Exodus allusions.

Hosea

Hosea uses six of the seven Exodus salvation verbs with yasha` and `alah showing a slight edge in frequency; use of the seven verbs is shown by frequency in the chart below; *shuv* and *`azar* have been added as synonyms:

yash`ah	*natzal*	*ga'al*	*padah*	*qanah*	*`alah*	*yatza'*	*shuv*	*`azar*
5	3	1	2	0	5	2	22	0

The modest use of Exodus verbs is typical of the individual Minor Prophets. The verb *shuv* (return) is added because in Psalms it became a substitute for *yasha`* in regarding Israel's saving relation with Yahweh as compromised and needing restoration; the Psalms also substitute *`azar* help to describe salvation.[8] In Hosea no less than 5 *direct* references to Israel's Exodus (2:15; 11:1; 12:9, 13; 14:4) occur with specific reference to Egypt—a rough quantitative match with the longer prophetic books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah.

As to Hosea's conventional salvation language, Hosea 1:6b-7 reads (NIV), using *yasha`* twice (the second use does not show in the NIV):

> I will no longer show love to the house of Israel
> That I should forgive them.
> Yet I will show love to the house of Judah;
> and I will save (*yasha`*) them—
> [but I will not save (*yasha`*)] by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen,
> but by the LORD their God.

[7]This criterion is arbitrary; it assumes a relatively full picture of the Minor Prophets thoughts could be gained thereby in a non-exhaustive study due to space limitations.

[8]Several studies also consider *`azar* among of the salvation terms; see for example J. Sawyer, *Semantics in Biblical Research: New Methods of Defining Hebrew Words for Salvation* (London: SCM, 1972), pp. 60-88; J. Barr, "An Aspect of Salvation in the Old Testament" in *Man and his Salvation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973), 42.

And yet of the same Israel, the LORD quickly adds (1:10-11):

> "Yet the Israelites will be like the sand of the seashore. . .
> The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be reunited,
> and they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land,
> for great will be the day of Jezreel.'

Several elements in the context help define its salvation. (a) The coming salvation is not a list of war events or warriors, but from God himself who saves without military action. (b) The coming salvation occurs from the initiative and love of God alone. (c) The end of vs 6b suggests future forgiveness of sins. (d) Although Judah (1:7) is singled out at first, 1:11 adds Israel (northern kingdom) to Judah--both under a single new leader. (e) The newly restored nation will "come up (`*alah*)" out of the land"—be planted and sprout, since "Jezreel," means "God sows seed" (1:11 NIV; Heb text, 2:3b). Thus within a few verses, two Exodus verbs are used a total of three times. 'Come up out of the land' may refer to the northern kingdom's Assyrian exile or to the original Exodus from Egypt, borrowed to describe release from exile in Assyria's land. However, in light of the planting and growth metaphors, it more likely refers to Israel's own land where it will be regathered, replanted and flourish (as also Amos 9:15): the New Israel will become a seamless spiritual and national salvation. D. Stuart thinks an extended meaning of *`alah* as "arise," "awaken from the dead" is possible.[9]

A second Hosea passage reflecting the Exodus vocabulary is 13:4-14:3. In these eighteen verses *yasha`* is used three times (13:4, Savior; 13:10; 14:3, "save"). In its midst (13:4-6) a reference to the deliverance from Egypt occurs in a participle of *yasha`* . In 13:14 two Exodus verbs are used—*padah* ransom, and *ga'al* redeem; the language following both verbs is that of salvation from a mother and child's death in a failed birth:

> I will *ransom* them from the power of the grave;
> I will *redeem* them from death.
> Where, O death are your plagues?
> Where O grave is your destruction?

The grave-death-death-grave structure of the four lines assumes the tragic conclusion of 13:13; thoughts about new life are natural here even if suggesting resurrection seems abrupt. The thoughts are like those of Hosea 1:7-11 and 14:5-6 about a resurrection-like flourish of the future Israel. The fifth and last line of 13:13, "I will have no compassion," seems to belong with the ensuing poetic lines on judgment; the NIV separates the line from the foregoing with a blank space suggesting a return to the judgment thoughts of 13:1-13. The Exodus salvation

[9]D. Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah: Word Biblical Commentary* (WBC 31; Waco: Word, 1987), 39; see also the suggestive (but not explicit on resurrection) comments of H. W. Wolff, *Hosea* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 28, and his comment on p. 29: "The dominant theme of the entire passage is the coming day of salvation."

vocabulary outcrops again in 13:15 using *`alah* of the destructive desert east wind with no relation to salvation, and *yasha`* again appears, "Assyria cannot *save* us." Perhaps "return" (Heb *shuv*) in 14:1, in a plea to return (*shuv*) to the Lord, should be mentioned; *shuv* is not an old Exodus verb, but in both Psalms and Prophets it represents Israel's "return" to Yahweh.

Thus Hosea's 18 aggregated uses of Exodus salvation verbs (aside from *`azar* and *shuv*)—and details of the two passages discussed above—see the coming salvation as Yahweh's implantation in Israel of a new heart and life in its own land with a mighty flourish—a new expression of God's love and forgiveness, and Israel's blessings and happiness. No such salvation comes from Israel itself; God alone initiates it in grace just as in the Exodus from Egypt. Infusion of new physical and spiritual life will produce a joyous reunion of Israel and Judah after exile, a new leadership, and a new kind of "resurrection" or resurrection-like rescue of the whole nation from death and the grave.

Amos

Amos avoids *yasha`*, *ga'al*, and *padah*, and *qanah* is used only once (8:6) in a list of economic evils, among them cheating in economic exchanges and trafficking in human beings—"buying (*qanah*) the poor with silver"; he also uses *natzal* (snatch, 3x), *`alah*, 11x) and *yatza'* (go out, 4x). Among Amos' three uses of *natzal* (snatch from, save), two occur in 3:12 for a very few persons "snatched" from a burning judgment—the rescued remnant of 4:11; but the image is that of a shepherd who snatches (*natzal*) two leg bones or a piece or ear from a lion which attacked a sheep. The image is negative; it intends to say that for all practical purposes nothing remains. These texts might be marginal to the salvation theme were it not for a more forthright remnant text in 9:8:

> Surely the eyes of the Sovereign LORD are on the sinful kingdom
> I will destroy it from the face of the earth—
> yet I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob,
> declares the LORD.

Amos' uses of *`alah* (11x) are striking, but not limited to salvation: a plant "comes up" from the earth or a stench "rises" to one's nostrils. And when Amos thinks of Israel's Exodus from Egypt, he turns again to *`alah*. Of Amos' 11 uses of this verb, 3 are directly for the Exodus (2:10; 3:1; 9:7), while allusions to Egypt include both the Nile (4:9-10; 8:8; 9:5) and attendant cosmic powers (5:8-9; 8:8-9; 9:5-6). The appearance of *`alah* in 9:5, 7-8 points to the same future salvation as elsewhere in the prophets: Amos 9:5-8, using *`alah* twice, is a prelude to Israel's salvation in 9:9-15. Using cosmic language like other Exodus salvation poetry, Amos alludes directly to the "going up" of Israel from Egypt (9:7), referring in the next verses to Israel's coming salvation. But even here he does not use *yasha`*, *ga'al*, or *natzal.* He does, however adopt *qum*, a synonym of *`alah* meaning "arise," "rise up," (2x in 9:11) and *shuv* meaning "restore," "return" (9:14). Three more observations seem relevant. (a) God's "I will," repeated through 9:7-15, shows how

changes needed in Israel for its future blessings are initiated not by Israel itself, but by Yahweh alone, expressing the principle of God's active grace. (b) The passage's only expression of the removal of sin is not forgiveness but destruction (9:10).

> All sinners among my people will die by the sword,
> all those who say, 'Disaster will not overtake or meet us.'

Thus removal of sin can be achieved by more than one kind of action—forgiveness, destruction, or exile and death abroad. Therewith the principle of righteousness is affirmed, although "righteousness" terminology does not appear in Amos 9. (c) The familiar prophetic references to the renewed house of David appear in 9:11, linking the prophecy to other Davidic renewal texts and to the prosperity promises which follow (9:13-15). Micah's materialistic verbal pictures describe the same future salvation as the other prophets, including thoughts of "planting" and "arising (*qum* and *`alah*)."

Micah

Micah uses 6 of the 7 Exodus salvation verbs; unused, as in Hosea, is *qanah* (buy, obtain). Micah too has repeated judgment scenes, and like other prophets has break-out passages shifting to Israel's prosperous future. Micah has two direct allusions to the original Exodus (6:4; 7:15); each text uses an Exodus verb, 6:4 citing *`alah* go up, and 7:15 citing *yatza'* go out. About 10 of Micah's 15 uses of the 6 salvation verbs are in the later chapters. In three passages (4:10, 6:4, 7:7-9) Micah uses two or more Exodus verbs together; in chapters 6-7, several of these verbs are loosely grouped together (6:4; 7:7, 8, 9, and 15).

In Micah 4:10:

> You will go to Babylon;
> there you will be rescued (*natzal*).
> There the Lord will redeem (*ga'al*) you
> out of the hand of your enemies.

In Micah 6:4 and 7:7-8:

> I brought you up (*`alah*) out of Egypt
> and redeemed (*ga'al*) you from the land of slavery (6:4).

> But as for me, I kept watch for the LORD,
> I wait in hope for God my Savior (*yasha`*);
> my God will hear me.
> Do not gloat over me, my enemy!
> Though I have fallen, I will rise (*qum* for *`alah*)
> Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light . . . .
> he pleads my case and establishes my right (*tsedek*).

He will bring me out (*yatza'*) into the light;
I will see his justice (*mishpat*, *7*:7-9).

This combination of Exodus salvation verbs and nouns shows no signs of mechanical patterning. It does show that when Israel's future salvation is in view, the established salvation language of the Exodus is used freely and naturally. The interwoven use of "right," (*tsedek*) and "justice," (*mishpat*) along with thoughts of "forgiveness" and "pardon" and other scattered uses of salvation language in the book are significant; the future salvation combines spiritual renewal, physical blessings, and world dominion—all as elements of the kingdom of God in the future redemption, including thoughts of a (national?) "right" in a court scene (7:7, justification). Similar pairings and combinations of Exodus salvation terms occur in the fifth chapter of Micah (*yatza'*, *natzal, qum*). Micah 7 ends the book with beautiful redemptive lines on forgiveness and removal of Israel's sins.

Who is a God like you,
who pardons sin and forgives transgression . . .
you will tread our sins underfoot
and hurl all our iniquities into the depth of the sea (7:18-19).

Zechariah

Zechariah also uses six of the seven original Exodus salvation terms; *yasha`* is used 6x (comparably to Hosea's 5x, and Habakkuk's 4x). Salvation's future is depicted in beautiful sweeping prose and poetry. Zechariah also uses *yatza'* a surprising 20x. However, most of the twenty uses describe visionary movements of symbolic angels, horses, chariots, and persons "going out" to their appointed tasks; the symbols relate to some phase of God's plan—his judgments, Israel returning from Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem and its temple, nation and land, and notes of future blessing (e.g., 2:10-13). Zechariah does see the future in terms of Yahweh or his messengers "going out"; *yatza'* may in this general sense allude to the Exodus salvation, but the connection is not explicit. Zechariah's 6 uses of *`alah* compare in quantity with his 6 uses of *yasha'*; all uses of *`alah* are at the end of the book (Zech 14) where in the days of salvation all the nations "go up" to Jerusalem. Since Egypt is singled out in 14:18-19 for special judgment if it refuses to "go up" to worship Yahweh at Jerusalem, one suspects an allusion to the Exodus; the allusion increases in likelihood from mention of "plagues" (14:18) and Egypt's greater responsibility in Israel's earlier slavery. Three examples from texts using *yasha`* are cited for their special images of Israel's coming salvation.

As you have been an object of cursing among the nations, O Judah and Israel, so will I save (*yasha`*) you and you will be a blessing (8:13).[10]

[10]C. and E. Meyers, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8* (Garden City, N.Y.: 1987), 417-418, recognize the central thematic importance of *yasha`*.

> The LORD their God will save (*yasha`*) them on that day
> as the flock of his people.
> They will sparkle in his land
> like jewels in a crown (9:16).

> The LORD will save (*yasha`*) the dwellings of Judah first so that the honor of the house of David and of Jerusalem's inhabitants may not be greater than that of Judah (12:7-8).

Several salvation images of the New Israel stand out. (a) "Blessing" (8:13) overcomes the nations "curses" on Israel and extends an original blessing promise to Abraham (Gen 12:12:3). (b) "Sparkle . . . like jewels (9:16)" enhances "you will be a blessing (8:13)," further intensified by "How attractive and beautiful they will be!" (9:17). Zechariah 8:20-23 had already spoken of redeemed Israel's attractiveness. (c) The elevation of Judah to equality with the messianic "house of David" marks a kind of "democratizing"[11] of Judah, Jerusalem and David—all raised equally and together to kingly prominence in the New Israel. Zechariah 12:8-9 suggests this democratized kingly power will enable Israel to destroy attacking nations; Israel's new power will be enlargement in the land, and leadership in the whole earth purged of sin (3:8-10; 5:1-11). So again we meet salvation from sin; its removal produces massive benefits to Israel and the nations.

Servant Songs in Isaiah 40-53

The Servant texts are the climax of Isaiah's redemptive theology. Five of the seven Exodus salvation verbs are spread through the four primary Servant Songs (42:1ff; 49; 50; 52:7-53:12)—*yasha`* save, *natzal* snatch, *ga'al* redeem, *padah* ransom, and *yatza'* go out. *S*everal other salvation verbs also appear: *`azar* help, *malat* save, and *shuv* return. These verbs are not concentrated in Isaiah 53, but they do appear clustered in the introduction (52:7-12) to Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Forms of *yasha`*, *ga'al,* and *yatza'* appear in 52:7-12. They are joined by terms like *shuv* return (52:8), *shalom* peace (52:7), *ranan* rejoice (vss 8, 9), *patzah* be serene (vs 9), and *malak* [of God] reign (vs 7); the nations become beneficiaries of salvation, and a group of terms for exaltation like *rum* (not *qum)* be high, 52:13), *nasa'* raise high (vs 13), and *gavah* be exhalted, appear in the passage (vs 13).

Finally, the previously noted texts suggesting salvation as new life or even resurrection, are complemented by Isaiah 53:11 where after death the servant "will see the light of life," suggesting resurrection. This apparent addition to the traditional Hebrew text is actually a restoration, since "light of life" appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls of Isaiah and Septuagint, but not in the later standardized Massoretic Hebrew text. Significantly for the New Testament, the introductory passage (52:7-12) also includes the Hebrew verb *basar* meaning "proclaim good news," translated in the Septuagint with forms of *euggelizomai* (52:7); both this verb and its noun forms became the most-used New Testament term for the proclaiming the gospel.

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[11] *Ibid*., 328.

Conclusion

The Old Testament's salvation was the Exodus. This and the three previous articles together show how seven Hebrew terms for salvation were introduced in Exodus 18 to describe God's self-initiated act of saving Israel from slavery in Exodus 1-18. The verbs were then reused in the historical books, and in Psalms and the Prophets. Re-use of these salvation terms gradually attracted synonyms in looking back at the Exodus salvation and forward to its future completion. The Exodus established Israel's relation with its God Yahweh as an act of grace; the event and its descriptive vocabulary pictured a multi-aspect salvation by using the seven major verbs and related nouns—a vocabulary identifying a preliminary, but incomplete "type" of salvation and then a fuller future salvation in Psalms and the Prophets. In a larger perspective, an expanding use and growth of the salvation vocabulary created in turn a progressing revelation of a divinely planned salvation which included both its spiritual and physical aspects; both aspects remained linked together as a single whole in the Old Testament.

Another aspect of salvation lacking in the Old Testament was its eternality. Although future salvation texts in the Psalms and Prophets have frequent notes of what its fullness will look like, its eternal dimension is not made known until the New Testament. As Christ fulfilled the salvation promises, the Old Testament's shortfall became both actually and provisionally operational. Hence when the *kingdom of God and its salvation*, already combined in the Old Testament, appeared in Jesus and his apostles, its fulfillment developed in two stages: at the first advent its central spiritual-moral-ethical blessings became operational in believers, while its physical, social and geo-economic benefits to the world are delayed until Israel's future repentance, and Christ's second advent and earthly reign. During the delay, an interim people of God was created and explained—the church of the Pauline epistles.

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Bonhoeffer and Participating in the Sufferings of God

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One of the greatest goals of a Christian is to become the likeness of Christ. This transformation into his image is how Christ can be made visible in the church through believers. Dietrich Bonhoeffer suggested the only way to recover the image that was lost through the fall is to "first bear the image of his shame."[1] Bonhoeffer's participation in the sufferings of God gives deeper insight to the true cost of discipleship and provides a model by which Bonhoeffer lives and dies. Should Christians be encouraged to do the same? Was Bonhoeffer justified in his quick road to martyrdom? In The Cost of Discipleship, Bonhoeffer explains the importance of bearing the image of Christ by participating in the sufferings of God. Bonhoeffer's road to martyrdom under Hitler in Nazi Germany may or may not have been justified, but was undeniably a participation in the sufferings of God and a manifestation of Christ in the world.

To begin examining this concept of participating in the sufferings of God, one must discover what Bonhoeffer thought was the aim and end goal of the Christian life. The Cost of Discipleship strongly concludes with the importance for the Church to bear the image of Christ.[2] To do so, one must be conformed to his image, making them identified with Christ, and, finally, they would become a reflection of Christ in the world.

This transformation begins with being conformed to Jesus Christ. Bonhoeffer finds this kind of transformation in Romans 12:2 and II Corinthians 3:18 and is to be a complete "metamorphosis" in order to fully become the image of God.[3] It is not in the petty acts and choices of everyday life. "It is not enough for man simply to recover right ideas about God, or to obey his will in isolated actions of his life.

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[1]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (tr. R. H. Fuller; New York.: Simon & Schuster, 1959), 301.

[2]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* 304.

[3]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* 300.

No, man must be re-fashioned as a living whole in the image of God."[4] This image, Bonhoeffer proposes, is the image of the "Suffering Servant who was obedient to the death of the cross."[5] Therefore, the Christian must be conformed to Christ's death. Bonhoeffer uses Philippians 3:10 "to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death."[6] When Bonhoeffer elaborates, this death is primarily a spiritual death—a death to the flesh, sin, and the passions for the things of the world. The one who does this is "marked by a daily dying in the war between the flesh and the spirit, and in the mortal agony the devil inflicts upon them day by day."[7] When this is done in the life of a disciple, they are then able to be identified with Christ and his sufferings. Through this transformation and identification, a believer will become a reflection of Christ.[8] This reflection is able to "shine forth in us even in this life."[9]

In just a brief examination of Bonhoeffer's theology on bearing the image of God, many references to suffering were made, particularly the suffering of Christ's life and becoming a participant in the sufferings of God. But, is this suffering to be interpreted just as spiritual, or might it be physical? Are all these allusions to participating in Jesus' suffering even to be taken seriously? That is determined through Bonhoeffer's examination in the chapter "Discipleship and the Cross."

A disciple must understand the suffering of Jesus on the cross. Jesus Christ, God incarnate, was required to suffer and be rejected on the cross in order that Scripture be fulfilled.[10] He had to suffer in the abandonment of his honor as God by becoming a servant, dying for the sins of humanity. "To die on the cross means to die despised and rejected of men."[11] Through the Messiah's suffering, disciples are to understand what that suffering looks like for their lives.

There are a few ways in which a call to discipleship imposes suffering. The "call to abandon the attachments of this world" and the "call to share the work of forgiving men their sins" are examples Bonhoeffer offers.[12] The former can be seen in leaving work in order to follow Christ, such is the case of Jesus' disciples, or the opposite idea found in Luther's abandonment of the monastery to go into the world.[13] The latter is found in Galatians 6.2, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ".[14] Though our sins are bore on the cross once and for all, the Christian must share in this forgiveness of sins by bearing the sins of his brother. This is done through the forgiveness of others, just as Christ forgave us. "My brother's burden which I must bear is not only his outward lot . . . but quite

[4]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* 299.
[5]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* 301.
[6]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship, 302.*
[7]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship, 302.*
[8]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship, 302.*
[9]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship, 302.*
[10]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* 86.
[11]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* 87.
[12]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* 89.
[13]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* 89.
[14]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* 90.

literally his sin. And the only way to bear that sin is by forgiving it in the power of the cross of Christ in which I now share."[15] By being forgiven through Jesus on the cross, one is bound to share that forgiveness with others.

In Dietrich Bonhoeffer's writings one can find examples for both spiritual and physical suffering, but what stands out is his argument for why one must do so. "If we refuse to take up our cross and submit to suffering and rejection at the hands of men, we forfeit our fellowship with Christ and have ceased to follow him. But if we lose our lives in his service . . . we shall find our lives again in the fellowship of the cross with Christ."[16] If the goal of the disciple's life is to become the image of Christ which is only found in fellowship with him, then the only way to do so would be by sharing in his sufferings. Through this, Christ can be made visible in the world.

Bonhoeffer wrote, "When Christians are exposed to public insult, when they suffer and die for his sake, Christ takes on visible form in his Church. Here we see the divine image created anew through the power of Christ crucified."[17] But for what purpose might this theology exist? Merely for the individual Christian to attain to an identity wrapped in Christ for the betterment of their own lives? To Bonhoeffer, that would not be participating in the body of Christ as God intended. If Christ is made visible through the believer's suffering, then this purpose is to fulfill the role of the Church in the world, "The Church is only the Church when it exists for others."[18] In a Christian's willingness to suffer, the world stands in awe at the sight of the power of God in their life. Through this relation to God, the Christian has obtained a new life that exists for others "through participation in the being of Jesus."[19] The problem lies in the world that can see no distinction between an "ordinary human life" and a "life committed to Christ."[20] This is the primary issue Bonhoeffer sees in the church and the reason he urges disciples to grasp the calling to suffering. Without participating in the sufferings of God one cannot comprehend the meaning of the cross and thus refuses to bear their own. Without this, Christ cannot be made visible in the world through them.

> The man whom God has taken to Himself, sentenced and awakened to new life, this is Jesus Christ. In Him it is all mankind. It is ourselves. Only the form of Jesus Christ confronts the world and defeats it. And it is from this form alone that there comes the foundation of a new world, a world which is reconciled with God. [21]

This is Bonhoeffer's vision, a world reconciled to God. In Bonhoeffer's life, he did not merely write about the idea of suffering, but followed the call God placed on his life to suffer for the injustice of his time during the Third Reich. It is proposed Bonhoeffer should not have taken the road to martyrdom, but rather pre-

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[15]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* 90.

[16]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* 91.

[17]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* 302.

[18]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison,* Revised Edition (New York: MacMillan, 1967), 200. Letter 3, August 1944.

[19]Bonhoeffer, *LPP,* 381. Letter 3 August 1944.

[20]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* 89.

[21]Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (tr. Neville Smith; New York: Macmillan, 1955), 81.

served his life in order to rebuild the church after the war. But because Hitler had come to power, the intensifying Nazi agenda forced Bonhoeffer to go against his pacifist convictions to stand up for the oppressed even if it meant his suffering.[22] This thinking and the tension it caused can be traced through all of his writings. But first, an examination of how Bonhoeffer suffered in his life is needed.

Through Bonhoeffer's many formative experiences throughout his life, working on his dissertation Sanctorum Communio, his time teaching in America at Union Theological Seminary, his friendship with pacifist Jean Lasserre[23], and his time at Finkenwalde Seminary, he was able to find that being a disciple meant actually doing what God's word commands. "Our faith is not opium which leaves us content in the middle of an unjust world. But that precisely because we look to what is above we protest all the more stubbornly and deliberately on this earth."[24] Bonhoeffer's studies of the church and theology gave him deep convictions about the implications Christianity has on the believer. Renate Wind explains his view that even if the church is not of the world, it does have a worldly form and while it should keep its distance from the world it also has an obligation to act responsibly in the world and towards it.[25] These convictions led Bonhoeffer, safe in America in 1939, to make a tough decision to return to Germany as he contemplated if by retreating to America he was avoiding the place where God is, "where He is for me?"[26] Though he thought this to be the will of God for him, he knew this choice was a choice to endure rejection and suffering, but also to bear the sins of his fellow man and live in God's forgiveness.

Bonhoeffer was rejected for this willingness to stand up against idolatry and injustice in a nation manipulated to thinking they were doing God's will in exterminating the Jews. Hitler said "by warding off Jews, I am fighting for the work of the Lord."[27] Hitler had summoned the support of the church throughout Germany as well, though not without political manipulation. These Church leaders thought Hit-

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[22]The Nazi Agenda was "the destruction of the entire web of relationships that existed between Jews and Gentiles – as friends, schoolmates, colleagues, neighbors, fellow citizens, and, most fundamentally, as human beings – and [they] used the full power of the state to accomplish this goal". The punishment for those unwilling to sever these ties was concentration camp and possibly death. Craig Slane, *Bonhoeffer as Martyr* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos, 2004), 216.

[23]Jean's influence on Bonhoeffer is best explained in this quotation, "Jean Lasserre . . . insisted that being a Christian meant 'quite simply' following the commandments of Jesus and putting the fellowship of Christians into practice in a credible way . . . we can see how much these ideas attracted Dietrich from a letter which he wrote . . . 'I think I know that I would really become clear and honest with myself if I really began to take the Sermon on the Mount seriously. . . . There are things which it is worth supporting without compromise. And it seems to me that these include peace and social justice, or in fact Christ.'" Renate Wind, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Spoke in the Wheel* (tr. John Bowden; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1992), 53-4.

[24]Wind, *A Spoke in the Wheel,* 58.

[25]Wind, *A Spoke in the Wheel,* 36.

[26]Wind, *A Spoke in the Wheel,* 137.

[27]Adolf Hitler*, Mein Kampf,* 1925-6.

ler to be Germany's savior and were obliged "to provide the spiritual endorsement Hitler needed to co-opt the churches to his plan for a new world order – the Nazi millennium. With church leaders in tow, he was free to stoke the fires of national pride and to undertake the systematic extermination of enemies."[28] The rejection Bonhoeffer faced was from the state as he was banned from teaching, speaking and writing because of his resistance to Hitler's anti-Jewish policies.[29]

Bonhoeffer's suffering began long before prison as he had to make the choice to join in the resistance against Hitler. This decision meant he would have to sacrifice his church.[30] He also had to sacrifice his innocence before God, as Wind wrote, "he left no doubt that any use of force is and remains guilt. But he insisted that there can be situations in which a Christian must become guilty out of love of neighbor."[31] This spiritual battle he faced was a suffering of the mind and heart. He had to do the hard thing in order to be in a right place before God and his conscience, even though it meant giving up his own personal innocence. "If any man tries to escape guilt in responsibility he cuts himself off from the redeeming mystery of Christ's bearing guilt without sin and he has no share in the divine justification which lies upon this event."[32] The physical suffering was most evident during his time in prison. He was not only stripped of his possessions, but was tortured to the point he understood the desire for suicide and counted it forgivable in certain instances.[33] In his first few weeks of prison he explained it as "separation from people, from work, from the past, from the future, from marriage, from God, impatience, longing, boredom, sick – profoundly alone…."[34] This physical and spiritual suffering continued until Bonhoeffer was hanged in Flossenburg concentration camp on April 9, 1945.[35]

Bonhoeffer also modeled his writings on bearing the sins of the fellow man. In the decisions he made toward the end of his life "he is solely concerned with love for the real man, and for that reason he is able to enter into the fellowship of the guilt of men and to take the burden of their guilt upon himself."[36] By joining the resistance, he was not only able to bear guilt in this way, but he was able to minister to the men with whom he was imprisoned by preaching, teaching, and living in community with them, bearing the burdens of his fellow sufferers.[37] His main concern during his time in prison was to minister to those who were ill and to his fellow prisoners. He was able to minister to ten-to-twenty men each week who in their last hours were "saved by him (and his father and solicitor) from cer-

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[28]Geffrey B. Kelly, "Cry Faithfulness!" in *The Other Side,* 1992, 59-60.
[29]Wind, *A Spoke in the Wheel*, 142.
[30]Wind, *A Spoke in the Wheel*, 141.
[31]Wind, *A Spoke in the Wheel,* 144.
[32]Wind, *A Spoke in the Wheel,* 144.
[33]Wind, *A Spoke in the Wheel,* 157
[34]Wind, *A Spoke in the Wheel,* 156
[35]Wind, *A Spoke in the Wheel,* 180.
[36]Wind, *A Spoke in the Wheel,* 144.
[37]Wind, *A Spoke in the Wheel,* 166, 175.

tain death."[38] This is exactly what it means to bear with one's fellow man in this situation.

Finally, Bonhoeffer took on this last portion of suffering—the forgiveness of the sins of man, which is participation in God's forgiveness on the cross. Bonhoeffer was called to face the forgiveness of his own guilt when he first made the decision to join the conspiracy to assassinate Hitler. This forgiveness of his own guilt is seen in his later writings in prison: "you must never doubt that I am thankful and glad to go the way which I am being led. My past life is abundantly full of God's mercy, and, above all sin, stands the forgiving love of the Crucified."[39] But when speaking of extending forgiveness to others, the question must be asked: could Bonhoeffer go so far as to forgive Hitler as well? While one cannot know whether Dietrich Bonhoeffer was ever ready or inclined to forgive Hitler for his actions, one can assume on the basis of his lifelong theology he would have to be willing to forgive all the sins of any man if that man wanted to partake in that forgiveness himself. While it is not known where Bonhoeffer stood in this respect, it can be inferred from his last moments how he might have stood before God with this injustice in mind. His last words were, "this is the end, for me the beginning of life. I believe in the universal Christian brotherhood which rises above national interests and I believe that our victory is certain." It is also reported he had prayed before he was hanged and seemed to be peaceful and composed.[40] The last portion of the quotation is very telling. His certainty of victory does not only seem to be a hope for salvation, but God's ultimate victory over the Nazi regime. In this, he seems to have left Hitler's fate and justice in the hands of God, knowing he did all he could in the world to bring an end to this wickedness.

Bonhoeffer taught suffering and rejection for the sake of Christ, but he showed how to do so in the last decisions of his life. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, though he could not have known the exact details of his fate, allowed his theology to form his actions. Christians ought to learn this from Bonhoeffer–if one does not allow their faith to shape their life in this world then it is no faith at all. "It is only by living completely in this world that one learns to have faith."[41] Through Bonhoeffer's writings, his students, and now the world, are able to learn about the great importance of participating in the sufferings of God. But even more, Christians, through Bonhoeffer's life, we have an example of this suffering in the real world during a time of political and social injustice. Dietrich Bonhoeffer made Christ visible in the church by being conformed to Christ's image – an image of rejection, suffering, and forgiveness for the love of man above the love of oneself. This is the image we see in Christ humbling himself to death on a cross for the worst of sinners, sinners like Hitler…and Bonhoeffer.

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[38]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, 18-9.

[39]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*. 18.

[40]Wind, *A Spoke in the Wheel.* 180.

[41]Wind, *A Spoke in the Wheel,* 171.

Despite the sin of Bonhoeffer in his attempts to kill Hitler, the image of God can still be seen in his love for mankind and willingness to put the lives of others above the value of his own innocence. But was Bonhoeffer justified in heading down a path which lead to self-destruction? Was it what was required of him? If Bonhoeffer had not chosen to suffer with and for the oppressed, he would not have been able to be transformed into the image of Christ and make Christ visible in the world. Moreover, if Bonhoeffer had not taken this road he might not have the universal impact on the church and theology he has had today. Perhaps he could have helped in the rebuilding of the church in Germany after the fall of the Third Reich, but the impact he would have had there would be small in comparison to the testimony of a martyr's death. Through Bonhoeffer's letters, it is evident that he had peace with God in the direction he took, whether that meant his personal comfort or not.

For the Christian examining this suffering today, one can have peace in that this does not mean we all must suffer a martyr's death, but there are nevertheless serious implications for the believer to participate in the sufferings of God. Bonhoeffer suggests:

> To be conformed to the image of Christ is not an ideal to be striven after…we cannot ransform ourselves into his image; it is rather the form of Christ which seeks to be formed in us…we must be assimilated to the form of Christ in its entirety, the form of Christ incarnate, crucified and glorified.[42]

The Third Reich shaped Bonhoeffer's call to participate in the sufferings of God – to the point of death. If his theology of suffering is correct, the whole church might learn to make Christ visible through its participation in God's suffering in its own time and place. This is the suffering of Christ which Bonhoeffer claims all disciples on earth must undergo.[43] Christians ought to learn from Dietrich's words and his life which gives them credibility:

> The cross means sharing the suffering of Christ to the last and to the fullest. Only a man thus totally committed in discipleship can experience the meaning of the cross. The cross is right there, right from the beginning, he has only got to pick it up: there is no need for him to go out and look for a cross for himself, no need for him deliberately to run after suffering. Jesus says that every Christian has his own cross waiting for him, a cross destined and appointed by God. Each must endure his allotted share of suffering and rejection. But each has a different share: some God deems worthy of the highest form of suffering, and gives them the grace of martyrdom, while others he does not allow to be tempted above that which they are able to bear. But it is the one and the same cross in every case.[44]

[42]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* 301.
[43]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* 302.
[44]Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship,* 89.

Bonhoeffer was one whom God counted worthy of this highest form of suffering. He was "more than a witness to the transcendent Christ, and more than an earthly referent to the divine reality, the martyr's ordeal becomes a concrete instance of God's suffering presence in and to the world."[45] Not all will be called to suffer and die in this manner, but Bonhoeffer's thoughts on suffering, his life, and his death beg the Christian to answer the question: are you willing to pick up your cross and participate in the sufferings of God?

[45]Slane, Craig. *Bonhoeffer as Martyr*, 250.

The Church and Surveillance

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Introduction

Contemporary society is increasingly reliant upon technology for the most basic functions of life. From household appliances, cellphones, cars, and the Internet, human life is now mechanized and human beings are hybrids or cyborgs.[1] This reliance often lends itself to two contrasting perceptions of humanity in relationship to technology. Either technology marks the deprivation or the fulfillment of human life. But both of these views posit an unhealthy mindset concerning technology insofar as technology is placed outside of its proper relationship to human life and to God. This paper seeks to place technology, not as humanity's deprivation or deliverance, but in relationship to God as a "conduit of love" towards the Other; a gift of God.[2]

In order to properly position technology within a theological framework, this paper will chart technology's role in society and note the transhumanist and Neo-Luddist view of technology. Then Dietrich Bonhoeffer's conception of the "penultimate," "ultimate," and the "natural" will be employed to critique these viewpoints and conceive of technology as a gift. As a case study, the use of surveillance technology, specifically CCTV monitoring in church buildings, will be discussed and evaluated under the proposed Bonhoefferian framework to realize the implications of viewing technology in this way.

Technology in Modern Society

Human beings have utilized technology since the beginning of known history. Civilizations have risen and fallen around the development and use of technology,

[1]Not in the manner found in science fiction, but in regards to technology used to push the human body past normal biological limitations, such as pacemakers, stints, replaced hips, etc. Philip J. Hefner, *Technology and Human Becoming* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 25.

[2]Brian Brock, *Christian Ethics in a Technological Age* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 235.

undoubtedly "…machines make history in some sense."[3] If modern technology is evaluated in the stream of human development, contemporary society is no different than the primitive man developing basic agricultural tools.[4] But, as Jacques Ellul notes in *The Technological Society*, modern society's use and reliance on technology is fundamentally different than the past: "…technique [technology] has taken substance, has become a reality in itself. It is no longer merely a means and an intermediary. It is an object in itself, an independent reality with which we must reckon."[5] Throughout human history technology has been a means, a part of human society, but not the whole of it. "Without exception in the course of history, *technique belonged to a civilization* and was merely a single element among a host of nontechnical activities. Today *technique has taken over the whole of civilization*."[6] In modern society, technique encompasses the whole world in which it is propelled and directed for its own sake. And therein lies the fundamental difference between the modern and historical use of technology.[7]

La technique, which is Ellul's term for the essence of modern technology, is centered on efficient ordering.[8] All technological advancement is focused on efficiency and the continual pursuit of "perfection." New technology is always "better and faster," simply for the sake of being "better and faster." Modern technology has its own "substance" inasmuch as it creates a need for more technology—technology drives itself. By creating a more efficient microchip for a cellphone, you create a need for a machine to create the microchip. This self-propulsion makes technology more "fluid" than ever, in which it is applied everywhere it can be applied.[9] As Jacques Soustelle said concerning the atom bomb, "Since it was possible, it was necessary."[10]

The grim portrait Ellul paints concerning *la technique* is darkest when humanity is placed in relationship to technology.

> The human being is no longer in any sense the agent of choice. Let no one say that man is the agent of technical progress...and that it is he who chooses among possible techniques. In reality, he neither is nor does anything of the sort. He is a

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[3]Robert L. Heilbroner, "Do Machines Make History?" in *Does Technology Drive History? The Dilemma of Technological Determinism*, ed. Merritt Roe Smith and Leo Marx (Cambridge: MIT, 1994), 54.

[4]For this view, see Braden R. Allenby and Daniel R. Sarewitz, *The Techno-Human Condition* (Cambridge: MIT, 2011).

[5]Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, trans. John Wilkinson (London: Cape, 1965), 63. (Parenthesis added)

[6]Ibid., 128. (Emphasis original).

[7]Martin Heidegger still views technology as means to an end, whereas Ellul sees technology as the end, inasmuch as it is creating an end in itself. Both see the essence of technology as self-propelling. Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 5; Ellul, *Technological Society*, 63.

[8]Ellul, *Technological Society*, 110.

[9]Ibid., 100.

[10]Ibid., 99.

> device for recording effects and results obtained by various techniques. He does not make a choice of complex and, in some way, human motives. He can decide only in favor of the technique that gives the maximum efficiency.[11]

In this sense, man no longer rules technology and its innovation but is forced to partake in it. Consequently, humankind's modern relationship to technology has altered his relationship to the world. As Martin Heidegger notes, "Thus when man, investigating, observing, ensnares nature as an area of his own conceiving, he has already been claimed by a way of revealing that challenges him to approach nature as an object of research…"[12] For Heidegger, through ontological technologization, "entities (such as nature) are transformed into intrinsically meaningless resources standing by for optimization."[13] Nature, society, and human beings are no longer seen for what they are, but as resources to be exploited. "The forest is there for us as lumber, the river is there for us as electric power."[14]

In drawing from Ellul and Heidegger, contemporary society is not simply a continuation of technological innovation but marks a transition in which *la technique* binds humanity to technological efficiency and the exploitation of nature and the world. Heidegger notes though, "What is dangerous is not technology. There is no demonry of technology, but rather there is the mystery of its essence. The essence of technology, as a destining of revealing, is the danger."[15] This essence, rather than specific technology, then, carries the danger. For example, surveillance technology, which was once the role of a human sentry, is now an entity permeating all parts of society. Surveillance technology is centered on efficient ordering, in which ethical considerations (i.e. privacy) are often put aside for the most efficient means of monitoring (i.e. automated data gathering).[16] It is continually expanded, to both public and private spheres, and sees the world as a means to be exploited (human beings as information). While there is nothing inherently wrong with CCTV or other surveillance technology,[17] the essence of technology is now "…*mastery* rather than service," controlling humanity, rather than serving it.[18] There are, then, two polarizing views concerning modern technology's relationship to humanity.

Response to Technology

Technology has fundamentally changed how human beings see the world, and

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[11] Ibid., 80.

[12]Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology,* 19.

[13]Iain D. Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 45. (Parenthesis added)

[14]Jesse I. Bailey, "Enframing the Flesh: Heidegger, Transhumanism, and the Body as "Standing Reserve,'" *Journal of Evolution & Technology* 24 (2014): 48.

[15]Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 28.

[16]David Lyon, *Surveillance after Snowden* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 81.

[17]However, this does not make technology inherently neutral though. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 4.

[18]Steven Schroeder, "The End of History and the New World Order," in *Theology and the Practice of Responsibility: Essays on Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, ed. Wayne Whitson Floyd Jr. and Charles Marsh (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994), 28.

more importantly themselves. Questions concerning what makes a "human a human", and how technology fits into human nature preoccupies contemporary society and creates a wide spectrum of belief concerning technologization. But, most persons considering these questions can be allocated into two groupings.[19] Humankind is finding a deeper humanity in technology or losing it.

The first view, transhumanism, is the idea technology is crucial for becoming *more* human, for evolving and developing past biological limitations.[20] "Human becoming" as described by Philip Hefner, "expresses the idea that we are *always in process*, we are a becoming…"[21] Humankind, then, finds a deeper sense of humanity through technology's integration and utilization in modern society. To innovate and develop biotechnology, nanotechnology, amongst others, is to change how human beings see the world and relate to it and therefore, how we see and relate to ourselves. As a Christian transhumanist, Hefner says, "Technology is not a phase of evolution, it is now creation, a vessel for the image of God."[22]

Transhumanism, in seeing technology as the "next step" in evolution, calls for the continual development of technology. As Hefner describes: "*Exploration of possibilities that are not yet actual is the nature of reality*." When we participate in this drive for new possibilities, we participate also in God."[23] For Hefner, there are spiritual motivations for seeking to transcend the current human status. Transhumanism, then, glorifies technological innovation as not only a *means* to evolve, but an *end* in which humankind finds itself more complete.

The other view, a form of Neo-Luddism, sees technology as a deprivation of humanity.[24] Albert Borgmann says,

> Instead, it [technology] has become a crippling of our most profound capabilities and consequently a deprivation of things in their own right and depth. To be saved, accordingly, may involve the recovery of one's capacity for the fullness of nature, of art, and for the pretechnological things and practices of daily life that lie half-buried under the surfeit of consumption.[25]

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[19]This is knowingly an oversimplification of the diversity of beliefs concerning technology. While there is an array of convictions, the *fundamental* level of most opinions concerning technology is rooted in one of these views.

[20]Ronald Cole-Turner, "Going Beyond the Human: Christians and Other Transhumanists," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 54 (2015): 20.

[21]Hefner, *Technology and Human Becoming,* 5. (Emphasis original).

[22]Ibid., 77.

[23]Ibid., 84. (Emphasis original).

[24]For the history of Luddism, a nineteenth century protest movement on British textile industry against machines replacing human roles, see: Katrina Navickas, "The Search for 'General Ludd': The Mythology of Luddism," *Social History* 30 (2005): 281–95. For the *idea* behind Luddism as it developed into Neo-Luddism, which sees many technological innovations as harmful for humanity, see: Steven E. Jones, *Against Technology: From the Luddites to Neo-Luddism* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[25]Albert Borgmann, *Power Failure: Christianity in the Culture of Technology* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2003), 87. (Parenthesis and Emphasis added).

From this view, social interaction, suffering and incompleteness[26], and emotions, what makes humans human, are lost or "buried" through humankind's relationship with technology. While this view does not call for the uncritical rejection of technology, it places emphasis on a return to nature and seeks humanity in the simple.[27] Many modern Neo-Luddites echo the cries of Henry David Thoreau, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."[28] But, nature is not necessarily the means to finding "buried" humanity, rather nature serves as a reminder of who humanity is. Borgmann notes, "Looking at a tree or walking through a meadow, I feel my regardless sovereignty fall away… Nature is present in its own right and beckons me to respond in the fullness and oneness of my bodily and spiritual faculties." Both transhumanism and Neo-Luddism, then, place emphasis on technology as the ultimate end in human becoming (or unbecoming). To evaluate the validity of technology as the "end," one of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theological frameworks will now be examined to provide adequate means for discussion.

Bonhoeffer's Ethics: The Ultimate, Penultimate, and the Natural

In *Ethics* Bonhoeffer describes a framework to place the "last things" and the "things before last" in correct correlation with one another. As James Burtness notes, "Bonhoeffer's categories…are ways of structuring the duality of the whole creation under sin and grace at the same time. They are a way of talking about the fundamental ambiguity of human and Christian life."[29] Bonhoeffer describes the "ultimate," "or last things" as "…the one process or event which the Reformation called justification of the sinner by grace alone."[30] The ultimate is justification, but the term is intentionally ambiguous, as it points to more than a single event. Justification, or the ultimate, ushers in a new reality, in which the whole gospel is encompassed.[31] Therefore, the ultimate is specifically justification, but generally

[26]Borgmann, *Power Failure,* 85. Borgmann demonstrates that humanity is alienated from suffering through physical and technological security, but still experiences death and harm. This suffering is not experienced as before, as a part of humanity's fundamental incompleteness, but is met with anger and misunderstanding. His point being, humankind has lost the ability to suffer properly through technologization because humanity feels that technology should prevent said tragedies.

[27]Such as the Anarcho-Primitivist view, which calls for a return to primitive pretechnological life to find "true' humanity. See: John Zerzan, ed., *Against Civilization: Readings and Reflections* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2005).

[28]Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (Norwalk: The Easton Press, 1981), 96-7.

[29]James Burtness, *Shaping the Future: The Ethics of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 72.

[30]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, (ed. Eberhard Bethge, trans. Neville Horton Smith, 4th ed; London: Fontana Library, 1964), 79.

[31]Ján Liguš, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Ultimate, Penultimate and Their Impact. The Origin

the supernatural, divine, and eternal.

The penultimate, "…is everything that precedes the ultimate, everything that precedes the justification of the sinner by grace alone, everything which is to be regarded as leading up to the last thing when the last thing has been found..."[32] All life preceding justification, the individual's journey towards the ultimate is thus the penultimate. The ultimate, then, can be spoken of in terms of "Christian" life in a supernatural light, while the penultimate can be spoken of as "secular" life, or in the broadest terms, as the world.[33]

The penultimate is only the penultimate through its relationship to the ultimate. In this sense, "the ultimate precedes the penultimate and gives it direction."[34] The penultimate is thus determined and validated by the ultimate. While the penultimate is superseded by the ultimate, this does not call for its rejection, rather, "For the sake of the ultimate the penultimate must be preserved."[35] The penultimate is crucial because everyone who reaches the ultimate must "trod the path" of the penultimate to reach it. In this sense, the penultimate is the "preparing of the word," the way to justification. "From this fact it follows that it is necessary to see to it the penultimate, too, is provided with the preaching of the ultimate word of God, the proclamation of the justification of the sinner by grace alone, lest the destruction of the penultimate should prove a hindrance to the ultimate."[36] Without the penultimate, there would be no opportunity for the preaching of the word, and therefore justification would be hindered. Thus, the purpose of the penultimate, for Bonhoeffer, *is* the preaching of the Word.[37]

To correctly position the penultimate and ultimate, for Bonhoeffer, is to "fortify the penultimate with a more emphatic proclamation of the ultimate, and also to protect the ultimate by taking due care for the penultimate."[38] Both must be seen in conjunction, encompassing not two separate realities, but one reality of God, manifested in Christ.[39] By viewing the world as a single reality of God, neither the penultimate nor the ultimate can be neglected. Those living in this reality must "…struggle on the side of the poor, oppressed, and those who are discriminated against."[40] To practice social justice and to preach the Word is to "prepare the way" for the ultimate. While Bonhoeffer places great emphasis on action from this framework, he believes the preparation for justification is wholly through the work of Jesus. "…there is no method, no way to attain to the ultimate from the

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and the Essence of Ethics," in *Bonhoeffer's Ethics: Old Europe and New Frontiers*, ed. Guy Carter et al. (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1991), 62.

[32]Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 91.

[33]Liguš, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 69.

[34]André Dumas, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologian of Reality* (London: SCM, 1971), 158-59.

[35]Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 92.

[36]Ibid., 92.

[37]Ibid., 93.

[38]Ibid., 100.

[39]Burtness, *Shaping the Future*, 38; Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 66.

[40]Liguš, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 65.

penultimate. Preparation of the way is always His way to us, that is, away from the ultimate to the penultimate." Life in the world, the penultimate, is thus crucial for the ultimate, but not in itself the means to reach it.[41]

Lastly, the "natural" is Bonhoeffer's description of the one reality of God…the form of life preserved by God for the fallen world and directed towards justification, redemption and renewal through Christ."[42] This reality is solely from God, and constitutes humanity's existence. "The natural is the created reality of man given him by God...The natural is the facts given by God which make man what he is…" To embrace the natural, the reality of God, is to realize a fuller humanity or rather to become human. Bonhoeffer states, "Only man can be justified, precisely because only he who is justified becomes 'man.'"[43] This (albeit vague) notion roots Bonhoeffer's conviction in the natural as composing true human reality, which is entirely found in Christ. The natural, then, is not strictly Christian or secular, divine or temporal, but a way to conceive of life as a unified reality in God, which lends credence and validity to both the penultimate and the ultimate.[44]

Technology in a Bonhoefferian Framework

In order to understand technology's role in the world, technology must be assigned its appropriate place: the penultimate. This means technology has a legitimate place in the natural, in which humans are called to enter into the reality of God. Technology can and should be utilized as an extension of love and care to prepare the way to the ultimate, or justification.[45] Without proper positioning, technology can be incorrectly glorified or demonized, as with transhumanism and Neo-Luddism. This section seeks to critique the transhumanist and Neo-Luddist perspectives, to properly place technology in the world using Bonhoeffer's scheme.

The first critique of transhumanism is the placement of technology as the ultimate, rather than the penultimate. By placing technology as the *eschaton* or the end, in which life is completed or matured, this view neglects the ultimate as justification. In other words, it places technology as the reality in which humanity gains its "humanness," rather than in the reality of God. While technology is correctly found in the natural, technology becomes unnatural if it is placed as *the* reality of life, rather than a part of it. By placing technology as the ultimate, "…transhumanism considers man a mere tool for the development of the universe."[46] From this perspective, "becoming human" through technology is to see life as a means to an end and technology as "the god to whom individual and social life are sac-

[41]Ernst Feil, *The Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (trans. Martin Rumscheidt; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 145.

[42]Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 103.

[43]Ibid., 92.

[44]Hiroki Funamoto, "Penultimate and Ultimate in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Ethics," in *Being and Truth: Essays in Honour of John Macquarrie*, ed. Alistair Kee and Eugene T. Long (London: SCM, 1986), 391.

[45]Brock, *Christian Ethics,* 233.

[46]Oliver Masson, "Turning into Gods: Transhumanist Insight on Tomorrow's Religiosity," *Implicit Religion* 17; 4 (2014): 456.

rificed…"[47] Transhumanism, then, improperly places technology as the ultimate, which sacrifices the natural and neglects its proper placement in the penultimate.

Neo-Luddism, conversely, demonizes technology as the destruction of the natural. Rather than viewing technology as important for "preparing the way," it improperly rejects it and places life itself as the ultimate. From this perspective, to be fully human is to have emotions, social interactions, to engage with nature, rather than to enter into reality with God. In this view, life becomes absolute. But as Burtness notes, "Life is never an absolute or an end in itself. If so, it becomes its own destroyer."[48] Bonhoeffer notes, "Vitalism cannot but end in nihilism, in the destruction of all that is natural. Life in itself, in the strict sense of the word, is a void, a plunge into the abyss."[49] To see human life as the ultimate in itself is to make life unnatural and so also to depart from the reality of God.

The second critique is both views do not provide a valid system for the acceptance or rejection of specific technology. Transhumanism views technology as "human becoming," which allows for the unrestricted development of technology despite serious ethical concerns. To innovate and develop is to become more human, so the prevention or restriction of development is counterintuitive. Neo-Luddism, views technology as human deprivation, but likewise proposes no proper framework for the rejection or use of specific technology. In both cases, there is a lack of tools to consider the specific cases. For instance, is CCTV inherently bad or good? Is CCTV as acceptable on a public street as in a private residence? With these views, there are no criteria for specific cases, which can easily lead to the wholesale acceptance or rejection of technology.

The strength in Bonhoeffer's framework is the ability to critique specific technology as a means to preparing the way in the penultimate. Rather than mindless integration of new technology, this view proposes a critical evaluation of technology as a means to love and care for the Other. While Ellul argues humans have no freedom but to engage in *la technique*, this does not mean individual technologies cannot be questioned and rejected, or used only in specific circumstances.[50] Technology as part of the penultimate in relation to the ultimate does not accept and integrate technology based on efficient order, but on love and care.[51] In this sense, technology can be viewed as a gift of God inasmuch as it provides means for better love towards the Other, and engagement with preparing the way of the ultimate.

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[47]Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 107.

[48]Burtness, *Shapring the Future*, 106.

[49]Bonhoeffer, *Ethics,* 106.

[50]Ellul, *Technological Society*, 84.

[51]Pope Paul VI, "Inter Mirifica: Decree on the Media of Social Communications," 1963. This encyclical calls for the utilization of media (and by extension, technology) if "…they are necessary or useful for the instruction of Christians and all its efforts for the welfare of souls."

Surveillance Technology as a Gift of God: A Case Study

This last section will evaluate surveillance technology, specifically CCTV cameras in church buildings, within the proposed framework to consider the ethical and practical implications of viewing technology as a means to prepare the way to the ultimate. If technology is a means to prepare the way, it must be considered as a gift of God, so long as it is viewed in light of the ultimate. Many churches, though, are integrating CCTV and other surveillance technologies uncritically, as an extension of what is happening in contemporary society. "Step by step, the Church, including the way she has shaped and communicated her message, has been determined by the categories of life and thought which has characterized the industrial society."[52] The proposed framework is a means to better critique the integration of technology, to place it in proper relation to the ultimate.

Closed circuit television (CCTV) is like other surveillance technology that has taken root and expanded throughout society as both fluid and ordered towards efficiency.[53] It has expanded beyond its public scope to such areas as home security, nanny cams, and churches. There are many benefits to CCTV, such as crime detection and prevention, a sense of security, and care for the dependent. But, there are serious ethical and privacy issues to consider as well, especially when it is integrated into churches.

In light of the ultimate, the placement of CCTV cameras in church sanctuaries or nurseries is a means to express care, protection, and justice. For example, in a congregation full of elderly individuals or young children, CCTV provides a better means to see accidents and to respond quickly. CCTV can provide legal protection in the case of a lawsuit, or prevent and detect crime within the walls of the church. It can also be a tool to execute justice, in the unfortunate case of abuse or molestation in the church. In the child molestation cases in the catholic priesthood, CCTV cameras may have been instrumental in exposing and executing justice sooner. In these situations, technology is preparing the way for the ultimate in providing care for the Other.

Surveillance cameras in churches may conversely *prevent* the way to the ultimate. People praying or worshiping in a church may feel uncomfortable by the presence of cameras, which may inhibit their ability to engage with the ultimate. While it may provide legal protection, it can also create a feeling of uneasiness as to why cameras are needed in the first place. While CCTV may protect the vulnerable from attack, it also may affect the worshiper's ability to be vulnerable (in a theological and emotional sense) before God and other worshipers. To prepare the way for justification, then, may be the abstention from CCTV as someone may be uncomfortable engaging with the ultimate in the aforementioned environment.

As it would appear, then, CCTV technology cannot simply be integrated into all

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[52]Paul Tillich, "The Person in a Technical Society," in *Social Ethics: Issues in Ethics and Society*, ed. Gibson Winter (London: SCM, 1968), 131.

[53]For the history and integration of CCTV in Great Britain, see: Inga Kroener, *CCTV: A Technology Under the Radar?* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

churches, but must be considered in light of the ultimate in each case. For instance, in the aftermath of some of the Catholic molestation cases, CCTV cameras may be an important way to care for the Other in certain churches, as it may put parishioner's minds at peace (as much as they can be at rest in such cases). Alternatively, in a church without those specific issues, surveillance cameras may be a hindrance to their worship and should be avoided. As Meurs notes, "Bonhoeffer offers not a principle but a summons to responsibility, as response to the encounter with the living Christ grounded in the resurrection."[54] Therefore, Bonhoeffer's theological scheme is not a rule to be applied across the technological plane, but a tool to critique and evaluate the use of technology throughout human life.

The question then poses itself: is (surveillance) technology a gift of God? In and of itself, technology is not a gift, rather, technology becomes a gift of God when it is properly placed and utilized within the natural: the reality of God. According to Brian Brock, "When technologies are revealed for what they really are, having been lit up by the Easter event…they are only extensions of acts of love, their very form beholden to and properly shaped by the love it expresses."[55] Through technology, there is a potential to love and care for the Other in ways formerly impossible. Equally though, there is a greater potential for abuse. Therefore, technology as a means of preparing the way for justification must be treated and cherished as a gift of God, but only when properly positioned in the penultimate.

Conclusion

Ellul notes, "As in the Middle Ages cities were built around cathedrals, so now they are built around industry."[56] Ellules profound image describes the innovation and development of technology as the orientation of modern society. The domination of technology in modern life can easily create transhumanist or Neo-Luddist opinions if technology is not viewed in relationship to the natural. The church should not to uncritically reject or accept technology, but consider the ultimate when engaging with specific technologies. This engagement requires consistent counterpractice, and a desire to "prepare the way" for justification.[57]

This paper has sought to provide a foundation for evaluating technology's relationship to the world and humankind. After evaluating the nature of technology and the transhumanist and Neo-Luddist opinions regarding its role with humanity, Bonhoeffer's concept of the penultimate, ultimate, and natural were used to provide a framework to think critically about technology's proper placement in the world. Then, surveillance technology was given a brief case study to evaluate the effectiveness of the provided framework. In drawing from the study, technology is certainly a gift of God, so long as it is placed in correct relationship with the rest of reality.

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[54]Rachel Muers, *Keeping God's Silence: Towards a Theological Ethics of Communication* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 90.

[55]Brock, *Christian Ethics*, 233.

[56]Jacques Ellul, *The Meaning of the City*, 155.

[57]Borgmann, *Power Failure*, 94.

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Is There a Dispensational Aspect to Prayer?

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Introduction

Especially at the populous level, a case for the dispensational approach to Scripture has often been made by pointing out obvious contrasts in the commands God gave to his people at various times. Seemingly contradictory dietary, ceremonial, and sacerdotal instructions make the case that apart from an unnatural allegorical hermeneutic God must have had different programs for his people at different times.

However, some of the contrasts put forth as evidence of dispensational differences may, upon closer examination, not be contrasts at all. Instructions regarding prayer, especially in the Gospels, have too often been used to show a difference between the Dispensation of Law and the Dispensation of Grace. A careful look at these passages as a group and individually shows that there is no dispensational aspect to the dynamics of prayer. The specific subject matter of the supplication may vary from one dispensation to the next, but the way God's people pray and God responds remains constant.

Thus, attempting to show dispensational differences by contrasting prayer in the Gospels vs. the epistles is a case of overreach depriving our people of important principles regarding the dynamics of our prayer life.

Is There a Dispensational Aspect to Prayer?

Someone wrote Covenant Theology (CT) views the Bible with uniformity while Dispensational Theology (DT) sees it as having unity. CT argues for one people of God throughout human history with one uniform set of commands and one eschatology. DT asserts God's timeless character and attributes are manifested in a series of dispensations, each with some unique features and instructions applying only to the people within that dispensation. Cornelius Stam's book, Things That Differ (Berean Bible Society, 1951) makes a case for a distinction between the Dispensation of Law and the Dispensation of Grace by highlighting several of the contrasts between those two dispensations, including their differing commissions, the role of water baptism, the sign gifts, and their distinct futures.

This contrast between the instructions given to God's people at various times is, in my opinion, the strongest evidence for the correctness of DT. God gave Scripture to normal people who read the written word normally. CT requires an unnatural, forced allegorical hermeneutic in order to get the obvious differences in God's varying instructions to mean the same thing. Their uniformity requires hermeneutical gymnastics to get circumcision to equate with infant baptism and dietary laws to really only teach about holy living. I have yet to encounter the new believer who, while he/she may be confused by the contrasts, doesn't see them as contrasts requiring an explanation. Resolving the apparent problems through an allegorical hermeneutic never occurs to them.

Perhaps it is the effectiveness of this approach which has led some within dispensational theology, especially within Mid-Acts Dispensational Theology (MADT) to see distinctions where none exist, or to overstate distinctions in other areas. Examples include the position that there are two gospels and two methods of salvation, a view that draws support from some bad exegesis of Galatians 2:6-10. Some exclude any relevance of the New Covenant from the Dispensation of Grace and/or reject any use of any portion of the Sermon on the Mount simply because it was given to Jews in the Dispensation of Law.

To really warrant the compliment given to the Bereans (Acts 17:11) we need to take a close look at some of the time worn formulas of MADT regarding things that differ to see if they hold up to biblical scrutiny. This is incumbent upon those of us who teach God's Word, but also makes an excellent group exercise for mature believers who sit under our ministry.

Do dispensational distinctions continue in eternity? Are there distinct hopes, heavenly and earthly, for Israel and the Body of Christ beyond the Great White Throne? What does that oft repeated difference mean in terms of our eternal location and our presence with Christ (1 Thess. 4:17). What about believers from dispensations before the Dispensation of Law? Where do they go for eternity?

Does the fourth commandment to keep the Sabbath have any relevance today? How is it that only one of the ten is a vertical truth while we easily agree all the others are binding through all dispensations?

These and other questions presented for discussion to mature believers perhaps steeped in MADT will require them to interact with Scripture in relation to some of these traditional MADT talking points regarding differences between dispensations.

As a student at GBC during the late 60s and early 70s I remember seeing a series of ads designed to run in newspapers promoting MADT. The roughly square ad was divided by a line down the middle. The left had a command or teaching from the Dispensation of Law, while on the right were instructions on the same topic from the Dispensation of Grace that clearly stood in contrast. For example, the left side might quote Leviticus 11:3, "You may eat any among the animals that has a divided hoof [the hooves are completely split in two] and that also chews the cud." Across the centerline would be 1 Timothy 4:4, "For every creation of God is good and no food is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving." Over the two columns was a header asking how such contradictions could be answered, and

then a footer invited the reader to a church where they would hear the Bible taught "rightly divided."

Leaving aside for now that bad exegesis of 2 Timothy 2:15 let's turn our attention to another of the contrasts I remember from that series of newspaper ads, one focusing on prayer. I don't remember the specific verses of the ad, but a passage like Mark 11:24, "Whatever you ask for, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours," was set alongside 2 Corinthians 12: 8-9, "I asked the Lord three times about this, that it [Paul's thorn in the flesh] would depart from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is enough for you."

Perhaps the verse on the left side was John 14:13-14, "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it." Or Matthew 18:19, "Again, I tell you the truth, if two of you on earth agree about whatever you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you."

Whatever the specific passages used, the point was clear: in the Dispensation of Law the rules governing the effectiveness and outcomes of prayer were very different from those in effect during the Dispensation of Grace. I admit I secretly liked theirs better. I could think of any number of things I'd like to receive from God and was pretty sure I could get a couple of my friends to agree with me, perhaps in return for a reciprocal prayer on their behalf.

At the same time, part of me wondered if that's how it really worked for the disciples. And if so, why did they get that kind of power and guaranteed outcomes for their prayers? But I pushed those doubts aside out of deference to those whom I viewed as my MADT betters, and though I don't think I ever preached those contrasts of prayer in the two dispensations I accepted them as orthodoxy.

I'm no longer willing to do that. In fact I concluded years ago prayer, like salvation, is what we sometimes call a horizontal truth, unaffected by the changes from one dispensation to the next. Certainly there are differences in what God's people pray for in different dispensations. King David would have prayed for victory in battle against the Philistines who occupied land given by God to Israel, or for the preservation of his reign against the threats posed by usurpers like Ish-bosheth and Abner (2 Sam. 2). That is, the faithful in the Dispensation of Law would have prayed for specific outcomes consistent with God's expressed plans for his people, the Jews.

That said, many (most?) of the recorded prayers from the Dispensation of Law are horizontal in nature, their content just as applicable to God's people today. Daniel's prayer of contrition in Daniel 9:1-19, while containing references to Jerusalem, is as powerful a model of repentance in prayer as we could want. It strikes me as unfortunate we haven't explored and taught Daniel's prayer of humble penitence more thoroughly.

Solomon's prayer at the completion of the Temple (I Kings 8:22-53) illustrates a prayer that contains content specific to Israel in her unique relationship to God as well as horizontal principles including the nature of God, of worship, and of spaces dedicated to worship. Again, we would benefit by the study and teaching of that prayer.

But I'm now convinced the basic dynamics of prayer (how we pray and how God responds) remain constant throughout the dispensations. I can't come up with anything related to God's relationship with Israel that explains why prayer would function so dramatically different for them than for members of the Body of Christ. And the oft-repeated interpretation of Christ's teachings on prayer in the Gospels just don't make sense. Could prayer really work like those newspaper ads implied?

And if not, what then are we to do with Christ's teachings on prayer given to the disciples in passages like those listed above? How should we understand these seemingly radical instructions?

Radical Distinctions?

One option is to say these teachings on prayer will apply only in the millennial kingdom anticipated in so much of Christ's teaching. With Messiah present on earth and ruling from Jerusalem, many of the basic features of life and the dynamics of the spiritual realm will be unlike any previous time in history. Messiah will judge with righteousness unaffected by outward appearances and will bring perfect justice for the downtrodden and certain judgment on the wicked (Isa. 11:3-4). The world will be at peace, both in the social realm and the animal kingdom (Isa. 11:6-9). So perhaps such a dramatic change in the dynamics of prayer fits better with the unique and radical conditions of the Millennial Kingdom.

But this explanation doesn't solve the most basic problem with the newspaper ad's interpretation, the problem that troubled me even as a student. Taking those promises on prayer in any age to guarantee the supplicant receives the desired results reduces prayer to a Hogwarts spell, sure to produce the sought after outcome if the formula is reproduced precisely. Could Christ really have meant a gathering of two requesting anything from God would be sure to get an answer in the affirmative? If that were the case wouldn't the disciples have immediately prayed with great earnestness that a crucified Christ would come down from the cross? Or the nation would respond with repentance to the preaching of the apostles in early Acts? Does this difficulty disappear in the Millennial Kingdom because Christ is present on earth? Sin with all its problems and negative consequences will still be present, and any prayer construct certain to bring the desired outcome seems unreasonable on its face.

Get the right number of people (two or more) to pray the same thing in Jesus' name and, if the premise of that ad was correct, the outcome was assured; the request would be granted by God.

But wait! There's more! Apparently the disciples had to pray with a certain degree of persistence, coming to God repeatedly. In Luke 11 the disciples ask Christ to teach them about prayer. In response he tells them of the man who repeatedly asks his neighbor for bread to feed an unexpected guest (v. 8) and gets that bread because of the man's "sheer persistence." In Luke 18 Christ teaches them to pray with the story of a widow who continually pestered a judge "who neither feared God nor respected people" (v. 2) until, fed up with her repeated pleas, he finally gave her justice (v. 5).

Were the conditions we previously cited not sufficient? Was some degree of per-

sistence or repetition also required before the supplicant's request is granted? And if so, why wasn't that condition laid out in those previously mentioned passages? Or those conditions mentioned here?

And therein lies the first part of our solution and the biblical answer to the question, "Is there a dispensational aspect to prayer?" Just as we insist any of Paul's instructions have to be understood alongside other passages on the same topic (cf. 1 Cor. 1:14-16 with Eph. 4:5) so we must understand the disciples heard any particular instruction on prayer within the context of the totality of Christ's teaching on prayer. They knew better than to think prayer requests were formulaic spells to be cast that, if incanted precisely, guaranteed the desired outcome. They had heard Christ teach them to pray in accordance with the Father's supreme and overriding will (Matt. 6:10), something the Son understood and modeled in the Garden when he prayed, "Not what I will, but what you will" (Matt. 26:39). That central principle informed their understanding of instructions on the need for faith, for persistence, and of the power of believers uniting in prayer.

There may be a tendency to short change the intelligence of the disciples. Yes, they were Galileans, but those of us who have pastored rural churches know there is no connection between formal education and intellect or common sense (unless it weights to the side of the farmer with nothing more than a High School diploma). Any reading of the epistles written by these men shows them to be sophisticated thinkers with a scholar's grasp of biblical truth. They certainly weren't so simple minded as to think they should pluck out an eye (Matt. 5:29) or to assume that getting one other person to agree with them assured an affirmative answer to their prayer.

In fact, they readily picked up on what contemporary readers so often miss, including the immediate context. In John 14:13, after telling the disciples he will "do whatever you ask in my name" Jesus adds, "so that the Father may be glorified in the Son." They understood praying in the Messiah's name was neither a charm to be recited nor the way to receive their fondest desires, but the means by which the Father is glorified. Thus, praying in the Son's name means to pray what is consistent with his character and purposes, and therefore also consistent with the Father's character, with whom the Son is fully aligned. The request is thus assured of being granted so that the ultimate grantor, the Father, receives glory.

It may provide some comfort to know newspaper ads promoting MADT were not the only place Gospel passages on prayer were misused. In an interesting footnote on this passage in The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah Alfred Edersheim wrote: "Some, to me at least, horrible instances of this supposed absolute licence [sic] of prayer have appeared in a certain class of American religious literature which of late has found too wide circulation among us."[1] It was perhaps this misuse of John 14:13-14 which led to the newspaper ads that denounced it. But the correction for the error is not applying dispensational differences where none exist, but simply, as Edersheim writes, a correct understanding of the words of Christ in their context as illustrated by the way the disciples subsequently responded to his

[1]Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Reprint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1971), 5:521.

teaching.

And so, regarding each of these Gospel passages on prayer I came to realize a little common sense and a modicum of good exegesis, including considering the broader and immediate context leads to the conclusion prayer is not a dispensational truth. That is, apart from the specific content of some prayers in a particular dispensation as noted above, the dynamics of prayer remain constant through time.

This means the Gospel passages, instead of presenting a wholly unique and puzzling construct for the offering up of and divine response to prayer, teach important truths about how prayer works in any dispensation. And this means it is incumbent on us to teach these truths to our people.

We learn Paul's view of prayer primarily by looking at the many rich examples of his prayers as recorded in his letters. He gives us very little straight teaching on the topic. We're told to "pray constantly" (1 Thess. 5:17) and "through prayer and petition with thanksgiving tell your requests to God" (Phil. 4:6). But beyond that we have very little didactic material on prayer within Paul's letters.

This adds to the value of Christ's teachings on prayer given that the dynamics he speaks of are horizontal in nature. In Acts 20:27 Paul assures the Ephesian elders he "did not hold back from announcing to you the whole purpose of God." His assurance to them serves as a reminder to us our preaching and teaching must not be so narrow and focused our people miss entire aspects of God's revealed truth. This includes Christ's teaching on the dynamics of prayer. God's people, pastors and congregants, need to grasp the miraculous power of prayer, including corporate and persistent prayer, principles taught by Christ during his earthly ministry.

Not only do I reject the premise of those newspaper ads that used prayer as a point of contrast, I have come to understand the importance of practicing and proclaiming the principles of prayer taught in those Gospel passages.

I'm not surprised one of the disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Lk. 11:1) and find it encouraging they, too, struggled with this spiritual discipline. Christ's particular response to their request (vv. 2-13) undoubtedly indicates he knew the specific nature of their struggle and gave them the teaching to address it, making what follows especially valuable given the horizontal nature of prayer.

An analysis of "the Lord's prayer" and the dispensational application of its specific phrases is outside the scope of this article. (Again, the content of any biblical prayer may be vertical in nature.) But 11:5-9 teaches all of God's children in any dispensation to be persistent in bringing our requests to God. Not only is it not a sign of inadequate faith to come repeatedly to the Father with the same burden, it stirs the heart of God to response.

The disciples certainly understood God is not initially resistant, as was the friend in this scenario; another example of the disciples' reasonable interpretation of Christ's teaching and the need to consider both the immediate and broader context of his words. They knew Christ was using a storyline which would illustrate the key principle he sought to communicate, namely, persistence in prayer. The kind of wooden interpretation reflected in the newspaper ads effectively insults the disciples and cheats contemporary believers out of the blessing of God's help for our prayer life.

Similarly, the disciples certainly did not understand the ask, seek, and knock triad to assure them of the granting of any and every request, but, with his following words (vv. 11-13), to assure them their Father loved them and would give them good things, not bad. This aspect of the divine character finds its greatest expression when he bestows the gift of the Holy Spirit on those who ask (v. 13).

Conclusion

As helpful as it is to illustrate the value of the dispensational approach to Scripture, those of us who teach God's Word do a disservice to our people when we overreach by falsely identifying differences between the two dispensations which , in truth, do not exist. Worse than misusing texts that don't support our objective, in the case of Christ's teaching on prayer, we cheat our people out of valuable help for a key area of the believer's walk. The basic dynamics of prayer are not dispensational in nature, and Christ's teachings on the subject have great value for members of the Body of Christ when we understand them as the disciples surely did.

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Why We All Should Read Martin Luther

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Introduction

This year of 2017 marks the five-hundredth anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. As Martin Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses on the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg, little did he know at the time this would be time the spark which would ignite the fire of the Reformation.[1] Certainly, other reformers preceded Luther, and some came after him. However, it was this monk from an obscure town in Germany, who would set the stage for sweeping change in Christian history.

Most of us know about Luther and have heard stories surrounding the events of the Reformation. Every course in Christian history, and even some treatments of general Western history, give recognition to the significance of Luther's work and influence in Western society. Unfortunately, this is usually where our interaction with Luther stops. He is a notable figure in history, but not much more.

With this in mind, I would like to suggest and highly recommend each of us become familiar with Martin Luther in a more direct way. Familiarity does not come from reading about Luther, but can only come from reading Luther directly. This can be a daunting task, considering the mountain of writing Luther produced through his own pen, and the transcriptions of student notes (fifty-five volumes and growing). Where does one start?

To begin, there are both personal and theological reasons that reading Luther is important. In the first section of this article, I'd like to give a few of these reasons from my personal experience which impacted my spiritual life, as well as my theological understanding. I share these in an effort to demonstrate why Luther's writings are important to include in one's regular reading plan.[2]

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[1]For a short summary of the event, see Eric W. Gritsch, "1517 Luther Posts the 95 Theses" (1990) *Christianity Today* and *Christian History Magazine*, found at http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-28/1517-luther-posts-95-theses.html

[2]In my own experience, reading Luther's works does not undermine a commitment to a mid-Acts dispensational framework, but rather expands the foundation through

Later in the article, I would like to give my own recommendations on what to read from Luther's writings and what resources to have in your library for a general understanding of his theology. I am hopeful you will find his writings to be as significant and intriguing as I have found them to be.[3]

Personal Reasons for Reading Luther

Finding an author that helps us think more clearly, and who influences our spiritual walk, is a treasure we all cherish. Certainly, we are impacted by many teachers, writers, and preachers in our theological development, yet each of us can point to a few who had a significant impact. Martin Luther is one of those theologians in my life in at least two ways. First was his uncanny ability to point me to Christ and the Scriptures through his writing. Second was his ability to easily explain Scripture for the common man.

Pointing to Christ and Scripture

In describing my own exposure to Luther and his writings, I make the following statement in my book, *Essays on Martin Luther's Theology of Music*:

> As much as I enjoy his writings, I have always realized that they point me back to the Bible – and more specifically in his own language – they point me to Christ. I have read many, many books, articles, and commentaries and listened to a lot of music over the years. Nothing has motivated me more to look to Christ and Scripture like Luther's writings.[4]

From a personal point of view, this is the key reason for including Luther in our reading. He is thoroughly Christocentric. Some have suggested Luther finds Jesus in every verse of Scripture, and use that as an excuse to avoid his writings. I have not found this to be the case, and do not believe it to be accurate, but rather that his focus is to lead us to Christ through Scripture. In reality, what I am suggesting is reading Luther leads to a deeper spiritual walk with Christ.

Luther himself was purposeful in his desire to point others toward the Scripture. "I make the friendly request," he states in the *Preface to the Wittenberg Edition* of his writings, "of anyone who wishes to have my books at this time, not to let them on any account hinder him from studying the Scriptures themselves."[5] In pointing to the Scriptures, Luther understood he was pointing to Christ Himself. In the final paragraph of his *Preface to the New Testament* he states, "In a word St. John's Gospel and his first epistle, St. Paul's epistles, especially Romans, Galatians, and

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a greater understanding of historical context. As an essentially post-Reformation theological development, it helps us to keep dispensationalism in historical perspective.

[3]My own reading of Luther spans many thousands of pages, prompted from my Masters level studies in Historical Theology, and culminating in the publication of my thesis, also published as a book, titled "*Essays on Martin Luther's Theology of Music*" (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Blue Maroon, 2006).

[4]Mark Sooy, *Essays on Martin Luther's Theology of Music,* 4.

[5]Martin Luther, *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings* (ed. Timothy Lull; Minneapolis: Fortress), 63.

Ephesians, and St. Peter's first epistle are the books that show you Christ and teach you all that is necessary and salvatory for you to know…"[6] This idea that Scripture leads to Christ is the same focus he learned from his own spiritual mentor, John von Staupitz. In a poignant scene from the movie *Luther*, Staupitz sends Luther to Wittenberg for the first time saying he is sending him to "study the Scriptures; to Christ Himself."[7]

Explaining Scripture

Another personal aspect I have found is Luther's example of explaining Scripture in terms accessible to everyone. On the one hand, many theological writings in classes and seminaries today are much too technical for the ordinary Christian. On the other hand, many recent books are written on a populistic level with thin exegesis and questionable application of biblical truth. Luther has an uncanny ability to share deep theological insight in simple terms. Certainly this reflects his desire that the Word of God be for all people. It also provides an excellent example of how to communicate God's Word effectively and simply.

A primary way in which Luther explains Scripture is to rephrase it for clarity. As example of this can be found in Luther's *Large Catechism*. As he comments on the first commandment:

> The meaning is: Take heed that ye allow me alone to be your God, and that ye never seek another. In other words: Whatever good you lack, look to me for it and seek it in me. And whenever you suffer misfortune and distress, come, cling to me. I, even I, will supply your want and help you out of every need. Only, let not your heart cling to, nor rely on, any other.[8]

By recasting the words of Scripture in such a way, Luther allows his audience to connect with the meaning of the Bible more directly without a full commentary. Certainly Luther goes on to explain more thoroughly, but he encapsulates biblical truth in these short recapitulations throughout his writings. This technique would certainly be a useful tool for teachers and pastors today!

Theological Reasons for Reading Luther

Without jeopardizing a commitment to mid-Acts dispensationalism, I have found Luther can both inform and expand our theological thinking. This is true in a number of areas, not the least of which is his treatment of Scholastic Theology, as well as his understanding of Law and Grace. Another area, about which I have written in more detail elsewhere but will not do so here, is Luther's view of the Word of God in its several forms.[9]

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[6]*Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, 117.

[7]Eric Till (Director), *Luther* [Motion Picture] (Germany & USA: Eikon Film, etc., 2003).

[8]Martin Luther, *Luther's Large Catechism* (tr. J. N. Lenker; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1935), 44.

[9]*Essays*, 65-82.

Medieval Scholasticism

Late medieval theology is characterized, in large part, by scholasticism. We have little room to fully expound the techniques and structure of scholasticism, but suffice it to say the scholastic theologians worked to balance human reason (i.e., philosophy) and theology. They did so in many ways, but one of the most significant was that the scholastic theologians sought to wed the philosophy of Aristotle with the truths of Christian doctrine. The most detailed and influential of these attempts was by St. Thomas Aquinas in his various writings, but especially the *Summa Theologica*.[10]

Luther rejected scholastic thought and its attempts at using human reason as a source of knowledge equal with divine revelation, yet he did not abandon the value of human reason. Keep in mind that in various contexts Luther can be found to swing in his attitude toward reason as the most excellent gift of God to denouncing reason as a tool of the devil. Yet overall Luther saw reason as the "handmaiden" of theology.[11] Reason is captive to sin, and cannot be more than a servant of truth.

This underlying attitude is demonstrated in his *Disputation against Scholastic Theology*.[12] This disputation (which predates the more famous one commonly called the *Ninety-five Theses*) uses a reasoned set of propositions (i.e., theses) to show reason and man's inclinations are not free but captive (to sin). Reason serves faith as far as it goes, but human thinking can never overshadow the grace of God and faith. "Briefly, the whole of Aristotle is to theology as darkness is to light."[13]

As a corollary to his battle with scholasticism, Luther also somehow distances himself from the philosophical outlook engendered in Neo-Platonism. This is something Jean Calvin was unable to do. Having inherited a Neo-Platonist outlook from St. Augustine, one can note that influence in Calvin's writings. Although Luther is thoroughly acquainted with Augustine's thought (he was a monk in the Augustinian Order), quoting him regularly in his writings, he avoided being influenced in his theological thinking by Augustine's Neo-Platonism.

The foundation of his ability to avoid the influence of philosophical thought, even though he was well-versed in it due to his Doctoral education in the Catholic Church, was his unswerving commitment to have Scripture establish and inform his faith and doctrinal beliefs. He summarizes this as he begins a short explanation of his own articles of faith. "I have most diligently traced all these article through the Scriptures, have examined them again and again in the light thereof, and have wanted to defend all of them…."[14]

It seems to me many modern Christian teachers and leaders would do well to

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[10]For an overview of Scholasticism: Turner, W. (1912). *Scholasticism*. In The Catholic Encyclopedia. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved September 18, 2017 from New Advent: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13548a.htm

[11] Brian Gerrish, "The Place of Reason in the Theology of Luther: A Study in the History of Ideas," Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, McCormick Theological Seminary, Columbia University 1958..

[12]*Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, 13-20.

[13]*Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, 16.

[14]*Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, 50.

follow Luther's example in keeping focused on Scripture and avoid the mistakes of the Scholastics. Modernity and Post-modern philosophies have influenced the teaching of the church more than we realize, and a distrust of these philosophical assumptions would lead to a clarity of biblical teaching even in today's culture.

Law and Gospel

Luther's *Lectures on Galatians* is one of his pivotal works, from the standpoint of understanding his theological thinking. First written in 1519, but fully revised and expanded in 1535, one can find in this commentary a full-orbed example of the various elements I have described above. In addition, a thorough reading can be very informative for any Protestant; as one will notice many Reformation ideals encapsulated in this work.

The distinction between law and gospel is a vital characteristic of Luther's thinking, and this theme is inherent within his work on Galatians. For Luther, the law is all that would lead to a salvation by works, whereas the gospel encapsulates the idea of salvation by faith. He sometimes couches this distinction in his writings by discussing the different kinds of righteousness. A righteousness by works, which does not lead to salvation, and a righteousness by faith in Christ, which leads to saving righteousness.

Luther summarizes Paul's argument in Galatians in this way:

> The argument is this: Paul wants to establish the doctrine of faith, grace, the forgiveness of sins or Christian righteousness, so that we may have a perfect knowledge and know the difference between Christian righteousness and all other kinds of righteousness...But this most excellent righteousness, the righteousness of faith, [is that] which God imputes to us through Christ without works….[15]

One can note the juxtaposition of righteousness by works (i.e., law) and the righteousness by faith (i.e., gospel). He comes back to this underlying theme over and over throughout the commentary on Galatians.

Again, this clarity between a self-earned righteousness and an imputed righteousness is often taught in Protestant circles, but rarely does it impact the full life of the believer as Luther expected it to as explained in his comments in *Galatians*. Reading Luther in this matter would give current teachers and preachers plenty of tools to help Christians live fully in the grace of God.

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[15]Martin Luther, *Luther's Works* (tr. Jaroslav Pelikan; St. Louis: Concordia, 1953), 26:4.

Conclusion

Although I have only touched on a few elements of Luther's theology and writings, it seems to me these are an important part of everyone's theological reading. We know the Reformation was much broader than Luther, yet Luther's work is among the most significant of that era, and we are well-served to understand his work in the context of later developments of Protestant theology. It is my hope the reader will not just read *about* Luther during this year of celebration, but read his words *directly*.

Recommended Resources

*Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings (*ed. Timothy Lull; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) is a selection of primary texts of Luther offering an overall sweep of his theological thinking.

Luther's Large Catechism is available in numerous editions. This is what Luther refers to as a "Short summary and extract of the whole Bible" and was written for pastors and preachers.

Lectures on Galatians (1535). One of the best examples of Luther's full theological thinking.

Luther (2003). A film starring with Joseph Fiennes and directed by Eric Till. Heavily funded by Lutheran organizations, the movie does an excellent job showing some of the major events of Luther's life.

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A Survey of Interpretations of the Scriptural References to Homosexuality

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Introduction

The topic of homosexuality seems to be the new way in which I believe Satan is working to split the church. In the past, the church has struggled with such things as slavery, rights of women, women in office, divorce to name a few. These issues have been resolved in various ways by Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox churches, but not all in the same way. Something similar seems to be happening with the issue of homosexuality.

Thomas and Olson (2012) did a study of articles written regarding homosexuality in the past several decades in the Christian magazine, Christianity Today. They propose "Christianity Today reveals four overarching responses to homosexuality, each of which is composed of a series of logically connected observations that correspond to the various shifts (regarding homosexuality)" (p. 250). Briefly explained these responses are: 1) biblical intolerance (the Bible is the exclusive source of moral authority with regard to homosexuality); 2) natural intolerance (the role of the Bible is downplayed and science, medicine, and the natural order are emphasized); 3) public accommodation (says both the Bible and science/medicine/natural order are congruent – the Bible becomes the major source with science/medicine/natural order placed alongside); and 4) personal accommodation (show much more tolerance and acceptance of nonbiblical arguments with little to say about the personal morality of homosexuality. (The reader is encouraged to read the article in its entirety to further explain these arguments.) This article seems to give a well-rounded summary of attitudes in the Church, many of which will be reflected in the following pages.

The question of the place of homosexuality in the church has several sub-questions: are people born gay or do they "become" gay (nature/nurture questions); should gay people abstain completely from sexual practice; should gay people only engage in a sexual relationship that is a long term commitment; should gay people who are practicing sexually be allowed to be members of the church and/

or participate in the sacraments; should gay people who are practicing sexually be allowed to be leaders in the church; should same sex marriage be recognized/performed by the church, to name a few.

The books and articles which I will be referencing address these questions. Unfortunately, there is no consensus in the answers. This article will also not present answers. Hopefully, however, the various answers given will provide for the reader something to ponder as well as information of where and why others may think differently. It will also give the reader an opportunity to reflect on his/her beliefs about homosexuality and the church. Finally it may give the reader a chance to develop arguments for and against the views presented based on his/her understanding of biblical principles.

Why I Am Writing This Article

Actually, I have been wanting to write an article for a long time but have not had the motivation to do so until I was asked by the editor if I would be willing to write it. Personally, my introduction to the gay lifestyle began in the early 80's when a very good friend "came out." Although I had suspected it, it still was discomfiting. I had no idea how to respond. I graciously told him I would still love him as a friend, but would not be approving of his lifestyle ("love the sinner, hate the sin"). As we shall see, this is not at all what the gay person wishes to hear! Unfortunately, he died of AIDS in 1987 and never was able to see what is happening in today's world regarding homosexuality. He worked in several churches throughout his lifetime, and it was comforting to his family to see over 200 people at his funeral, many from those churches in which he served. Since then, a female friend of my age and a young friend in his 20's have come out. The female friend is married to her partner. The young man was told by his pastor he would be going to hell.

A very memorable incident happened which prompted me become better educated about this world of homosexuality. I was teaching a class for another local Christian school in the area. I invited members of an organization called PFLAG (Parents of Lesbians and Gays) to speak to my class. I thought this would be a "slam dunk" in terms of getting some information about the organization and letting them know how wrong they are. It did not turn out that way. Two of the gentlemen were ordained pastors who had come out after both of them had been married and had children. They were now together and pastored the local Metropolitan Community Church. As students from the class brought up the various biblical passages, these men were able to respond with interpretations of the words from the Hebrew and Greek which gave an entirely different spin on the passages. In addition, they showed how the culture of the New Testament and the culture of the time when various translations of the Bible were written may have contributed to how the words were translated pejoratively. Not knowing Hebrew or Greek and not being familiar with the various cultures, the students and I were understandably stymied and had little to say in return. The next day I checked with the Greek teacher at Grace Bible College and found out their interpretations were legitimate, but not necessarily the most common translations. In thinking about these and other experiences in my life, I decided I needed to educate myself so that I could educate my students about these and other issues related to homosexuality. This

is not something that is going to go away, and future leaders in the church need to be aware of various thoughts on the issue so they can decide for themselves where they will stand and why, but will also understand why others may differ in their thinking.

Therefore, I write this paper. I will present the various suggestions regarding homosexuality made by theologians and other writers. These answers will include questions about the passages usually referenced, questions about the influence of culture, and questions about practice/marriage, etc. The reader will note there are very few, if any, "traditional" or "literal" interpretations given, as I assume the reader is most familiar with these. Instead, I present answers given by less traditional and/or sometimes radical authors, with which the reader may not be as familiar.

I have chosen not to give my own conclusion as I wish the reader to come up with his/her own answers (or maybe more questions). My research involves several books and articles written on the topic, but it is by no means exhaustive. In addition, lack of space will necessarily make each argument brief. But, the reader is challenged to continue their own research if this is of interest. In the end, my hope is the reader will see there are no easy answers and prayerfully consider your response to those who struggle with homosexuality in the church setting.

Fraser (2016) summarizes the scope of beliefs prevalent in the church with regard to homosexuality. On the one hand, there are those who believe "….scripture condone(s) homosexual practice in the context of a loving, committed relationship" (p. 161). On the other hand, Scripture condemns homosexual practice of any kind. As we shall see in this paper, these are the two extremes; people either embrace them entirely, or fall somewhere between them. Thus the church is faced with much variety, not only in general, but in each congregational setting.

The passages most referred to include Genesis 1—2, Genesis 19:1-29, Leviticus 18:22; 20:13, Romans 1:24-31, 1 Corinthians 6:9, and 1 Timothy 1:10. According to Page (2006), the word "homosexual" did not appear in English translations until the nineteenth century, a time when homosexuality was considered by most to be a pathological condition. He challenges his readers to study thoroughly the social, historical, and linguistic contexts of the time when the Old and New Testaments were written before coming to certain conclusions. The reader may look to their clergy person for guidance, but Wildeman (2008) did a study on how clergy are handling the topic. He found some clergy avoid the issue for fear of threatening the stability of their congregations or for fear of losing their jobs while others are involved not only in their congregations but in society at large. Gushee (2015), too, found although many clergy are finding the traditional viewpoints to be out of date, they remain silent. Caldwell (2010) brings up the point other clergy use the argument that homosexuality does not appear to be of great concern, although he does not appear to agree with this. Fortunately, some have addressed the issue and we now turn to some of the attempted answers/explanations given regarding the texts.

The Origin of Marriage (Genesis 1—2)

Haiken (2012) argues this is one of the weakest arguments as it is an argument from silence (i.e., homosexuality is not mentioned). According to Haiken, the passages are to answer the question as to where do we come from and how human society was established, not to define the concept of "traditional marriage." Page (2006) further argues although procreation is considered to be one part of human sexuality, there are others such as "mutual support and enjoyment" that also are emphasized in chapter 2 particularly. Brownson (2013) gives several reasons why the concept of the complementarity of the male and female bodies does not necessarily mean a homosexual relationship is wrong. He adds that the argument of procreation gets lost in the fact the church no longer condemns the use of contraceptives. Gushee (2015) believes that "core practices referred to in Genesis 1-2, including mutual care for children, helper-partner companionship (Genesis 2:18) and total self-giving, can and do occur among covenanted gay and lesbian couples" (location 1306).

Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:1—29)

The controversial story of Sodom and Gomorrah seems to have laid the groundwork for the condemnation of homosexual behavior in the past, enhanced, of course, by the word "sodomy" which some believe refers to homosexual behavior. Page (2006) refers to several other passages in Scripture which refer to Sodom (for example, Ezekiel 16:49, 50 and Jude 7). Page argues none of these passages refers to sexuality as the sin of the men of Sodom. For example, he claims the expression in Jude of "going away after other flesh" refers to the fact that Lot's guests were angels and therefore their flesh was much different than that of mortals. Gushee (2015) refers to Judges 20:5 which he interprets as saying the sin of Sodom was violence which the men wanted (including sexual violence, but also included war, gender violence, rape, etc.). Caldwell (2010) shows how Jesus associates Sodom with inhospitality when telling his disciples to wipe off the dust of any town that rejects them. Toensing (2005) takes a bit different tack on the topic by looking at the role of the women in the story. She says "…the women of this story emerge only as possessions of heroes and husbands as war booty, as bartering commodities in social or political deals, and as pawns in theological challenges" (p. 74). She believes this fact further supports the belief the men and women were heterosexual, rather than that homosexuality was central to the concern of the story. Peterson (2016) writes a very interesting article about the various theories about the sin of Sodom in his article *The Sin of Sodom Revisited: Reading Genesis 19 in Light of Torah.* He concludes that he believes he has demonstrated that "the central problem for the men of Sodom and Lot's family was their failure to abide by God's divine decrees, especially those related to God's moral standards" (p. 31). In my reading, it appears that the argument of Sodom and Gomorrah is no longer valid to many.

Legal Texts (Leviticus 18, 20)

Douglas (1999) rejects the idea these verses justify one to throw the homosexual out of the community. She believes the sins indicated in these two chapter are

denounced because they are the things the nations around the Jews were doing in their idolatry. Also, she believes the verses indicate sexual deviance is immoral, but not more so than other sins. She ends her discussion by arguing if people are going to justify persecuting homosexuals, they must do the same to adulterers. Page (2006) argues these verses are part of the Holiness Code which described in length what the Jews were to guard themselves against. He points out some of the aspects of the Holiness Code as he sees them:

1. The concern was they maintain their identity as God's chosen people.
2. Failure to adhere to the regulations of the Holiness Code are described as an "abomination" (Hebrew word is *toevah*). These are detestable activities.
3. The condemnation of male-male sexuality related more to the resulting lack of increasing the Jewish population, making the sexual act "more of a sacred act" as it would result in the loss of life males carry in their semen.
4. The Holiness Code was underlined by the belief that "at creation all species had been assigned certain specific functions and characteristics." Stepping out of one's function, such as acting like a woman in the sex act, was wrong because it violated the male function.

He then argues none of these stipulations are viewed as relevant for the Christian life today. He also says we would then need to see the second half of Leviticus 20:13 as something to be obeyed today, i.e., men lying with men need to be put to death. Shin (2005) expands this to include the belief of some that such things as "eating rare steak, wearing mixed fabrics, and having marital intercourse during the menstrual period" (p. 98).

Gushee (2015) puts a little different spin on the passage. He believes the men show more interest in the men than the women because women had little worth in that culture. Therefore, violating the men would be a greater offense than violating the women. So the sin is not homosexuality per se, but just a way to denigrate the men, as violating the women would mean nothing.

Turning to the New Testament it is interesting to begin with a possible cultural background given by Loader (2014) regarding homosexual activity. Loader notes the following from the first century A.D. Jewish philosopher, Philo:

1. Same sex acts happen primarily in wild drunken parties.
2. They are simply part of profligate sexual response; the same men also engage in adultery.
3. The passive parties are frequently slaves exploited for the purpose, made to look like women, functioning in many instances as male prostitutes, and ranging in age from puberty to maturity.

According to Loader, in the larger Greek world both Philo and Plato both felt homosexual behavior threatened the survival of the species as men lost their virility through homosexual behavior. Yet the behavior was not in itself wrong.

Paul's Statement in Romans 1:27

Loader (2014) identifies three main options in dealing with these verses:

1. Embrace Paul's view that the same-sex mind/orientation desire and action is a sinful perversion comparable to idolatry.
2. Embrace Paul's view that same-sex acts are sin as Leviticus states, but not his view of sexual orientation, acknowledging there are some genuinely same-sex oriented people.
3. Not to embrace Paul's view of sexual orientation, thereby acknowledging there are genuinely same-sex oriented people (as Option 2) and encourage them to express their sexuality responsibly on the same basis as heterosexual people (pp. 10-11)

He then goes on to further explain each option. Indicating his preference for option 3. Loader argues "our focus is his [Paul's] statements about same-sex intercourse, which, in effect, are incidental to his argument. Had he chosen something else like the closely related drunkenness, we would have been left with virtually nothing about same sex relations in the New Testament" (p. 5).

According to Punt (2014), this passage seems to be the clearest New Testament statement regarding homosexuality. However, he believes this passage deals with homosexual activity, but not with homosexual orientation since this was not an issue in the culture in which it was written. In fact, homosexual orientation was not known in that culture, although homosexual activity was. Punt goes on to explain that verses 24-27 where Paul talks about the "unnatural," he is talking about excessive sexual activity which was out of control. According to Punt, the culture of that time defined "unnatural" as "unconventional practices, actions out of the ordinary or contrary to accepted social practices," whether it was with a male or female (p. 8).

Caldwell (2010) gives several interpretations of the passage, but does make the point that he believes homosexuality is being used here by Paul as an example of how we fall short of God's righteousness and, related to that, what Paul is writing is not a "treatise on sexual morality." He does argue against those who say Paul is only concerned with pederasty (sexual activity between a man and a boy) as this certainly was not the only kind of homosexuality in Paul's world. Caldwell ends his article with a challenge to the church to remember we are all made in the image of God and "this is no small claim and, if appropriated faithfully into any Christian theology, should cause us to reject as unscriptural any claim or action that does violence to the integrity of human persons, for such violence is directed against the very image of God" (p. 75).

Page (2010) does not believe Paul is even beginning to speak to the contemporary situation of consenting adults who respect each other and are committed to each other. Page believes Paul is speaking to people who had abandoned God, favoring idolatry (something like the interpretations of the Leviticus passages) and were living lives sunk in sin. He further advocates that the concept of "natural" in Paul's day was heterosexual relationships. In the same way that we no longer

accept Paul's commands regarding women, we need to view homosexuality in light of the fact the worldview has changed. Page goes on to say he believes Paul's lists of condemned behaviors are descriptive not proscriptive. Like the Israelites of old, believers need to acknowledge God and no other idol. Finally he shows how Paul warns us against self-righteousness. Earlier I suggested that saying we love the sinner and not the sin may have tones of self-righteousness in it as we might be intimating we are not as "bad" as the homosexual.

Brownson (2013) emphasizes that Paul is not meaning all same-sex eroticism, but rather relationships which express excessive and self-centered desire. This is what makes them *lustful.* Therefore what makes them *impure* is a heart centered on fulfilling one's own desires. He says Paul focuses on "the violation of male honor specifically, as well as gender roles more generally" (location 4500), and that it is *shameful*. Finally the *unnatural* refers to whatever violates what is natural for the culture of that day.

Gushee (2015) incorporates much of this thinking as he points out four possible approaches to this passage, including what Paul means by natural and unnatural and some cultural practices of his day. Not the least of these were the cultural practices done in the Roman imperial court which were observed first hand by many Christians who had connections with the court. Because of the extreme debauchery prevalent in his world, Gushee argues, Paul would have been against same sex relationships he would not have pointed out any exceptions for committed Christians in a same sex relationship.

1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10

Punt (2014) believes the difficulty with this passage lies in translation. He writes, "….translations often reflect current day concerns rather than the words entrenchment in a 1st century context" (p. 9). Caldwell (2010), too, says these passages contain very similar vocabulary, but not all of it is easy to translate. He believes one needs to "consider the broader context in which the lists appear" (p. 63). He shows how the word *arsenokoites* does not appear in any earlier Greek literature, so the question is whether Paul was addressing the larger issue of same-sex unions or specifically the practice of pederasty. In addition, Punt says the word *malakos* is in the Corinthians passage, but not in Timothy. On the other hand, it appears in Matthew and Luke "as an adjective to describe the softness of royal clothing" (p. 63). He goes on to present others' interpretations of the word, but concludes that even though these two Greek words are in close proximity in the Corinthians passage, it is not clear that they refer to homosexuality. Gushee (2015) also points out several possible interpretations of these words, concluding that in terms of *malakos* it is certainly not a given that it means homosexuality and in the case of *arsenokoites* it is very possible a word that Paul made up out of two words *arsenos* and *koiten*. He then lists examples of various biblical translations of the word over the past 425 years. As a result of some of these translations giving it the meaning of homosexual, Gushee points to the fact some clergy have then indicated the practicing homosexual will surely not be allowed into heaven. He says such clergy have forgotten about God's grace.

Conclusion

I realize this is a very brief and certainly not an exhaustive summary of the various viewpoints on homosexuality. I also realize I have not offered an opinion or evaluation of these views. This is intentional. There are a few other comments that I would like to conclude with for further thinking and processing.

Griffin (2006) is one of many who observe Jesus is completely silent on homosexuality. Nothing is said about it in all four Gospels. According to those who advocate for this concept, since Jesus pointed out several other sins, he certainly would have included homosexuality if it were indeed the great sin many believe it to be.

Some Christians say being gay is all right, but celibacy is then required. Vines (2014) argues mandatory celibacy is "different from any other kind of Christian self-denial, including involuntary celibacy for some straight Christians" (location 326). He says mandatory celibacy just emphasizes the belief that expressions of sexuality for the homosexual is sin. In addition, Jesus says even looking at a woman lustfully is sin. To ask the gay Christian to abstain from sexual activity will not take away the lust, so they will still be sinning. The failure of Exodus International happened because this was the tension the gay person experienced. Interestingly, the last leader of Exodus International, Alan Chambers, admits he still has gay desires, but chose to marry a woman (Chambers, 2015). Lee (2012) has chosen to remain celibate for various reasons, but does not condemn those who do not do so. Hill (2016) calls for more than biblical theology. He says fellow believers need to stand beside the celibate gay person "to help them face the pastoral and practical questions of the lived experience of celibacy in the midst of ongoing sexual desire" (p. 330). Gushee (2015) says some Christians, including some gay Christians look at Jesus' suggestion that some may become "eunuchs for the kingdom" as a mandate for celibacy for all gays and lesbians. Some Christians, including some gay Christians, read it as mandating celibacy for all gays and lesbians. Gushee believes the text itself intends a stern attack on the growing tendency toward permissiveness in first-century Jewish practice, allowing men to initiate divorce from their wives for trivial reasons, leaving families shattered and women disgraced and destitute. So the purpose of his teaching was to call listeners to a much stricter understanding of the permanence of marriage rather than a command for gays and lesbians.

Regarding some other cultural aspects, Brownson (2013) concludes it is essential we not just look at *what* Scripture prohibits, but we need to know *why* it is prohibited. He points out Scripture's teaching on charging interest, long hair on men (or other passages where men are commanded to NOT to cut their hair), etc. Brownson, for example, gives his reasons for believing "one flesh" does not mean "complementarity" but rather it means kinship.

Vines (2014) argues other sins in the church actually violate certain sinful acts: "Adultery violates a commitment to your spouse. Lust objectifies others. Gossip degrades people. But committed same-sex relationships didn't fit this pattern" (location 254). He also looks at the example of Peter to include Gentiles in the church and much later the abolitionists arguing against slavery. These people and others were asking for a reconsideration of long-held interpretations of Scripture which is what he is asking for in his book.

The other day a friend of mine told me about a conversation another friend and her pastor. The pastor told her he had just told a practicing homosexual member he was no longer welcome in the church. She then asked the pastor about a middle aged couple who were living together but were not married. He responded he could not ask them to leave as many of his parishioners would be upset. I find this story to be very disturbing, as I hope does the reader. I decided to look on Amazon to see how many books have been written by Christians on pre-marital sexual activity compared with those written on homosexuality. I found about fifty written on pre-marital activity versus hundreds written on homosexuality. Yet, it occurs to me in any given worship service, there probably are many more people involved in pre-marital sexual activity than homosexuals. Then I thought further and wondered how many couples were sitting in the audience who had experienced "non-biblical" divorces and had remarried, despite Jesus' admonition in Matthew 19:9. How often is homosexuality brought out as examples of living in sin, compared to how often either of these other examples are used? Personally I am hard pressed to remember any condemnation of the last two, but certainly have heard and read much about homosexuality. Many of the latter are participating in church leadership and partaking the sacraments, while homosexuals are excluded. I am not advocating to allow homosexuals to be able to participate; that is up to the church leadership. If you interpret Scripture as saying homosexuals must be excluded, then you need to do the same with the latter two examples.

I end with a proposal made by Zahniser and Cagle (2007) for churches to follow as they deal with the issue of homosexuality in their churches.

1. A caring posture toward gay and lesbian person which they believe will follow with a more compassionate attitude toward the LGBT community. The issue of practice still remains an issue.
2. Both traditionalists and non-traditionalists agree the Bible is authoritative.
3. Try to understand how tradition has played a part in church polity throughout history via creedal statements which guide belief and practice, how Scripture has been interpreted traditionally, and what we mean by Christian morality.
4. Use of reason "to organize and interpret data gathered" from the above.

For each of these, the authors present what they consider to be the traditional and non-traditional viewpoints and then try to show how the two sides still have points of contact. The only conclusion they have is to state their position as of now and to encourage dialog to continue between Christians as they grow in Christ together. Gushee (2015) believes Christian institutions and colleges that maintain traditional viewpoints regarding homosexuality will soon be left behind by culture as well as face possible legal confrontations. On the other hand, he says those who attack the traditionalists in a hostile way will only drive the traditionalists to be more firmly entrenched in their beliefs. He writes his book in hopes of alleviating these problems. The Church should not be blindly led by changes in culture. His purpose in writing is to challenge people to change their attitude and practice toward the LGBT community that remains consistent with historical Christian attitudes and beliefs. Sadly, of course, in this whole argument some have gone so far as to question or deny the power of biblical authority. Shin (2005) summarizes the teachings of many of these theologians in his article, *Homosexual Hermeneutics and its Deadly Implications: A Pastoral Reflection.* However, for most of us, I believe Zahniser and Cagle have made some good suggestions.

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Book Reviews

Pelton, Randal E. *Preaching with Accuracy*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Ministry, 2015. 170 pp. Pb; $16.

Preaching is like an onion in that it has many layers. Randal Pelton in his book, *Preaching with Accuracy* peels back many of those layers to give the communicator of God's Word a more accurate depiction of how to communicate God's heart through preaching. In this review we will discuss the overall premise of the book and its positive contribution to the accuracy of solid preaching. Secondly, we will take a closer look at Pelton's method of study. And thirdly, I would like to make a strong recommendation for those who are seasoned in preaching to consider reading and applying this book.

Pelton's basic premise is that accuracy in preaching is rooted in the TEXBI (Textual Big Idea), CONBI (Contextual Big Idea), and CANBI (Canonical Big Idea) in which the student/preacher is attempting to hit the one main thought: the bullseye of the passage being proclaimed. Pelton will describe in detail each of these three concepts to present a methodology promotes accuracy in communication of God's Word. The author works off of Dr. Haddon Robinson's teaching on grabbing the "Big Idea" (15). He states after being given those tools of study from Robinson, he "…has been trying to figure out how to get closer to the bullseye of meaning." (15) Thus, Pelton's tension for hitting the target as he says, "aim small, miss small." (119)

In pursuing the "Big Idea", the author was introduced to Timothy Keller's preaching at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. "The more I listened to Tim preach, the more I began to catch his Christ-centered hermeneutic that created Christ-centered sermons. It was my first exposure to how the gospel makes Scripture function for the Church. I was hooked." (16) This was the living example of "Big Idea" preaching.

In the following chapters Pelton describes the three elements mentioned above in detail. The book provides working examples from scriptural passages in which Pelton unpacks the three rudiments of TEXBI, CONBI, and CANBI. For example, Hebrews 1:1-14 is used in helping to identify the Textual Big Idea (TEXBI) explained in chapter 4 of the book. (86-87)

By taking a deeper look at this methodology of study, one of the great contributions of this book is the challenge to look at the Scriptures from a 30,000-50,000 feet elevation. That is, in studying the Scriptures we do the worms eye observations (word study), the ground level observations (who, what, when, where, why, how) … in which Pelton would say is the Textual Big Idea, the fly-over observations, which would include the Contextual Big Idea; but then the author suggests the canonical view of God's Word. This is one of the positive contributions Pelton offers in this work. He states, "It is about explaining how each of these preaching portions makes complete sense only in light of what God–in–Christ–by–the–Spirit has accomplished" (120). This ultimately always bring us back to the person of

Jesus Christ, the central figure of the whole canon of Scripture. This canonical Big Idea is the strength of Pelton's work.

Another observation of Pelton's methodology is coming to the "big idea" takes place in the first two hours of study; that is, Monday morning preparation. (163) From personal experience, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday's study of approximately 6-8 hours are hours spent observing the text and attempting to understand what the big idea is. Can we identify the big picture at such an early stage of one's study? This does not remove Pelton's overall premise of identifying the big picture; it would only suggest it might come later in the process of study.

Third and finally, I would strongly recommend this book for those preaching who are well-seasoned in the preaching experience. This is not for a novice or one desiring to understand the basic elements of preaching. This book reclaims the principles of men like Dr. Haddon Robinson. What Pelton does is add tools to pull back the many layers of Scripture to fully understand God's desire for us. Ultimately, we want to preach with accuracy; finding Christ-centered big ideas for biblical preaching. Pelton does an outstanding job in presenting this detailed methodology.

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Kimble, Jeremy M. *40 Questions about Church Membership and Discipline*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 2017. Pb. 272 pp. $23.99.

This is another 40 Question book published by Kregel Academic. The author, Jeremy Kimble is a professor at Cedarville College. He has written a clear and concise work on the local church and discipline. As in earlier publications in the series, each chapter answers a question about the subject matter.

He begins with why Church membership and discipline is important and ends with what is their significance in the Christian life. He sees the importance of church membership as preserving the truth of the Gospel; what he calls covenant commitment and the church is its membership. In the church, discipline is necessary because of the mandate of Scripture. It is a proper demonstration of love and preserves its members in the faith and edification. He goes on from this starting point to define church membership as a formal commitment and defines discipline as the exercise of authority.

He sees the church in relation to the New Covenant and an extension of the Kingdom which he argues from the Gospels. To me, this heavy reliance on Jesus's earthly ministry and the covenant is one weakness of the book. Little is said about the church as earthy defined by Paul and his epistles.

For Kimble, church membership is linked with the act of water baptism and the Lord's Supper.

After dealing with his biblical view of the church and discipline, he turns to answers on practical matters including:

1. Why do some churches not believe in membership?
2. What kind of church should one join? The characteristics he suggests are somewhat broad and not specific.
3. On the question, "Who should become a member?" Kimble places an emphasis on regenerated people.
4. With respect to the ideal age for becoming a member of a church, he argues maturity and discernment ought to be the criteria rather than age.
5. When should someone be removed from membership? Membership can be revoked if there is unrepentant sin in the life of a believer. He warns the church should not be too hasty in revoking membership, nor should it be haphazard, or unlovingly. The goal of discipline is restoration not punishment. I am afraid in most cases punishment is the true motive.
6. Benefits of membership is one of the better chapters. Sees the benefits as discipleship, service opportunities, to give structure for your life, and being a witness.
7. What are the responsibilities? Membership brings responsibilities of submission, helping other grow, and attendance.

Kimble then moves to questions about church discipline. How it has been practiced in history? He deals with Old Testament discipline of God's people, not fully recognizing the difference between Israel and the Church. The result is a weak and confusing chapter. The Old Testament had an element and authority the church does not have (i.e. the killing of the offender). This is caused by failing to see the Israel as a theocracy and the church is not. In addition, in the Old Testament discipline applied to the nation, not only to the individual.

Today in the church discipline is not just corrective but provides an opportunity for growing as a disciple. Discipleship is a call to discipline to accomplish the goal of maturity in Christ. Church leadership has the role of positive and negative discipline in the local church. Discipline is a complex issue because we are sinful people dealing with other sinful people. Even though discipline is not practiced in some churches, but he notes its benefits. Its aim should always be restoration. The trouble is we tend to throw out the baby with the bath water. We are too quick to punish, slow to restore.

Overall this is a helpful book in stimulating one to think. Kimble provides a good starting point for these issues. It is broad and what I would call a start-up book to deeper study on these important subjects. It is a good survey on the issues. It is a welcome guide on church membership and discipline. It is readable, understandable, and helpful in spite of a few weaknesses.

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Laurie, Greg. *Tell Someone: You Can Share the Good News*. Nashville: B&H, 2016. 134 pp. Pb.; $12.99.

There are many times I will pick up a book on evangelism and become discouraged by the author's guilt trips and lack of empathy for everyone's fears. I am pleased to say Greg Laurie has been very intentional in this short book to both inspire and equip his readers to "tell someone" the good news! I was challenged and felt empowered many times as I read.

I found myself often struggling to put the book down and eagerly borrowing his points, quotes and illustrations for sermons. Laurie does not reinvent the wheel with new tactics or new unheard illustrations. Instead, he walks familiar logical territory as he brings the reader into the world of most unbelievers. Thankfully, Laurie does not assume the readers of his book are already passionate about evangelism, but is begins by sharing the reasons both biblically and logically why a Christian should share their faith. More importantly, he addresses the reasons why a believer may not be passionate about sharing their faith and offers suggestions to guard against apathy. He also broadens the scope of what contexts are appropriate for evangelism with great personal stories and passages to show how many opportunities believers have to share their faith in any given day. By coaching the readers how to take advantage of these opportunities, he guides them away from ridged methods that sound less than authentic or suspicious to unbelievers. There were many times I was thankful that Laurie answered questions which I have often wondered about with respect to evangelism in a postmodern culture. Laurie leaves the reader feeling that they "can share the good news."

With respect to theological soundness, Laurie has not been too careful with his Bible references. I was thankful to have further investigated one of his references to the lost only to learn the verse was not talking about unbelievers. Oddly enough, most of these errors could have been solved with other relevant passages. Then again, this book is not a biblical basis for evangelism, but a practical guide to evangelism. There was only one instance where Laurie went into unbiblical territory in making the statement: "God will judge us according to the light we have received and the truth

we've been shown" (77-78) in reference to unbelievers who have the opportunity to hear the gospel. However, before we throw the baby out with the bathwater, we should appreciate Laurie's willingness in many instances to address and challenge his readers in many difficult areas of evangelism. He encourages his readers to not shy away from speaking the truth about hell and peoples' spiritual condition. One other area of difficulty which could be a hang-up for some, is Laurie's use of the Great Commission to the disciples as the marching orders for the Church, the Body of Christ. But, for those able to see the parallels to the Ministry of Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5 with the Great Commission, this should not be an issue.

Finally, we come to *Tell Someone*'s usefulness in a ministry context. I found this book to be a very easy read because it was brief with short chapters. The content of the chapters was on topic, full of substance, grabbing the attention of readers and challenging their perspectives. Although there are no discussion questions at the end of the chapters, there are very clear action points for the reader in relation to their sharing of faith to spur conversation in a group setting. The few theological weakness referenced above could easily be addressed in a discussion setting and his points strengthened with additional Scripture passages. Both new believers and passionate evangelists will glean from Greg's personal experience and practical applications. Additionally this book includes a postscript for ministry leaders with a few short pointers about creating and maintaining an evangelistic culture in the local church.

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Bird, Michael F. *Jesus The Eternal Son: Answering Adoptionist Christology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2017. xv + 155 pages; Pb. $18.

This new monograph from Michael Bird is the result of a discussion held at the Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint forum at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 2016 entitled "How Did Jesus Become God?" featuring Bird and Barth Ehrman. The seminar discussed Ehrman's *How Jesus Became God* (Harper One, 2015) and Bird's recently edited collection of essays entitled *How God Became Jesus* (Zondervan, 2015). Larry W. Hurtado, Jennifer Wright Knust, Simon Gathercole and Dale Martin also participated in this conference.

As Bird explains in the Preface, in his preparation for this conference he became aware much of what is said about adoptionist Christology is incorrect. It is simply assumed the most primitive Christology was adoptionist and scholars tended to reference John Knox or James Dunn rather than examine the evidence. This book calls that quasi consensus into question (9).

Bird argues in this book that although there was Christological diversity in the early church, adoptionism was a second-century phenomenon. As Bird says, it is not correct to speak of a single, monolithic Christology of the early church, but it is equally problematic to speak of a wide variety of competing Christologies proportionally distributed across the early church (5).

After a short chapter describing what he means by both Christology and adoptionism, Bird examines two passages most often used as evidence for adoptionism (chapter 2). First, Romans 1:3-4 is one of the earliest statements often taken as evidence for adoptionist Christology, especially if these verses are a pre-Pauline creedal formula. Ehrman claims these verses say Jesus was (according to the flesh) the Davidic Messiah, *then* he was declared to be the exalted Son of God (14). Bird points out both titles "Son of David" and "Son of God" were messianic titles in Second Temple Jewish literature. There is no evidence the phrase "Son of God" was ever used in Jewish literature for a human who lived a meritorious life and was given divinity after a bodily resurrection (20). For Bird, Romans 1:34 claims the resurrection is the transition from Jesus's messianic and earthy mode to a display of his divine sonship and heavenly position (23).

Second, Acts 2:36 (along with 5:31 and 13:33) claim that "God made Jesus both Lord and Messiah." Since speeches in Luke-Acts reflect Luke's theological agenda, it is at least possible these speeches by Peter and Paul intend to present the exaltation of Jesus as the divinization of Jesus. Bird counters this by showing Luke's theology assumes Jesus was the messiah and Lord from the beginning (Luke 2:11). Bird cites Kavin Rowe to defend the change in Acts 2:36 is not *ontological* but *epistemological*. For both Romans 1:3-4 and Acts 2:36 there is no beginning to divine sonship implied because divine sonship is presupposed as a part of his messianic identity (29).

Bird devotes two chapters to the Christology of the Gospel of Mark. As the earliest Gospel, it is often assumed the book has an underdeveloped Christology and the baptism is clearly adoptionist: Jesus goes into the water a human, and comes out the Son of God (34). Barth Ehrman considers this as an innovation in Mark's gospel; Jesus is adopted at the baptism rather than the resurrection. Mark's gospel is also considered by some to have been influenced by Greco-Roman culture so that the baptism is deification similar to deified Hellenistic heroes or emperors. Bird surveys how the Greco-Roman world presented these defied figures and concludes ascriptions of divinity "were not primarily about essence but honor, status and power" (41). These people were deified because they had provided some benefit to the people and were worshiped because they were perceived as continuing to be a benefit. In the Hellenistic world the idea a human could become a god was doubted, even if there was some cultural benefit from perpetuating the imperial cult. Both Jews and Christians rejected the idea of human deification, although Judaism developed used angels or exalted

humans as intermediaries between God and man. But these angelic creatures are never exalted quite to the same level as Yahweh nor were they recipients of cultic worship (59). With respect to parallels between Mark's Jesus and the divine men in the Hellenistic world, Bird suggests everyone read Sandmel's article on parallelomania (*JBL* 81 (1962). Certainly Mark needs to be read within the context of both Greco-Roman and Jewish worlds, but parallel texts "create endless possibilities" and need to be used with clear criterion in order to avoid seeing things which just are not there (108).

Turning to the details of Mark's Gospel, Bird interacts at length with Michael Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World* (Oxford, 2011). Peppard argued the term "son of god" in the imperial cult was a major influence on early presentations of Jesus (67). For Bird, Peppard does not take seriously Mark's key images for Jesus are drawn from the Hebrew Bible, especially in the story of Jesus's baptism, the key adoption text in Mark. Psalm 2, Genesis 22 and Isaiah 42:1 provide Mark with his material: the Davidic king, the submissive son, and the Isaianic servant. In addition, Mark's use of Lord for Jesus connects Jesus to the *Shema*. It is Jesus who is the Lord, and it is the Lord Jesus who is initiating a new exodus (91).

Bird deals more briefly with three other issues in the Gospel of Mark. First, in Mark 2 Jesus claims to forgive sin. This is not the function of a priest in Judaism, only God has the prerogative to pronounce sins forgiven. Second, calming the storm (Mark 4:25-41) and walking in the water (Mark 6:45-52) are "theophanic episodes" which reveal Jesus as the God who controls the chaos of the seas (94). Third, in Mark 14:61-62 Jesus claims to be the son of Man from Daniel 7:13 who is invited by God himself to sit on his right hand (Ps 110:1). This blending of texts strongly suggests Jesus is the co-enthroned one who will be Lord of all creation (101).

Since the first four chapters of this book argue there are no adoptionist texts in the New Testament, Bird devotes his fifth chapter to explaining how adoptionism developed in the second century. Even here he questions adoptionism in *Shepherd of Hermes* (which he calls complicated and even incoherent, p. 111) and the Ebionites (which he calls a "poor man's Christology, 112). Bird agrees with Bauckham's assessment that the Ebionites were Jewish believers who were uncomfortable with some of the Christological claims being made about Jesus and defaulted to a possession Christology (Jesus was taken over by God at the baptism). Bird thinks the first writer who can be described as an adoptionist is Theodotus of Byzantium (about 190 CE). Even here, Bird hedges since there appears to have been some mixture among his followers.

In his brief concluding chapter, Bird makes the point the New Testament is not adoptionist, but rather focuses on the enthronement of the Davidic Messiah to heavenly glory. This conclusion favors a Christology developed out of the Hebrew Bible over one influenced by the Greco-Roman

world. Modern adoptionism erodes the atonement since a created being cannot redeem another created being (128) and runs the risk of a merit-based theology (129).

Like most contributions to the ongoing discussion of early Christology, this book will probably not convince adoptionists. However, Bird does successfully challenge the assertion the earliest Christology was adoptionist by carefully examining several Pauline texts and the Gospel of Mark and providing a compelling non-adoptionist interpretation of these texts.

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Keown, Mark J. *Philippians 1:1-2:18*. Bellingham, Wash.: Lexham Press, 2017. 533 pp.; Hb.; $39.99.

Keown, Mark J. *Philippians 2:19-4:23*. Bellingham, Wash.: Lexham Press, 2017. 569 pp.; Hb.; $39.99.

Mark Keown's contribution on Philippians in the *Evangelical Exegetical Commentary* (EEC) is one of the most detailed commentaries published on this Pauline Letter. This two-volume exegetical commentary can take its place alongside recent major Philippians commentaries by Fee (NICNT, 1995), O'Brien (NIGTC, 1991) or Hawthorne and Martin, (WBC, revised edition, 2004). Keown's revised dissertation was published as *Congregational Evangelism in Philippians: The Centrality of an Appeal for Gospel Proclamation to the Fabric of Philippians* (Paternoster Biblical Monographs; Cascade, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2009). He is a frequent presenter at SBL and has published several articles on aspects of Philippians.

The 92-page introduction to the commentary more or less assumes Pauline authorship and settles on a Roman provenance (33) after weighing the various alternate suggestions. He examines various suggestions Philippians is a compilation of several shorter letters ("interpreting Philippians does not require a multi-letter hypothesis," 22). He suggests a range of dates from 61-64, but favors the later end of that range (33).

In his reconstruction of the background of the letter, Keown traces the history of the Roman church. Although it was primarily a Jewish Christian movement, after the edict of Claudius in A.D, 49 it was increasingly a Gentile church. This created friction as Jewish Christians returned to Rome after the death of Claudius. Keown suggests there was already some anti-Paulinism in the Roman church before Paul wrote Romans in A.D. 56. By the time Paul arrived in A.D. 60, there already was opposition to Paul from local Jewish Christian congregations.

He also argues the conditions of Paul's imprisonment have taken a turn

for the worse because of conditions in Rome (ie. "Nero's lunacy, p. 14) in the early A.D. 60s. He is no longer under house arrest, but "in chains" and his life is in danger. As Keown acknowledges, this older view is so out of favor it rarely appears in a commentary on Philippians, but he argues the idea has merit (6). Despite worsening conditions, Paul is still zealously preaching the gospel, although his imprisonment has caused him to put off going to Spain. Instead, his intention is to return to Philippi when he is permitted to leave Rome. Keown wants this decision to affect the interpretation of the book, in contrast to Stephen Fowl (for example) who said it made little difference whether the Philippians was written from Ephesus or Rome. That Paul was writing from a Roman imprisonment will heighten the contrast between the Roman Empire and the heavenly *politeuma* (33, note 121).

This leads Keown to suggest Paul may have intended to escape from his Roman imprisonment and travel to Philippi. This material is synthesized from Keown's 2015 article in the *Journal for the Study Paul and his Letters*. The letter of Philippians clearly indicates Paul was in prison and planned to visit Philippi soon. At least according to church tradition Paul did leave Rome and continued to do some ministry (depending on the status of the Pastoral Epistles). Yet there is nothing to explain how he was released from prison. Keown briefly surveys many of the possible solutions to Paul's confidence he will leave Rome and concludes a prison escape answers all of the potential problems (12). Paul claims to have friends in the Praetorian Guard (1:13) who could help him escape. The obvious objection to this interesting reconstruction is Paul's desire to bear witness before Caesar (Acts 23:11) as well as his willingness to suffer for the sake of Christ (2 Cor 11:16-33). Yet even while boasting about his suffering, Paul does claim to have escaped from Damascus when perused by Aretas IV (2 Cor 11:33). Although Keown does not mention it, Paul avoids persecution a number of times in Acts (at Thessalonica and Ephesus for example). Although not exactly prison escapes, they do indicate Paul was willing to relocate in order to continue preaching the gospel, or at the very least Paul cannot be considered as seeking martyrdom.

Perhaps the most useful feature of the introduction for most readers will be the lengthy introduction to the city and culture of Philippi. As Keown points out, Philippi was founded as a kind of mini-Rome," and this observation opens up several important interpretive possibilities. After a sketch of the history of the city, Keown offers a commentary-worthy discussion of Acts 16 and the charges against Paul and Silas. He argues the letter of Philippians reflects a clash between Caesar and Christ, especially in the Christ Hymn (Phil 2:5-11). Because Philippi was so Roman in outlook, it is natural to see some of Paul's presentation as "anti-imperial." Keown says the letter is "utterly subversive and countercultural," although he stops short of some of the more radical anti-imperial readings of the letter (44).

The last long section of the introduction is an account of the church it-

self. For Keown, the Philippian church is predominantly Gentile including a number of prominent women (Lydia, for example). Paul has a positive relationship with the church and there is little which needs to be corrected as in Corinth, although there are some problems with divisions (4:2-3). The church is facing some opposition, which Keown describes as "twin challenges" (56) from Jerusalem (Judiazers) and Rome (Greco-Roman libertines). The final part of this description of the church is excellent fodder for a pastor preparing to preach this letter.

After the introduction, the body of the commentary is laid out in large sections divided into logical sub-sections as outlined in the introduction. Each section of commentary begins with an introduction discussing the context of the section as well as literary features. Following this introduction Keown offers his own translation of the text along with extensive textual critical notes.

The commentary itself proceeds phrase-by-phrase. Keown provides the Greek text followed by his translation. He comments extensively on Greek syntactical and lexical issues, occasionally comparing various translations in order to indicate the importance of the grammatical decisions. Since this is an exegetical commentary on the Greek text of Philippians, Greek words appear frequently and are not transliterated. Major commentaries are cited in-text, technical monographs and articles appear in the footnotes. Keown interacts with all major Philippians commentaries (Fee, O'Brien, for example), including many classic works (Lightfoot, Vincent, for example).

Following the exegetical section Keown makes a brief conclusion and offers a short section entitled "Biblical Theological Comments." Here he tries to connect the pericope to the larger world of Pauline theology. For example, after the exegetical section on Philippians 3:1-21, Keown discusses the impact of Paul's conversion on his theology, especially his view on what "Israel" means after his encounter with Christ as well as the role of the law. Paul's "fresh perspective on the law" is not antinomian, but rather "agapenomian, hypernomian, pneumanomian or kardianomian" (2:183). The four neologisms do indeed express how Paul sees the law in the present age (even if they are unlikely to catch on).

Each exegetical section ends with a short thought entitled "application and devotional implications." An exegetical commentary may draw theological implications, but not many technical commentaries like this one allow the author's pastoral heart to come forward and offer such exhortations.

Each volume includes a Scripture index, and volume two includes a brief glossary of foreign words and technical terms. The second volume also includes an extensive, 42-page bibliography divided into technical monographs, articles and essays, and other non-Philippians works cited in the commentary. For the commentaries, the bibliography follows the introduction in volume 1 (pages 83-92). There is no index of authors cited

in either volume.

In the printed version of this commentary there were a few typographical oddities. In volume 2, starting on page 187 the header does not include the chapter/verse, although it does in the previous and following sections (it simply reads "Philippians" through page 290). However, this does not distract from the content of the commentary.

Since Lexham Press is part of the larger Faithlife family, these volumes are available in Logos Bible Software as a single resource rather than two volumes. In the Logos resource, all Scripture is tagged so readers can float over the reference with their pointer and read the text or click to read the text in their preferred Bible. All abbreviations and references to other commentaries are similarly tagged; if you own the book you can click the pages to go directly to the resource. An additional advantage for the Logos version over the printed version is the ability to click on Greek words to launch your preferred lexicon. I happen to have BDAG in my library, so clicking a Greek work in the commentary takes me to the lexicon. Resources in the footnotes can be copied and pasted into a word processor, or in BibTex format for use in bibliography software. Finally, references to other section of the commentary are hyperlinked. For example, when Keown refers back to his thematic and structural analysis (page 492, for example), the Logos user can click the hyperlink and go directly to page 80 to read this section.

One potential problem is a discrepancy between the Logos resource (published 2016) and the printed book (published 2017). Since an electronic book can be updated frequently, it is possible a printed copy will be out of date. To date there are eleven commentaries in the Evangelical Exegetical Commentary available to Logos users, with a total of forty-four volumes planned.

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McKnight, Scot. *Philemon*. NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2017. 127 pp.; Hb.; $25.00.

Commentaries on Philemon are often added to the end of a Colossians commentary as if this short letter is an appendix to Colossians (or, in the case of Jac Müller's 1955 NICNT commentary, an add-on to Philippians). Perhaps editors consider the letter too short to merit a full sized commentary, unless it is heavily supplemented with additional material on slavery in the Roman world (as in the 588 page Barth and Blanke, Eerdmans Critical Commentary, 2000). Although Scot McKnight's commentary on Philemon in the NICNT series was originally intended to be included with this forthcoming Colossians commentary, Eerdmans decided to publish

Philemon separately.

As McKnight recognizes, commentaries on Philemon must deal with the problem of slavery in the letter. In Philemon, Paul "envisions a new kind of relationship on the basis of siblingship," even if that new relationship is between a slave and master (2). For many modern commentators this is a problem since slavery is a horrific abuse of human rights and a serious problem throughout the world today. Rather than tell Philemon to release his slave Philemon from his bondage, Paul does not seem to notice a problem with slavery in this short letter. Taken along with Colossians, Paul tells slaves to obey their masters rather than commanding masters to set their slaves free. In 1 Corinthians 7:21-24 Paul tells people who were slaves when called by Christ to "not let it trouble them" and to gain their freedom if possible. McKnight points out this is as close to modern abolitionism that Paul gets, "but abolitionism it is not" (29).

In this commentary, slavery is in the background, but the relationship of masters and slaves is not the point of the letter. For McKnight, Philemon is a "deeply disturbing text" which embodies a new vision of reconciliation. This commentary argues the church ought to be a place of reconciliation first among its own people and second in society. "Reconciled people become agents of reconciliation" (5). In Philemon, Paul "envisions a new kind of relationship on the basis of siblingship" even if that new relationship is between a slave and maser.

Because Paul does not appeal to Onesimus to set Philemon free, he seems to approve of slavery. One approach to the problem is to fully describe slavery in the Roman world then draw contrasts to various modern practices of slavery in order to claim Roman slavery was often not harsh. Onesimus is imagined to be an educated *majordomo* for a wealthy Philemon, appealing to Paul to adjudicate some dispute with his master. This strategy attempts to reduce Paul's offensive lack of interest in ending the dehumanizing practice of slavery.

McKnight provides a twenty-two page description of slavery in the Roman world, summarizing a wide range of recent scholarship on Roman slavery. He carefully defines slavery and describes Rome's pervasive "slave culture." This includes brief sections on the family life of a slave, the slave's relationship with the master, and options for obtaining justice for the slave, including manumission and the possibility of becoming a runaway. Each of this subsections are illustrated with some Greco-Roman source and each example could be multiplied. McKnight offers illustrations and ample references to more detailed works of Roman slavery, thus keeping this commentary on Philemon from becoming too bloated with background material.

After surveying the possibility of slavery as providing a way for a person to move up the Roman social ranks, McKnight comments "we must come down from these utopian mountains to the reality" (26). The western

ideal of freedom was unknown to the vast majority or Romans. Only those at the very top of Roman society would have something like the freedom western (especially American) people enjoy. We are, as McKnight says, "driven by culture to evaluate Paul's moral message on the basis of later abolition of slavery and freedom of slaves" (26). In order to properly interpret a text like Philemon, we must enter the word of the Roman first century and read Philemon in that context.

This is valuable material, but McKnight does not simply lay out background then proceed to the commentary. He includes a six-page essay entitled "Philemon in the Crucible of New World Slavery and Slavery Today" (30-36). Here he deals with the serious problem of slavery in the twenty-first century. A reader of Philemon may feel smugly satisfied modern Christianity has "gone beyond Paul" by ending slavery in England and America, but the conditions of slavery persists throughout the world with estimates as high as thirty-five million people living in slavery. This includes sex trafficking as well as labor exploitation (either agricultural or domestic). McKnight mentions three brief examples, Thai fishing ships, child sex slaves and forced marriages. "Modern slavery" McKnight says, "is different from the past in its deception, its technological sophistication, and is disregard for ethnicity and race" (36). Paul's answer to this heinous problem would be the same as his answer to Philemon: the church is to be a place where reconciliation happens and justice in the church ought to become justice for all.

The body of the commentary is only about sixty-five pages, about half of the volume. McKnight proceeds as do other contributions to the NICNT. After providing a translation of the text and a brief introduction, McKnight works through the text phrase-by-phrase, with any comments on the Greek in transliteration (although Greek appears untransliterated in the footnotes). Since Philemon is less complicated grammatically than other Pauline letters, the notes only occasionally need to deal with lexical and syntactical issues. More often McKnight comments on the rhetoric of the letter, focusing on how Paul makes his appeal to Philemon.

This new contribution on Philemon ought to take its place alongside other major exegetical commentaries (Barth and Blanke, Johnson, Knox). This small commentary will assist pastors and teachers to prepare sermons and studies on this small but important letter of Paul which are sensitive to the original cultural context but also squarely aimed at contemporary issues. McKnight has already contributed an excellent commentary on James to the NICNT series and his Colossians volume is scheduled for release in February 2018 to replace the venerable NICNT commentary by F. F. Bruce on Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians (1984).

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Le Peau, Andrew T. *Mark through Old Testament Eyes*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 2017. Pb. 352 pp. $28.99.

As Andrew Le Peau observes in the introduction to this new commentary series, the New Testament writers were Old Testament people. Although this seems like an obvious statement, the symbols and literary patterns of the Old Testament are often overlooked in popular preaching and teaching on New Testament books. Although scholarship has done a better job setting the documents of the New Testament into the context of the Old in recent years, there is still much to be done to develop the database of background material available to illuminate the New Testament. There have been a few recent contributions in this area, D. A. Carson and G. K. Beale edited a single-volume *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (IVP 2007) and the *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary on the Old Testament and New Testament* (2009 with many of the individual books available in separate volumes). Although many commentaries include this sort of background material, there are few commentaries which focus exclusively on how the New Testament writers used the Old Testament.

This series of commentaries will provide a verse-by-verse commentary which integrates typical exegesis of the text with Old Testament background in order to help answer questions as they arise. With respect to the exposition of the text, Le Peau comments on key phrases with an eye to Old Testament parallels rather than the typical exegetical details found in most commentaries. For example, at Mark 9:43 "if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off," Le Peau briefly discusses prohibitions on self-mutilation in the Law (Deut 14:1-3) as well as ancient pagan practice (1 Kings 18:27-29). He also draws attention to the hand, foot and eye as a source of stumbling in Proverbs 6:16-10 and Job 31:1, 5, 7. In his commentary on Mark 3:37, Le Peau draws attention to the provision of abundant food as a "picture that looks ahead to Isaiah's coming messianic kingdom" (123). He cites Isaiah 55:1-3 at length, but also notes the miraculous feeding in Numbers 11 and 2 Kings 4:42-44.

Throughout the commentary section, Greek and Hebrew words are used sparingly and always appear transliterated so those without language skills will have no trouble making use of the commentary. There is some interaction with contemporary scholarship, although this is light and all references appears in endnotes.

Throughout the commentary are a number of sidebars entitled "Through Old Testament Eyes." These units focus on the big picture to show how a particular text picks up on themes and motifs from the Old Testament. For example, Le Peau offers a chart in his exposition of the feeding of the five thousand tracing parallels between Psalm 23 and Mark 6. I briefly commented on Psalm 23 as a messianic text and potential background for this miracle in *Jesus the Bridegroom*, so it is good to see the Psalm used

to interpret a miracle often used to preach brotherly sharing rather than a miracle which reveals Jesus as the Messiah. Another example of this kind of sidebar is Le Peau's short description of the suffering of the Messiah in the Psalms to illuminate Mark 14-15 (275-8).

A second type of sidebar in this commentary series is labeled "What the Structure Means." These sections focus on literary devices such as metaphor, hyperbole, or other elements of story-telling. Often these take the form of an outline of a pericope with attention to chiasms or other features. In Mark 10:13-52 he lists four predictions and a prediction which frames the unit. In another place Le Peau offers a list of examples in Mark of sets of three events (272-3) and draws attention to this literary style in the Old Testament.

One problem with scholarly background studies is a failure to connect the context with the contemporary reader. This commentary hopes to avoid this my balancing the background element with an application section. These sections are labeled "Going Deeper" and intend to connect the text of a New Testament book with internal debates within the early church as well as draw out implications for contemporary church questions. For example, the "Going Deeper" section following Le Peau's exposition of Mark 9:14-50 is a pastoral reflection on anger and quarrelsomeness (173-2). The section following Mark 13:12 deals with a non-eschatological understanding of "watching and being alert." The focus is on understanding suffering as a part of the disciple's calling. Although this application is quite preachable, I am not sure the application arises from the text of the Olivet Discourse. The actual text of the commentary does a good job with the Old Testament (Daniel 7) and Second Temple (1 Maccabees) backgrounds to Jesus's words and even notices the shift in 13:27 from the Temple in A.D. 70 to the "end of the age." It seems to me the natural application in that section ought to concern a warning against false predictions of the end in the light of the very real end which will eventually arrive.

I have a few minor problems with this commentary which probably fall into the category of "this is not the book I would have written." First, Le Peau's commentary on Mark does not deal with introductory issues in any depth. There are two pages under the heading "Who was Mark?" which deal with the few appearances of Mark in Acts and the epistles along with an ancient African tradition about Mark's family. Since the purpose of the commentary to provide background to read the Gospel of Mark, perhaps more ought to be said about traditional authorship. For example, if the tradition Mark was Peter's interpreter in Rome is accurate, what does his use of the Old Testament imply about the original audience and intention of the Gospel? What does the use of a New Exodus motif imply about the audience?

Second, there is a very short introduction to the use of the Old Testament in the Gospel. Most of this four page section involves an illustration

drawn from contemporary movies. Although this analogy does explain how a writer might allude to an earlier work, it fails to explain why Mark would use the Old Testament in the way he does. Mark is not paying tribute to Isaiah for his contributions to prophetic writing; Mark is alluding to Isaiah's New Exodus motif because he believes Jesus is really enacting the metanarrative of the whole Old Testament and placing himself in the center of that story. I realize Le Peau simply does not have space to write a fully argued methodology in the introduction to this commentary, but improving this introduction would pay dividends as readers use the commentary to read Mark.

Third, although this might be less interesting to evangelical readers, I think the commentary could be improved by occasionally tracing a motif through the literature of the Second Temple period. In my review of the text, I only noticed a few references to 1 Maccabees in the context of the abomination of desolation and there are no references to the Apocrypha or Pseudepigrapha in the Scripture index. Although this is not always possible, perhaps using the Dead Sea Scrolls as background for son of David sayings or the messianic banquet would set the Gospel of Mark into a more broadly Jewish context.

A final comment goes beyond the scope of the commentary, but I raise it since few scholars have asked the question. In the commentary, Le Peau understands allusions to the Old Testament are a product of Mark's narration of the events. But to what extent did the historical Jesus shape traditions by alluding the Old Testament himself? If Mark 4:11 fairly records the words of Jesus, then the allusion to Daniel 2 and 4 in the phrase "mystery of the kingdom" comes from Jesus rather than Mark. If this is the case, does it affect the exegesis of Mark 4?

Nevertheless, Le Peau contributes a good commentary on Mark which focuses on an often overlooked aspect of New Testament research.

This is the inaugural volume of a new series from Kregel Academic, with four other volumes planned at this time (David Capes on Matthew, Karen Jobes on John, Gary Burge on Galatians and Ephesians, and Tremper Longman on Revelation). My copy of this book has a number of strange spacing errors when the text is italicized, hopefully this can be corrected in future reprints of the commentary (p. 27, the word Spirit, p. 39, the phrase Kingdom of God; p. 49, the word quiet, p. 51, the word healed, etc.) This is a minor problem and does not detract from the value of the commentary.

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McGuckin, John Anthony. *The Path of Christianity: The First Thousand Years.* Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2017. 1209 pgs., Hb.; $65.00.

John Anthony McGuckin's new book is a substantial contribution to the intellectual and social history of the first millennium of Christianity. Intentionally designed for use in a college or seminary classroom, McGuckin provides an excellent overview of major historical movements from the apostolic era through the Great Schism.

Often church histories from evangelical publishers lean towards a western, Protestant form of Christianity and move rapidly from the Augustine to the Reformation (when the church *really* started). This is not the case for *The Path of Christianity* for two reasons. First, the book intentionally limits itself to the first millennium of the church. Few church history textbooks limit themselves to this period. Second, McGuckin is an archpriest of the Romanian Orthodox Church and his academic interests are solidly in the pre-Reformation period. He demonstrates an encyclopedic knowledge of Church History, having written twenty-five works of historical theology, including major works on St. Cyril of Alexandria, Gregory of Nazianzus, and St. Symeon as well as a survey of Orthodox Church history (*The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to its History, Theology, & Spiritual Culture*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). As a result, McGuckin's history is richly illustrated with a wide range of voices from both the eastern and western church.

The first twelve chapters of the book survey the first ten centuries of church history, from the end of the first through the eleventh century. Each chapter is well-organized and carefully outlined. The clearly marked sections will assist students as they work through the often lengthy chapters. Following each chapter is a "short reader" with excerpts from key texts from the period covered in the chapter. McGuckin also includes a "for further reading" bibliography organized into sections matching the text in the chapter.

At 144 pages, the first chapter is by far the most comprehensive as it covers the "fertile second century." McGuckin surveys Jewish Christian groups (Encarites, Nazorenes, Ebionites, Elkesaites), Gnostic writers and Apostolic Fathers along with substantial sections on Montanism, Marcion, the Quarterodecimans, and Irenaeus. The chapter ranges into the third century with a section on the Monarchic movement (up to Hippolytus and Novatian of Rome). What is surprising about the book is the detail McGuckin is able to include. His descriptions of the four Jewish Christian groups are longer than most Church history textbooks (if they include early Jewish Christianity at all). His brief descriptions of each of the Apostolic Fathers are excellent introductions and his thirty pages on the Monarchian movement is more than enough to sort out the complexity of this issue.

As the title "Blood in the Arena" implies, the second chapter survey's Rome's response to Christianity from Nero through the Diocletian perse-

cution, with attention to the status of Christianity in the Roman Empire. He has a lengthy discussion of Tertullian's social theology as a response to imperial oppression. McGuckin includes rival non-Christian groups in this chapter (Mithras, Isis, Cyble and Manichaeism) as well as Christian relations with the Jews. Finally, McGuckin devotes a section of the chapter to the second century apologists (Justin Martyr through Minucius Felix).

The historical section also covers the development of theology as well. For example, the fifth chapter "Reconciling the World" begins with a short overview of Paul's doctrine of reconciliation and how this doctrine was developed in both eastern and western penitential theology. McGuckin devotes about ten pages to eastern penitential canons including the rarely-discussed Synod of Ancyra in 314 and the influence of the canons of this Synod on the eastern monastic movement. This chapter has a lengthy section on the development of the monastic movement, once again beginning with its intellectual roots in the Hellenistic world and the New Testament. McGuckin includes brief sections on Syrian, Egyptian, and Palestinian monastic orders, taking into account the impact of Islam on these monastic centers. The chapter concludes with a collection of short readings from several monastic canons as well as Augustine's *Letter to a Female Monastic Community*.

The second part of the book is a collection of topics of interest to scholars and historians of the first thousand years of the church. These chapters are intended as a social history of ideas and therefore trace an idea through the full thousand year period surveyed in the historical section. The topics in this section are:

- The Bible and Its Interpretation in the Early Church
- The Church and War
- The Development of Christian Hymnography
- Ways of Prayer in the Early Church
- Women in Ancient Christianity
- Healing and Philanthropy in Early Christianity
- The Exercise of Authority in the Church: Orders and Offices
- Christians and Magic
- The Church and Wealth
- Church and Slavery in an Age of Oppression
- Attitudes to Sexuality in the Early Church
- A Brief Account of Ancient Christian Art

Most of the chapters begin in the world of Hellenism and trace the issue through the biblical material into the early church. Some of these issues concern developments in worship, liturgy and art, but others are social issues (magic, wealth, slavery, sexuality). This volume is worth the price for the second half of the book alone.

For example, in his chapter on Healing and Philanthropy, McGuckin

begins with healing in ancient Hellenism before quickly surveying the New Testament and patristic writers. He traces the same history for philanthropy, although the Hellenistic section is longer in this case. These two threads are combined in a short section on philanthropy in the Byzantine liturgy and the Hospital as symbol of the church. He includes short readings on the topic from biblical literature .

McGuckin's chapter on the development of Christian hymnody also begins with origin of Greek hymns (perhaps found in the Pauline letters) and compares them to pre-Christian Hellenistic hymns. There is a larger collection of short readings for this chapter in order to illustrate some of the more obscure early Christian hymns. These hymns are often translated by McGuckin and are annotated with comments suggesting poetic allusions. For most readers, this collection of hymns may be a first introduction to the vast number of hymns, songs and sacred poetry from the first millennium of the church.

As the bibliographies make clear, each chapter in this book is worthy of a monograph. In fact, given the length of the chapters and the slightly small font, several chapters could have been published as short stand-alone books. Despite the length of the book, McGuckin distills complex historical problems into a readable chapters and offers the interested reader an excellent list of resources to go much deeper. For students, these chapters are excellent introductions, but also resources for further research and writing.

Conclusion. Because McGuckin's The Path of Christianity is so detailed, it is an important contribution to the study of church history. It is written in a style which will appear to the general reader as well as a student in a seminary class. But the massive amount of data in the book makes in a valuable reference work as well. It is possible the book is too much for classroom use, especially in a single, general seminary church history class. Nevertheless, the book will serve well as a standard reference for early church history.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Following the lead of the original *Grace Journal of Theology*, the present Journal is intended to stimulate constructive thought, awareness, devotion and practice in matters of ministry, biblical, theological and dispensational studies. The Journal will publish articles and reviews of merit with preference of acceptance given to credentialed and experienced writers. Articles are to be well researched, documented and relevant to the objectives of the Journal. Publication decisions will be made based on the consensus of the editorial committee. A full article will be between 4000 and 6000 words including footnotes. A "short note" on a text or topic will be between 1000 and 2000 words. Book reviews will be about 1000 words. Several books are available for review; contact the editor for more information.

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