

## EDITORIAL

Scott Shaw deals with issue of how technology affects the way we think and develop spiritual. His “Sanctification and Christian Maturity in the Technological Age” was presented at the Midwest Evangelical Theological Society in March 2018. His paper examines several findings from neuroscience on the addictive nature of technology and highlights the difficulty of building maturity in an era where fewer people engage Scripture deeply. Relevant data highlights the implications of addictive technology on various age cohorts, especially adolescents and young adults.

Grace Christian University Communications professor Pamela Sherstad introduces readers to Quentin Schultze as “a Sage Who Informs, Challenges and Encourages.” Schultze has contributed many books and articles on the art of communication in an increasingly technological culture. Sherstad examines Schultze’s contribution to communication through the lens of communication accommodation theory which allows for the recognition of a sage who informs, challenges and encourages Christians in their conversations. With the power of the Holy Spirit, Christians need not “. . . sound like the rest of the world, hanging out our dirty rhetoric.”

Bruce A. Sabados contributed an article in the last issue of the Journal of Grace Theology on preaching difficult texts, he returns in this issue with “Church Discipline: A Neglected Formative Resource For Shaping Disciples.” Both articles arose from his D.Min research and will be very useful as an encouragement to pastors and churches dealing with the difficult problem of church discipline.

Anumbondem Joseph Asong, “Transition as a Distinct Component of Change” with a special interest in Theological Education. Joseph serves as Chief Academic Officer of the Malawi Grace Bible Schools and speaks from both academic and personal experience. Asong argues transition poses serious challenges to the execution of change, it nonetheless possesses

opportunities which would work for the interest of carrying out change.

Two pastors contributed shorter studies for this issue of the Journal. First, Craig Apel thinks there is “Much Ado about Nothing” with respect to the issue of water baptism. Second, long time Grace pastor Jerry Sterchi offers a few thoughts on “Law and Grace.” Jerry is an old friend who has been a solid supporter of the Journal since its inception.

There are a good book reviews included in this issue. I have a number of books to offer for review, including a large number of books on pastoral issues and pastoral leadership. If you are interested in writing a short review of a book please contact me. It is important for pastors and Bible teachers to be constantly reading and developing but it is very difficult to keep up on the avalanche of new literature published each year. By writing a book review you are helping other busy pastors to prioritize their study and personal development.

Similarly, 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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SANCTIFICATION AND CHRISTIAN MATURITY  
IN THE TECHNOLOGICAL AGE:  
EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY  
AND NEUROSCIENCE ON SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Sanctification is the process of being conformed to the holiness of God and being ‘set apart’ from worldly vices and distractions. Avoiding distraction is becoming increasingly challenging in a hyper-connected, technological age. This paper examines several findings from neuroscience on the addictive nature of technology and highlights the difficulty of building maturity in an era where fewer people engage Scripture deeply. Relevant data highlights the implications of addictive technology on various age cohorts, especially adolescents and young adults.

*Keywords:* Sanctification, technology, addiction

Christian maturity takes deliberate focus and work. Foster (1998) describes the spiritual disciplines which lead to maturity as focused, deliberate actions over time (i.e. habits) which lead to greater Christlikeness. Assuming Christian maturity and sanctification through a personal relationship with Christ is a goal (a good assumption), we must be purposeful. Writing in 1978, Richard Foster (updated in 1998), began his book *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, with “Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people” (p. 1). What

Foster observed forty years ago was only the beginning of rapid advancements and changes in daily life. Even since his “20 Year Revision” (1998), this was only just beginning the Internet revolution, before smart phones and touch screen technology. Moving past the superficiality of our age and becoming “deep” followers of Christ should be the goal of all believers, as we seek to avoid the distractions of this world. 1 Peter 1:16 reminds us to be holy as God is holy. This is becoming increasingly difficult in our era of constant distraction and additive habits.

### A PRIORI ASSUMPTIONS

There are several assumptions worthy of delineation. This writer assumes in the context of creation, fall, and redemption, a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ is predicated upon a confession of faith in Christ as Lord and Savior (John 3:16), as well as a daily purposeful walk, lived out volitionally. Once a believer has come into the grace of Jesus Christ, a process of maturity is initiated through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13; 1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Cor. 6:19; Gal. 4:6) which leads one into greater Christlikeness in thoughts, attitudes and daily behaviors. The process of using and even “redeeming technology” should at least be a consideration as we seek to use everything at our disposal (including all of our technology) for good. I would recommend H. Richard Niebuhr’s *Christ and Culture* (1951) for further consideration about how the believer might critically engage culture, including one’s use of smart-technology.

James K. A. Smith (2016) begins his excellent book *You Are What You Love: the Spiritual Power of Habit* in his Preface with the admonition to curate one’s heart, saying, “You need to worship well. Because you are what you love. And you worship what you love. And you might not love what you think” (p. xii). Evaluating the power of our routines will tellingly illustrate where we place our focus, and ultimately our worship on a daily basis. This has significance for any discussion on growing in Christian maturity. Observing a disconnect between our knowledge (i.e. right thinking, doctrine, relationships) and our actual daily habits should better lead us to account for our time and attention. Romans 5:1-5 (ESV) says,

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we re-

joyce in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

The Christian life is a teleological process moving forward toward a goal, hopefully a goal of becoming increasingly aligned to the purposes of Christ in this world until he calls us home (Erickson, 2013). Irenaeus said, "The glory of God is a human being fully alive" (cited in Smith, 2016, p. 8). As believers engaged in the world, being fully alive assumes a level of deep thinking and habits support the continual awareness of Christ and his purposes, as well as living in genuine relationship with others.

### SANCTIFICATION AND VOLITION

Sanctification is the process of being set apart, anointed and brought into greater Christlikeness. The believer's walk with Christ should align with the will and purposes of God. Volitional attention and sanctification are (at least to some degree) behavioral, meaning that thoughts, feelings and desires are purposeful. For instance, Jesus instructed his followers to guard their hearts against lust. Whoever looks at a woman lustfully or "with desire" has already committed adultery in his heart (Matthew 25:27-30). This illustrates our visible, social actions matter to God, including our thoughts and motivations (often called "the heart"), in addition to how we manage interpersonal relationships. We should account for the role technology places in our lives, including our relationship with God and significant others in terms of time and depth of communication.

Erickson (2013) describes sanctification as the "continuing work of God in the life of believers, making them actually holy. By 'holy' here is meant 'bearing an actual likeness to God'" (p. 897). This work of sanctification is a process engages the indwelling Holy Spirit with our volition and brings about daily regeneration as we turn away from old, sinful patterns to serve Christ in our lives. Sanctification can also be associated with "moral goodness or spiritual worth," leading followers of Christ to therefore "conduct themselves accordingly" (Erickson, 2013, p. 898). As maturing believers in Christ, we should embrace daily holiness as set apart from those pursuing the desires of the world.

Konyndyk-DeYoung (2009) writes, “Very simply, a virtue (or vice) is acquired through practice – repeated activity that increases our proficiency at the activity and gradually forms our character” (p. 15). She further acknowledges, “This is why, when we want to re-form our character from vice to virtue, we often need to practice and persevere in regular spiritual disciplines and formational practices for a lengthy period of time. There is no quick and easy substitute for daily repetition over the long haul” (p. 15). Daily habits and repetition necessarily should cause us to explore the brain’s role in habituation and sanctification.

Theology is also practical and lived out daily as we make choices and engage in habitual behavioral patterns. Theology is life. Willard (1998) notes, “theology is only a way of thinking about and understanding – or misunderstanding – God. Practical theology studies the manner in which our actions interact with God to accomplish his ends in human life. So everyone has a practical theology” (p. 14). The Apostle Paul likewise used the metaphor of clothing in describing Christian maturity (Rom. 13:14). As Christians are to “put off” the things of the world (i.e. sinful desires, distractions) and “put on” the things of Christ (i.e. right attitudes, behaviors), habits are changed and become internal and also visible to others.

This “putting on” of godly behaviors and “putting off” of sinful or selfish vices is a common strategy for Christian counselors, providing a useful metaphor in considering one’s behavioral choices. Couples can be encouraged to emulate Christlike attitudes in lieu of putting away anger. The same imagery provides a context to consider how one responds to others and how to make God-honoring use of one’s time. The phrase, “What would Jesus do?” though admittedly cliché in Evangelical popular culture on shirts and wrist-bands nonetheless provides a reminder to consider daily decisions and habits in consideration of eternity.

## TECHNOLOGY

Technology is multifaceted, such as ancient civilizations using fire, or creating the wheel to move large stones to create massive buildings. The use of fire for cooking and forging bronze and iron is also a demonstration of advanced technology. Reinke (2017) rightly observes technology shapes our theology, as we consider the metaphors we use for God and ourselves within the world. He gives the example of the pocket watch,

when applied to ‘intelligent design’ can prove useful, but also potentially impersonal. He writes, “God makes himself clear to us through metaphors of technology, and we find it possible to define him, and also to distort him, by projecting metaphors of technology onto him” (Reinke, 2017, p. 37).

For our discussion here, I am purposely referring to “smart technology” that integrates screen technology (i.e. smart phones, screens/tablets and computers), and which has become synonymous with daily functioning in a globalized world. David Kinnaman (Barna & Kinnaman, 2018), President of Barna Group, in reflecting upon the ubiquity of smart technology calls the surrounding culture “digital Babylon,” citing believers today need to “reexamine their understanding of their place in the world and in God’s intentions for creation” (p. 9). I will illustrate the increasingly addictive and life-changing habits that have resulted in this ubiquitous use of screen technology in the modern daily lifestyle, as well as the difficulty this places on deep focus, critical thinking and daily habits consistent with healthy development and maturity (Newport, 2017).

According to the *New York Review of Books* (Weisberg, Feb. 25, 2016), it is estimated that American’s check their smartphones 81,500 times per year, or an average of every 4.3 minutes of our waking lives, whether checking email, texting, or seeking and succumbing to the pressure of the constant barrage of social media status updates (Reinke, 2017, p. 16). According to a Pew Research study (2015), 86% of 18-29-year-olds own a smart phone, with 36% of them admitting they are online “almost constantly” (Reinke, 2017, p. 38). Seventy percent of Facebook users (over a billion) are on Facebook every day, often with a sense of compulsion to check status updates, leading to anxiety when absent from one’s mobile technology, or a reliable internet signal.

The discussion of “web-addiction” is very real for those of us who work with high school and traditional college-age students. For some students, the inability to sit still in class and avoid social media, even at the cost of missing important information is simply too tempting. The average American college student admits to wasting 20% of class time on a digital device, not related to class (Reinke, 2017, p. 43). Pastors, psychologists, counselors, social workers and other mental health professionals have become increasingly concerned about screen technology and its role in society. Scientists are now beginning to discuss diagnostic and treatment

options for *Nomophobia*, the fear of being without one's mobile phone (or running out of battery, being off-line, losing signal). According to *Scientific American* (2018), *Nomophobia* is characterized by significant anxiety or distress at the loss or impending loss of losing one's phone or being disconnected (or running out of battery), and the degree to which one's phone is interlaced in daily activities (i.e. staying connected). Psychologists are developing assessments to help identify and treat *nomophobia*, especially common among younger patients. Also concerning is the phenomenon of *transactive memory*, which reduces one's ability to remember, or even having motivation to remember basic facts and information. According to *Scientific American* (2018), "research on *transactive memory* finds that when we have reliable external sources of information about particular topics at our disposal, then this reduces our motivation and ability to acquire and retain knowledge about that particular topic." The significance for Christian leaders should be obvious as we are increasingly less able, and subsequently less motivated to learn anything as we become increasingly attached to our screens and smart-technology. I no longer need to remember my wife's cell phone number because I have it saved under her name in my iPhone. Students no longer need to memorize Scripture because they can always Google the gist of the passage they are looking for, or look it up on their Bible "app." Deep learning is becoming increasingly challenging and uncommon.

The world our children are growing up in is increasingly synonymous with always-on screen technology. Some have labeled this age cohort as "Gen Z" (born between 1999 – 2015, making up between 69 – 70 million), the largest American generation yet (Barna & Kinnaman, 2018, p. 10). The Barna Report on Gen Z likewise suggests that Gen Z is less likely to leave their homes until a much later age, drink alcohol, obtain their driver's licenses or go out on dates than generations before (Barna & Kinnaman, 2018, p. 16). For those of us involved in youth ministry, parenting or grandparenting, or even Christian higher education these delays in development are potentially concerning as we guide the next generation in mature Christian adulthood.

The amount of time adolescents spend online and on smart-technology, often negatively impacts getting the needed sleep (i.e. less than seven hours per night) for optimal functioning, including on school days. According to the Barna study (Barna & Kinnaman, 2018), many adolescents sleep with their phones, and check social media immediately before they go to sleep and immediately upon waking. More than half of 13- to 18-year olds admit to being on their screens four or more hours per day, with over 26% using their screen technology for more than eight hours (Barna & Kinnaman, 2018, p. 16). Cognitive scientists are still not sure how the high level of interactive screen time is ultimately changing the brain, especially in child and adolescent development. According to the *Journal of Individual Psychology* (as cited in Barna & Kinnaman, 2018, p. 17),

Generation Z's lower cognitive regions, which stimulate impulse, are constantly being activated by the bombardment of neurological arousal provided by text messages, Facebook updates, and video games. At the same time, the so-called Google culture of learning – finding answers to any question within seconds – continues to change the way Generation Z youth concentrate, write and reflect... Their capacity for linear thinking has been replaced by a new mode of thinking, in which they need to take in and dish out information in a fast, disjointed, overlapping manner.

The late Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple Corporation, when questioned about his own children's opinion of the new iPad in a 2010 New York Times column admitted his children had not used it, and their own use of computer technology was limited (and tightly controlled) in the home (Alter, 2017, p. 2). Alter (2017) also found similar trends among many of the technological leaders from companies such as Google, Facebook and other social media companies, asking the question, "Why are the world's greatest public technocrats also its greatest private technophobes?" (p. 2). This seems like a significant disconnect and should at least be concerning to consumers of social media and technological gadgets, such as smart phones, tablets and wearable technology. Greg Hochmuth (Instagram founding engineer) admitted he "was building an engine for addiction... There's always another hashtag to click on. Then it takes on its own life, like an organism, and people can become obsessive" (cited in Alter, 2017, p. 3). It is becoming increasingly clear smart technology (i.e. always on, wearable) is designed to be irresistible and addictive.

We will return to the topic of habits and the neuroscientific findings

worthy of consideration later. However, while some have argued smart, “always on” technology is making us more intelligent and able to connect with others (i.e. friends), many warn our phones are actually making us “shallow, dumb, and less competent in the real world” (Carr, 2011).

#### GENERATIONAL COHORT DISTINCTIVES AND THE SOCIAL COST OF TECHNOLOGY

Social media and always-on access to technology has led to what Dean (2010) calls “worshipping at the Church of benign ‘whatever-ism’ and becoming ‘Christian-ish’ as many younger Christians lack understanding in basic doctrine and biblical knowledge. Much of this change is being blamed on ‘always-on, ready access to technology, which not only affects biblical knowledge, but overall knowledge about many subjects older generations take for granted (Carr, 2011). It is suggested “smart technology” is making users anything but.

Jean Twenge (2017), in an article entitled, “Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?” notes for the first time in 24 years (in 2011) teen suicides passed the number of teen homicides, signaling a trend of special concern to teachers, youth pastors and others who work closely with developing adolescents. Notre Dame Professor Donna Freitas (2017) has outlined the additional social pressure on adolescents (and to an increasing degree adults) to conform to “always on, always connected” smart-technology (i.e. social media such as Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, Snapchat) through her national qualitative study of public and private college students, where she interviewed college-aged men and women about their use and the role of social media in their social lives. The psychological distress associated with smartphone use and social media is related to “FOMO” (fear of missing out). Many report anxiety creeps in as they fear what is happening online in social media without them, leading to greater loneliness and feelings of being excluded. The “always on” nature of social media connected to smartphones and “immediately available” technology is changing our ability to simply “be” in the world and in relationship to one another. Many college students interviewed reported they also became increasingly anxious to post (and add their own updates), but also felt increasingly anxious, waiting for affirmation, comments and “likes” that follow their status updates and Instagram pictures (Freitas, 2017). Posi-

tive posts portraying the poster in the most positive frame (i.e. vacation, beach, smiling, happy pictures) were preferred over negative posts, so the pressure is to appear happy and content at all costs for fear of banishment online or shaming, or even cyber-bullying. This was more pronounced among females than males, who seem less influenced by social media and more influenced with online gaming and more prone to social withdrawal.

These findings have significant application for those concerned about growing in grace with Christ in one's daily walk and avoiding mindless distractions. Psalm 46:10 reminds us to "Be still and know that I am God." This is becoming increasingly difficult in a world that cannot stand still, and feels pressured to be 'always on, and always happy' (or at least to appear that way to others).

### DISTRACTED BRAINS, ADDICTIONS AND COMPULSIONS

Volitional attention is within our control, though it is rarely intuitive or easy to control. According to philosopher Douglas Groothuis (2014 Interview with T. Reinke, 2017, p. 47), "We live in a very loquacious, noisy, distracted culture. It is difficult to serve God with our heart, soul, strength and mind when we are diverted and distracted and multi-tasking everything." This author rejects the notion addiction is a disease. Addictive behavioral patterns are rather the results of neurochemical and neuroplastic changes in the brain which lead to habits and automatic behaviors. Lewis (2015) describes the process whereby addiction stems from motivated repetition of the same thoughts and behaviors until they become habitual (p. 11). Addiction therefore is learned; however, it is learned more quickly and deeply due to a "narrowing tunnel of attention and attraction" (Lewis, 2015, p. 11). This process requires less and less "top-down" control (i.e. purposeful, goal-directed thought) versus "bottom-up" control (i.e. impulses such as hunger, thirst, sleep). As behaviors are repeated, they become automatic, much like brushing one's teeth or fastening one's seatbelt rarely require significant mental focus once the habit is established. This is true of behavior and invokes neuroplasticity (i.e. neurons that fire together, wire together). Good behavior leads to more good behavior, and takes less mental energy and willpower to support this behavior. Bad or sinful behaviors likewise often lead to a slippery slope of greater sinful behavior that becomes normalized over time. This aligns well with what neurosci-

entists understand about neuroplasticity and how habits are formed and subsequently changed for good or bad.

Neuroscientists have been examining the “psychology of technology” (esp. Dr. Larry Rosen) as well as what psychologists call the *interference dilemma* and *inattentional blindness* (Gazzaley & Rosen, 2016). Essentially, cognitive control (i.e. top-down thinking) is located primarily in the prefrontal cortex and though many (especially my students) believe they are able to multitask between several complex cognitive tasks (i.e. listen to a lecture while also reading for another class, and streaming Facebook on their laptops), in actuality we can only rapidly sequentially-task. Multitasking is a myth at best, and life-threatening and dangerous at worst. Pulitzer Prize winner Matt Richtel (2014) in *A Deadly Wandering: A Mystery, A Landmark Investigation, and the Astonishing Science of Attention in the Digital Age* tells the story of Reggie Shaw and his texting and driving crash causing the instant deaths of two men, both scientists, husbands and fathers. The case unfolds as Reggie is found responsible for texting and driving before laws were on the books outlawing such behaviors, while also examining the emerging (at that time) research of attention and the interference dilemma (Richtel, 2014). Reggie Shaw has since become a national spokesman against distracted driving.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC.gov) reported in 2011, 3,331 people were killed nationwide and 387,000 were injured in a motor vehicle crash caused by inattention, most often involving cell phone use. University of Utah Professor David Strayer is a national expert on technology and driving, and has estimated there is *an equal risk of injury or death* from using a phone (i.e. calls, texting) and having a blood alcohol above the legal limit of .08 (BAC); yet 69% of U.S. adults admit to driving and talking or texting. Remarkably, the risk was the same while using “hands free” phone technology, suggesting cognitive load and necessary mental resources causing *attentional blindness* slows reaction time to a level that makes the driver unsafe, similar to intoxication. Readers should consider the potential risk to everyone sharing the roads and the costs to society (not to mention our loved ones) from the interference dilemma and inattentional blindness.

Inattentional blindness can be observed in YouTube videos of people walking into fountains, into stationary objects such as walls and down stairwells, and even in front of moving cars and busses. According to *Scientific American* (2018), in a sample of 100 hospitals, in 2004 an estimated nationwide 559 people hurt themselves (requiring hospitalization) by walking into stationary objects while texting. By 2010, the number passed 1,500 and again doubled by 2015 to over 3,000. A study by Corey Basch and colleagues tracked pedestrians in Manhattan's most dangerous intersections and "discovered that nearly 30% focused their attention on their mobile device while crossing during the 'walk' signal, and 25% were looking at their phones while crossing during the 'don't walk' signal" (as cited in Gazzaley & Rosen, 2016, p. 129). More than half were also wearing headphones or ear buds or looking at their handheld device while attempting to cross traffic; these studies have been replicated nationwide (Gazzaley & Rosen, 2016).

Reward is also ubiquitous with addictive, habit-forming behaviors and an immediate dopamine hit in the brain, or the behavior would simply not be repeated or be readily extinguished over time. The reward in "smart technology" (i.e. always on) comes in the immediate dopamine hit that results from posting, updating a status or "liking" a post or picture. Yet, intuitively research shows an inverse relationship between screen activities (i.e. smartphones, screens, social media, games) and rates of anxiety and depression. "Despite the promise of connection, social media exacerbates loneliness and dislocation, and appears to increase rates of depression" (Barna & Kinnaman, 2018, p. 19). According to Barna Research (Barna & Kinnaman, 2018), 31% of Gen Z report looking at other people's posts make them feel bad about the way they look, 39% report looking at other people's posts make them feel bad about their own lack of an exciting life, and 33% disclosing being bullied on social media (p. 20). Online bullying is a significant social problem and is worthy of further exploration; however, beyond the focus of this paper. Not all technological instant-access and social media use is positive or necessarily negative, as many of my students would argue. I would suggest habits around smartphone (and other screen media) and social media use should give Christian leaders pause as we consider frequency and mode of use, individually and with those we serve. We should be deliberate and intentional with our use, like any other

potentially addictive substance or object.

MIT Professor Sherry Turkle (2011) has proposed in her appropriately titled book, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* that our readily distracted minds are leaving us offering “sips of connection” with one another in lieu of real connections with those closest to us. Relationships are becoming significantly (negatively) impacted by technology. Who among us has not witnessed a couple at a restaurant both engaged in their phones and effectively ignoring one another? Turkle (2011) highlights the negative impact on parenting relationships as parents are physically present, but mentally elsewhere. If this is the state of our relationships with family members and our closest social connections, how might this reflect our relationship with God?

Distraction also negatively affects one’s sense of time, as memories and ambitions or urges take on greater emotional pull. Lewis (2015, p. 203) notes, “the sense of time as a linear dimension, connecting now to later, is replaced by a sense of time as cyclical.” Perhaps some of us have experienced this alteration in time perception when completing (or hoping to complete) important tasks, being interrupted by email or other distractions, and wondering where the day went? Our perception of time can be significantly altered through distraction and mindless activities that deviate from our planning center (i.e. prefrontal cortex) as we mindlessly succumb to distractions and attentional blindness if we are not careful.

#### HABITS AND NEUROSCIENCE

Lewis (2015) notes repetition changes the brain’s physical structure, through a process called neuroplasticity. As neurons (i.e. thoughts, emotions, all behaviors) “fire together,” they increasingly “wire together” (Doidge, 2015). This creates a neurochemical feedback loop in the brain that cycles more rapidly and lessens creativity in favor of decreasing options (i.e. addictive behaviors have a singular focus, such as lovers in lust, alcoholics who crave a drink, or other substance users seeking the next hit). The neuroscientific community is more keenly aware brain plasticity is greater than previously estimated. The former model of brain plasticity was akin to a concrete sidewalk that though initially liquid became increasingly hard and immovable. Brain plasticity and neural “pruning” was thought to only occur in earlier developmental periods, especially up to age

two and again in adolescence as the teenage growth spurt ran its biological course. Once someone reached adulthood, we observed this previous rapid growth slowed and likely stopped as it was set in place and no longer plastic or malleable. We now know this is not the case, as evidenced by fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) and PET (positron emission tomography) scanning of adults of various ages (Doidge, 2015). This has also been evidenced in stroke patients or those who have experienced traumatic brain injuries, who have regained lost functions from parts of the brain previously lacking oxygen or having been physically damaged. Newer brain therapies have included light, sound, vibration and physical movement that engages the senses and brings about healing and reestablishing equilibrium without the negative side effects of surgery or medications.

“Addiction is a habit, which like many other habits, gets entrenched through a decrease in self-control” (Lewis, 2015, p. 13). Brain circuits become aligned to seeking a goal, and addictive habits often seek a singular purpose to satisfy a perceived desire, such as alcohol, drugs, porn/sex, eating junk food, or even engaging technology. Once the habitual behavioral process has stimulated addictive patterns, the appearance of choice lessens and seems more difficult to control or change.

The motivational core of the brain includes the striatum, orbito-frontal cortex, and the amygdala, leading to feelings of desire and anxiety when their perceived needs are not met (Lombard, 2017). The dorsolateral prefrontal cortex engages this motivational core with long-term goals and the perception of meaning. When maladaptive (including sinful) habits become automatic (i.e. addictive behaviors), desire begins to drive behavior in “redundant circles, independent of insight, perspective, and higher-order goals. Desire roars with immediacy, craving fulfillment, but its natural partners are judgement and direction, planning and perspective” (Lewis, 2015, p. 201). This is not a good recipe for building a sanctified or “set apart” lifestyle seeking maturity.

## CONCLUSION

Reinke (2017) acknowledges we often engage in unhealthy (digital) addictive behaviors because we fail to see the consequences, and often use these distractions as avoidance (i.e. work, relationships with people, and God). Haden (2018) suggests that without actively having significant purposeful time set aside to accomplish specific tasks (i.e. block out time), distractions will creep in and sap productivity and focus. Newport (2017) likewise suggests blocking out time for specific tasks to ensure important work is completed. This necessarily includes turning off instant notifications and other superfluous media that detracts from singularly focusing on one specific task at hand.

Given the goal of sanctification and Christian maturity proposed here, we might encourage greater relationship integrity and purposeful connections apart from social media. My Facebook friends are not the same as my true friends, those whom I “do life with” and share deeper conversations, struggles and celebrate victories. Real life is not virtual life online, though some might argue this is also an untapped resource for engaging the younger generation (i.e. B. Webb thesis on E-Church and gamification in 2017, a topic beyond our scope here).

The opportunity to reverse the anxiety and depression observed, especially among Gen Z and Millennials through genuine relationships is promising. The Barna Report on Gen Z (Barna & Kinnaman, 2018) also concluded Gen Z has a significantly higher level of ignorance about the Bible and basic theological doctrine. The emptiness, anxiety and depression experienced by many of our younger Gen Z cohort provides an opportunity to lead them to Christ through genuine, personal relationships.

Instant-on, always accessible technology is here to stay. How we integrate technology and screens into our own lives and ministry is something each of us will have to balance. Adopting older pedagogical methods of lecture (i.e. classroom teaching, preaching) no longer reach younger generations who are easily distracted (and distractible) and have shorter attention spans. I am not proposing seven-minute “nugget-sized” sermonettes, integrating power points with moving graphics, or even flashy videos into our teaching to keep participants entertained, but we might need to strike

a balance as we seek to present Christ's eternal message of salvation to a rapidly-changing culture that "can't sit still."

Interested readers are also referred to "The Challenge of Sabbath and the Rest of God" (Shaw, 2017, pp. 71-79), published in the *Journal of Grace Theology* (Vol. 4, No. 1). In this article, readers are encouraged to consider the role and purpose of Sabbath rest, whether literal or practical as a gift of God to find rest and renewal. It is argued the need for Sabbath is as great now as ever. The reader can determine what this would look like as one considers "always on" technology and the ubiquity of social media. Some have argued a technological Sabbath (i.e. day of turning off all devices) can be a useful method for renewing one's perspective (Reinke, 2017).

Willard (1998) affirms "though costly, discipleship once had a very clear, straight-forward meaning. The mechanics are not the same today. We cannot literally be with him in the same way as his first disciples could. But the priorities and intentions – the heart or inner attitudes – disciples are forever the same" (p. 261). This process of becoming disciples or being sanctified (i.e. set apart) takes effort, deliberation, and focus.

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QUENTIN SCHULTZE'S CONTRIBUTION TO  
COMMUNICATION: A SAGE WHO INFORMS,  
CHALLENGES & ENCOURAGES

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ABSTRACT

The exploration of Quentin Schultze's communication scholarship and the extension of the tenets of communication accommodation theory provide Christians with a fresh perspective on how to evaluate modes of communication with biblical truth and positively touch the lives of others through interpersonal relationships, public speaking, and use of technology. Acknowledging Schultze's contribution to communication and seeing it through the lens of communication accommodation theory allows for the recognition of a sage who informs, challenges and encourages Christians in their conversations. With the power of the Holy Spirit, Christians need not ". . . sound like the rest of the world, hanging out our dirty rhetoric" (Schultze, 2000, p. 158) for others to hear and see. Communication accommodation theory is the process of reducing or magnifying communicative differences in interactions (Giles & Soliz, 2015) and can be combined with Schultze's scholarship to embolden Christians to communicate conscientiously and respond, not react, in love.

*Keywords:* Quentin Schultze, communication accommodation theory, interpersonal communication, public speaking, communication technology.

INTRODUCTION

GQ Magazine lit up social media in the latter part of April 2018, and it was not because of edgy men's fashion advice. The kerfuffle originated from the editors of GQ who put the Bible on a list of 21 classic books not to read. USA TODAY noted how GQ's article incurred the ire of Christians

across the country (Diebel, 2018). GQ's article not only made the news, but it also created conversations. The article about what books to avoid and USA TODAY's response not only illustrates how a secular magazine views the Bible as just another book, but it also provides a snapshot of the pluralism in the United States. Knowing how to communicate in a meaningful way with those with whom we come into contact takes more than tact. The exploration of Quentin Schultze's communication scholarship and the extension of the tenets of communication accommodation theory provide Christians with a fresh perspective on how to evaluate modes of communication with biblical truth and positively touch the lives of others through interpersonal relationships, public speaking, and use of technology.

Communication technology makes it easy to connect with family, friends, coworkers and new acquaintances. In addition to talking face-to-face and speaking to audiences, new communication technology provides opportunities to correspond with people from across the globe. With an abundance of communication media, it has never been more important to communicate purposefully. Quentin Schultze is an ideal communication scholar to analyze because he has written extensively on interpersonal communication, public speaking, and how new communication technologies are changing the way people communicate. While the media of communication have expanded, Schultze posits the most important fundamentals of communication has not changed.

Schultze points to theologians who have used the wisdom of the Bible to develop insights about human interaction. As Christians, communication is not intended to be self-serving; it has a higher purpose of glorifying God. The foundational attitudes for communication of gratitude, servant speaking, and listening have provided a biblically based approach for Schultze to interpersonal communication, public speaking, and the use of technology. [Quentinschultze.com](http://Quentinschultze.com) notes that Schultze's academic résumé is almost 100 pages long. Born in 1952, Schultze continues to write and speak regularly. In 2015, he stepped down as the Arthur H. DeKruyter Chair and Professor of Communication at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Schultze's focus on how the Bible and theology frame great communication has resulted in communication textbooks for Christian colleges, universities, and churches. Seven books and more than 100 articles for general-interest periodicals demonstrates how Schultze provides a wealth of scholarship

from a biblical perspective. His thought-provoking Christian contribution to the field of communication is immense. Schultze agrees with St. Augustine that all truth is God's truth.

This paper begins with a brief introduction of Schultze's philosophical views of communication regarding love for God, God's love for humanity, and biblical expressions of love towards others. This foundation and groundwork offer insight to Schultze's perspective on the opportunity and responsibility of Christian communication.

### LOVE FOR GOD

One of Schultze's most significant contribution to communication comes from his faith-filled perspective and love for God. Schultze (2000) explains when we communicate faithfully, it can be a heavenly experience here on earth. He describes this divine experience with the ancient Hebrew word "shalom." Schultze writes, "A community of shalom is a responsible community in which sinful people obey and are reconciled in joyful peace with God and each other, a community in which justice and peace are embraced" (2000, p. 26). Picture the peaceful condition of the world when God created the Garden of Eden. Before the fall and sin corrupted communication, Adam and Eve lived in the garden and communed with God. Schultze recognizes the role of communication in humankind's connection with God. How God communicates today is different from the Garden of Eden, yet dialogue remains a gift from God allowing for a relationship with him and others.

Schultze illustrates how communication comes from God when he wrote in memory of communication scholar James W. Carey. Schultze knew Carey from his time at the University of Illinois. Schultze stated, "Communication is fundamentally, although not exclusively, a means for human beings to imitate and thereby engage vicariously in the original, sacramental work of their creator by giving order to the formless void of chaos" (2007a, p. 3). Schultze recognizes with the help of the Holy Spirit the gift of communication can be used responsibly in a fallen world (Schultze & Badzinski, 2015).

## GOD'S LOVE FOR HUMANITY

The most significant example of God's love for humankind is his son, Jesus Christ. John 3:16 communicates this love, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Schulze, recognizing the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as being necessary because sin separates humankind from God, identified this concern with the media's view of sin. Schultze wrote, "The concept of sin, as the religious contextualization of evil, has virtually disappeared from the popular media. It took the fall of a hell-fire-and-brimstone preacher from Louisiana even to get the word 'sin' on the nightly news. Day in and day out, the mass media act as if sin simply does not exist" (1993, pp. 233-234).

Schultze sees the media's promotion of a self-satisfying position on sin as being detrimental to fallen people recognizing their depravity which predictably impacts communication. Because of God's love for humanity, Jesus paid the ultimate price for the sins of all people; juxtapose this picture of complete surrender and love with an unsettling reality of Christian communicators. Schultze explains, "Believers look and sound like the rest of the world, hanging out our dirty rhetoric for the world to see and hear" (2000, p. 158). Because of God's love and the power of the Holy Spirit, there is no excuse for believers' communication looking like the degrading communication of non-believers. As Christian communicators, our aim must be high to serve God and others.

## EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE TOWARDS OTHERS

Schultze notes, "We are created to serve others with all our God-given gifts. Therefore, we are called to be responsible, courageous speakers who use the gift of speech to serve God and neighbor – to be servant speakers"(2006, p. 11). The fruits of the Spirit, love, gentleness, self-control, and patience, can guide Christian communicators in their actions. Schultze shares, "These characteristics can be feigned in a fallen world, but when they truly exist in the heart of a communicator, they suggest that God has breathed grace into his or her life" (2000, p. 95).

Schultze shares, “Democratic life is founded on open dialogue, including dialogue animated by people’s deepest convictions – their faith commitments” (Muehlhoff & Langer, 2017, p. ix). Responsible people must learn the skills to navigate tough conversational topics; for example, the issue created by the editors of GQ who put the Bible on a list of 21 classic books not to read (Diebel, 2018). Christians must approach such conversations as opportunities to share truth and love.

Schultze notes Augustine’s decision to persuade for Jesus. Schultze states, “What Augustine did is exactly what we are called to do, and what this book [*Winsome Persuasion: Christian Influence in a Post-Christian World*] helps us to do: use the gift of language to be faithful agents for truth and justice in a broken but still redeemable world” (Muehlhoff & Langer, p. xii). Schultze encourages communicators to develop their gifts to be of service to others; however, following the example of Jesus is critical and allows God to use our gifts in ways unimaginable to us (Schultze, 2000).

Schultze writes, “By scientifically reducing human communication to a mechanical process of sending and receiving messages, scholars sometimes rob it of its creativity and spiritual mystery” (2000, p. 15). Recognizing communication is a gift from God allows Schultze to explore communications creativity with spiritual mystery. Schultze states, “Among the reasons for our poor communication are the ambiguity of symbols, the self-defeating relativism of postmodernism, our failure to develop our giftedness, and the trade-offs between space and time” (p. 72). Our communication as humans may be damaged, but hope is not lost. With a better understanding of how Schultze frames his approach to communication as a love of God, God’s love for humanity, and as an expression of love towards others we are ready to explore communication theory in general.

Schultze (2000) explains there are two fundamental types of communication theories, transmission theories and cultural theories. Also, communication theories serve two primary functions; first they are “descriptive maps of human communication” (p. 47), and second, theories are “prescriptive maps for communication” (p. 47). Communication theories not only help us understand communication but also serve as a helpful guide explaining how to communicate. The cultural view of communication is described as “a participatory ritual in and through which we create, maintain, and change culture” (Schultze, p. 55). The interdependence of com-

munication and community is colligated in a cultural view. Schultze explains, “From a Christian perspective, communication enables us to keep the faith by sharing it with each other creatively in community” (p. 56). There is a danger to the cultural views of theology, however, and that is relativism. For Schultze, communication models help us “. . . better understand God, others, creation, and ourselves, but any map of communication can lead us astray if we fail to test it, modify it, and hold it up to the light of God’s Word” (p. 57). For this paper, the cultural communication accommodation theory will be used to examine Schultze’s communication scholarship helping to guide our communication. We will begin with an exploration of communication accommodation theory.

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF COMMUNICATION ACCOMMODATION THEORY

Howard Giles and Jordan Soliz provide a heuristic theory of why we adjust our communication to others. Communication accommodation theory is the process of reducing or magnifying communicative differences in interactions (Giles & Soliz, 2015). According to Giles and Soliz, “Accommodation is considered one of the main routes to reducing social or relational distance as it enhances interpersonal similarities and thereby reduces uncertainties about the other” (p. 163). Littlejohn and Foss (2011) state the communication accommodation theory is a prominent behavioral theory exploring convergence and divergence as mutual or non-mutual. Accommodation may at times be an unconscious act; however, to examine Schultze’s communication scholarship, the focus will be on conscious behaviors. Littlejohn and Foss explain, “Accommodation researchers have found that accommodation can be important in communication. It can lead to identification and bonding or disapproval and distancing” (p. 184).

As Christians, we have not only the ability but the responsibility to communicate in a way that brings honor and glory to God. Communication accommodation theory initially focused on practical applications to interpersonal relationships. In more recent years, communication accommodation theory has been used for developed relationships and online interactions (Giles & Soliz, 2015; Chang, 2014). “Communication accommodation theory operates on the assumption that managing accommodative practice and dilemmas per se, and especially when one’s partner is perceived to

veer in non-accommodative directions, might be an important ingredient in long-term relational satisfaction-dissatisfaction" (Giles & Soliz, 2015, p. 169).

Chuang (2014), in her dissertational research, used communication accommodation theory to explore intercultural online exchanges theorizing communication is motivated and "accommodative strategies are goal oriented and used to understand and be understood, maintain face and relationships, direct flow of conversation, and maintain interpersonal control" (p. 48). According to communication accommodation theory, personal attitudes influence communicative behavior. Farzadnia and Giles (2015) state communication accommodation theory "contends that communicators accommodate those they admire, like, respect, and trust and, in this way, social and communicative differences are attenuated" (p. 19). A communicator's attitude toward the other could potentially determine accommodativeness or non-accommodativeness.

Littlejohn and Foss (2011) give prominence to the effort of convergence which could result in a loss of identity. Loss of identity is a crucial factor when reviewing Schultze's work through the lens of communication accommodation theory. There are times when as a Christian communicator, the effort of convergence is desirable; however, to stay faithful to biblical truths, divergence may be needed in certain circumstances to draw attention to or exaggerate differences.

### QUENTIN SCHULTZE'S CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNICATION SCHOLARSHIP

Acknowledging Schultze's contribution to communication through the lens of communication accommodation theory allows us to recognize a sage who informs, challenges and encourages Christians in their communication. A preview of Schultze's contribution to communication scholarship through the lens of communication accommodation theory provides an extension of communication understanding from a theological perspective. The pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Heraclitus is credited with saying, "You cannot step into the same river twice, for other waters are continually flowing on." Heraclitus illuminates the fundamental essence of change, which has applications to all communication. Each communicative act is different because of the context, time, and people involved. Depending

on the situation, the Christian communicator must adequately accommodate keeping in mind biblical truths. Because of Schultze's communication foundation, which includes a love for God, an understanding of God's love for humanity, and the biblical expressions of love towards others, Schultze's scholarship serves as a guide to help Christian communicators accommodate appropriately.

### *Schultze Addresses Religious Freedom and Protecting the Gospel*

Schultze has written extensively providing a historical perspective about the founding of the United States of America while highlighting the tension between mass media and religion. As Christians living in the United States, this context is essential. The American experience offers a guarantee of religious rights and the right to religious practice. Schultze explains, "Freedom of religion was built into the Bill of Rights because religion was the most likely reason for someone to be excluded from public life in early America" (2003, p. 311). Religion has provided a moral guide for democracy, and religious customs influenced mass communication. While some Christian may feel their views are unwelcome in today's society, recognizing how Christian beliefs have influenced media may provide an element of confidence for Christians. Schultze states, "In far more oblique ways the same mass media, even the most seemingly secular and purely amusing ones, both shaped and reflected religious life in the nation" (2003, p. 311). Recognizing the influence of the media is essential for Christian communicators considering communication accommodation theory. Acclimating communication styles which are displayed via mass media may be dangerous. In addition to probing personal communication, critically analyzing the communication witnessed from mass media is essential.

As noted at the beginning of this paper, GQ magazine published an article discrediting the Bible which stirred up controversy. Divergent views on religious matters are not new in our country. Democracy requires a sincere approach to public communication from both media and churches. Schultze explains, "The tension between secular and religious culture in the United States is a major part of the history of the nation and a crucial aspect of the story of mass communication" (2003, p. 330).

In the first chapter of *Understanding Evangelical Media: The Changing Face of Christian Communication*, Schultze and Woods (2008) explore the growing ability of evangelicals to be media makers.

### *Schultze Addresses Communication Technologies*

Churches and parachurch groups can sidestep media gatekeepers by using communication technologies like websites, blogs, YouTube and social media. The challenge comes with finding a balance between tribal communities of discourse and communication and awareness of mainstream media. Schulze and Woods write, "We need both interpersonal and mass media to help us together make sense of the world we inhabit" (2008, p. 32). Schulze helps us recognize the ongoing struggle of Christian communicators to have their voices heard.

The use of communication technologies provides an example of where communication accommodation theory may help guide behavior. Vatamanescu and Pana (2010) found that communication accommodation theory could be utilized in virtual communities. Vatamanescu and Pana state, "Even though the theory [communication accommodation] was initially meant to be an interpretation key of the speech particularities, nowadays its relevance can be highlighted at multiple levels of the communication and interaction process – it may account for discovering how people perceive, assume and express their identity in a boundless community" (p. 287). With Giles and Soliz (2015) identifying how accommodation can reduce uncertainties about the other and Vatamanescu and Pana's study of virtual communities, Christians can employ tenets of communication accommodation theory for the development and exchange of online messages using Schultze's communication foundation.

If Christians are using communication technologies like websites, blogs, YouTube and social media to sidestep media gatekeepers and respond to GQ's article, meaningful convergent or divergent messages could be constructed to express similarities or differences. With Schultze's communication foundation, which includes a love for God, an understanding of God's love for humanity, and the biblical expressions of respect towards others, Christians can generate thought-provoking responses. Franklin Graham (2018) used a Facebook post to magnify differences with GQ editors. Graham posted, "There's nothing more powerful, and there's nothing more

needed by mankind than the Word of God. Maybe the GQ editors need to read it, again. The subject of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is Jesus Christ. And one day soon, every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord.” More than 10,000 Facebook users shared Graham’s post continuing the conversation or distributing the information about the GQ article.

Explaining how Americans use the Internet for religious purposes, Schultze explores different groups and recognizes how Christians evaluate the Internet through the lenses of theological assumptions. Schultze states, “Evangelical discourse about the Internet should discern how best to serve specific groups in particular parts of the world – a process scholars call ‘glocalization’” (Schultze & Woods, 2008, p. 148). When used wisely, communication technology can promote local communities of discourse with worship and biblical teaching. Communication technologies provide an abundant opportunity to reach others with the gospel; however, Schultze cautions communication technology should not be recognized a silver bullet for reaching the lost with the Good News. Schultze made the case in 1992 that electronic media are most suited to pre-evangelism. Speaking on televangelism, Schultze said, “Sooner or later we have to admit that television alone is hardly adequate for truly successful evangelism. As a missionary medium, TV needs a broad theology that locates the truth in a web of different media, including congregational life. The Holy Spirit works principally through the flesh, where relationships create the context of genuine love and authentic witness” (1992, p. 5).

Because of the progress of electronic media, a case can be made that Schultze’s point of the logical place of image-based electronics, the printed word, and spoken dialogue has been blurred within missiology and ecclesiology. Considering communication accommodation theory, Christians can intentionally serve others by striving to reduce uncertainties and promote similarities, when appropriate, with websites, blogs, YouTube and social media to help others worship God and grow from gaining knowledge of God. Today’s culture and use of communication technology have changed during the last 30 years allowing for unprecedented interaction via technology. The need to be accurate in communication will be highlighted next. Media may be advancing. However, one quality of communication which has not changed is the need to be correct in what is communicated. Schul-

tze addresses accuracy and the counterintuitive view that technology may be hindering efforts to communicate truthfully.

### *Schultze Addresses Accuracy*

Schultze and Bytwerk (2012) address a growing concern of how technology has influenced the culture of communication: the lack of vetting in cyberspace by traditional gatekeepers. When accuracy is in question, the impact of a message is diminished. By tracing the origin and spread of a misattributed quote to Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels, Schultze and Bytwerk expose how attributed unknown quotes to well-known individuals are causing the online spread of false information. Schultze and Bytwerk state, "Coupled with the growth of the Internet, the declining resources available to libraries, newspapers, standard publishing companies, and even university presses could result in increased, and increasingly believed, nonsense" (2012, p. 230). Schultze and Bytwerk make a strong case for accuracy; public discourse may come into question if arguments come from unsubstantiated information. Christians need to check the accuracy of information communicated. Whether the desire is to use accommodation for bonding or noting disapproval, the sharing of accurate information is essential.

### SCHULTZE ON PERSONAL SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

Schultze said, "The Holy Spirit works principally through the flesh, where relationships create the context of genuine love and authentic witness" (1992, p. 5). A brief analysis of Schultze's scholarship with interpersonal communication, public speaking and the use of technology follows. Technology may remove the "flesh" as Schultze notes; however, communication technology does provide options for real connections with others.

### *Schultze's contribution to interpersonal communication*

The most critical attitude which shapes our interpersonal communication is gratitude (Schultze & Badzinski, 2015). Schultze and Badzinski share, "Great interpersonal relationships, including friendships, result from a fascinating combination of God's grace and our efforts. If they were just a product of human work, we would all be stressed out. But the Spirit

is walking alongside us, piquing our interest in particular people, cautioning us against ignoring or smothering others, inviting us to walk ahead in the knowledge that God wants the best for each one of us” (2015, p. 126). What if the attitude of gratitude was central to our communication? One precept of communication accommodation theory is the process of reducing or magnifying communicative differences in interactions (Giles & Soliz, 2015). A grateful heart for the people in our lives provides the proper foundation for our communication. Even when differences need to be acknowledged, doing so with gratitude fundamentally changes the framing of a conversation.

Schultze points to theologians who have used the wisdom of the Bible to develop insights about human interaction. Schultze’s foundational attitudes for communication of gratitude, servant speaking, and listening have provided a biblically based approach to interpersonal communication. Schultze and Badzinski explain, “Heartfelt gratitude is the best way to begin communication with others. This includes gratitude for the gift giver (God), for those we communicate with, and for the gift of communication that equips us to relate to others” (2015, p. 2).

Schultze reminds us, “As a form of action, human communication reflects our God-given freedom. We decide what, when, why, and with whom to communicate” (2000, p. 137). Considering communication accommodation theory, as communicators we decide what efforts will be made to reduce the distance between us and others. Giles and Soliz share, “Accommodation is considered one of the main routes to reducing social or relational distance as it enhances interpersonal similarities and thereby reduces uncertainties about the other” (2015, p. 163). Communication accommodation theory provides guidance when considering if our rhetoric is intended to reduce social or relational distances; or, if needed to magnify distances drawing attention to biblical truths. Giles and Soliz (2015) explain that convergence is applicable during an extensive gamut of communicative dimensions. Consider a conversation with a colleague in a professional working environment. You may choose to converge by managing the discourse and selecting topics of interest to your colleague. The value connotation is for her or him to feel included and comfortable. Adversely, a person may share inappropriate jokes or off-color comments and non-accommodativeness may be used to create distance from the questionable

comments. Giles and Soliz suggest divergence can be triggered by dislike and include “negative and even derogatory responses” (p. 165). As Christians, we learn from Schultze that in both types of accommodation, convergence and divergence, respect for others is critical. We may disagree with the communication of another, but viewing all people as being created in the image of God and loved by God is essential. Next, we will look at what can be gained from Schultze's scholarship on public speaking through the lens of communication accommodation theory.

*Schultze's contribution to public speaking.*

Public discourse is a gift from God and a responsibility allowing speakers to serve their neighbors (Schultze, 2006). Schultze stated, “For the sake of the church and society, we should reclaim Augustine's vision of rhetoric, which is fitting for servants of God in a needy world” (p. 10). Our world is in desperate need of speakers who communicate with honesty, integrity, and civility. In an excerpt from his published book, *Communicate Like a True Leader: 30 Days of Life-Changing Wisdom* posted on his blog Schultze (2017b) shares the embarrassing situation of a friend who showed up to speak at a Toastmaster's meeting. Upon arriving the friend learned it was not a Toastmasters meeting but a Postmasters meeting, postmasters who manage local post offices. Schultze's friend came clean and shared he was thoroughly unprepared for the Postmaster's meeting. Schultze writes, “My friend's message was simple but profound: we are all first and foremost human beings, not workers. We share a common humanity. We experience fear as well as hope. Then he thanked the postmasters for the opportunity to share his thoughts and feelings. He received a long, standing ovation. The wounded storyteller had connected with the wounded postmasters” (2017b, para 5).

The story of Schultze's friend provides an opportunity to extend communication accommodation theory beyond its typical use of interpersonal relationships and ponder how it might be applied to public speaking situations. A case could be made that accommodation was used towards the Postmasters leading to identification and bonding. Schultze explains, “Not all topics, illustrations, gestures, and vocal styles fit all audiences” (2006, p. 67). As Christian public speakers, an effort must be made to accommodate our remarks to fit the situation, audience, and event. To reach an au-

dience, Schultze states, “Good speeches are orally and visually expressive performances by which a speaker serves an audience with mind, heart, and body” (p. 63). The general area of public speaking scholarship misses an essential emphasis on purpose and ethics. According to Schultze, “This bias is unfortunate because Christians historically contributed some of the most important insights on public speaking. Early Christians discerningly adapted speech practices from the ancient Greeks, who founded rhetoric (the art of persuasion)” (p. 9). Using elements of communication accommodation theory with Schultze’s suggestions can help guide speakers to reach a goal of giving a good speech, not to draw praise for herself or himself, but to responsibly serve the audience making the most of a speaking opportunity.

*Schultze’s contribution to communication technology use.*

Schultze shares reservations on a propensity to accept without question new communication technologies. New does not equal better. Using communication technology responsibly is at the core of Schultze’s plea (Schultze, 2002). Schultze uses his theological background and experience as a college professor to bring a fresh perspective on technology in the classroom. Education has changed with the Internet and how class lectures utilize tools like PowerPoint presentations. It is not uncommon for students in a higher education classroom to take polls using their phones to prompt an in-class discussion. Schultze focuses his thoughts on how Christian educators can appropriately use classroom technology by 1) “rediscovering biblical and theological wisdom about human communication,” and 2) “applying this wisdom discerningly to new educational technologies” (2004, p. 9).

A recurring theme in Schultze’s work is that communication technologies have outpaced our understanding of first, how to use them and second, how to use communication technology ethically. The ethical use of technology in the classroom involves wisdom. A Christian tradition shows an emphasis on listening over transmitting. Christian educators must practice listening well so he or she can love God and others. Schultze warns, “If educators are not careful, technological excesses can make them less neighborly to learners and other staff” (2004, p. 12). These words of wisdom are applicable beyond educators; a general focus can be on the transition of

information. Schultze challenges people to listen and understand others as distinct individuals (2004).

Consideration of biblical truths is urged adapting with character rather than adopting communication technologies. Schultze's theme with media use is stewardship. Schultze writes, "At some level maybe we all are binge users of media who don't ask the tough questions about stewardly use of our time and talent" (2017a, p. 91). Schultze reminds us "When we look at our screens we are looking at ourselves as if through a mirror." (2017a, p. 96). Schultze has also written extensively about technology within worship. Schultze suggests that "to do technology and worship well, you have to fit the technology to the worship rather than the worship to the technology" (Redman, 2012, p. 97). Correlations can be made between Schultze's urging adaption with character to communication technologies as opposed to blindly adopting new technology. With communication accommodation theory in mind, responding to others with care and integrity as Schultze proposes as a contrast to quickly reacting provides Christians with communication strategies that have great potential to glorify God.

#### SCHULTZE'S FILLS COMMUNICATION SCHOLARSHIP VOID

The published work of Schultze supports his Christian belief is the core of his being. Schultze provides an encouraging reminder that Christian communicators are never alone because of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit can help with communicating gratitude to God which in turn can lead to communicating appreciation with others (Schultze & Badzinski, 2015). "Communication is a means for forming relationships that honor God and demonstrate how we serve one another. Interpersonal communication, in particular, is faithfully using the gift of communication to foster shared understanding for life-giving relationships, especially friendships" (Schultze & Badzinski, 2015, p. 23).

Schultze's most significant contribution to communication comes from his faith-filled perspective, filling a void in communication scholarship. Schultze (2000) explains that when we communicate faithfully it can be a heavenly experience here on earth. He describes this divine experience with the ancient Hebrew word "shalom." Schultze writes, "A community of shalom is a responsible community in which sinful people obey and are reconciled in joyful peace with God and each other, a community in

which justice and peace are embraced” (2000, p. 26). How can we get to a community of shalom? Schultze suggests it starts with God’s gift of communication and our desire to co-create, with God, a culture that embraces and celebrates shalom. Proverbs 16:7 states, “When a man’s ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.” Schultze states, “In biblical peace, we enjoy our relationships even if we don’t always appreciate every aspect of them. . . The goal of faithful interpersonal communication is not just reducing conflict but building relationships filled with justice and peace so that each of us may flourish with God, others, and ourselves” (Schultze & Badzinski, 2015, p. 99).

Schultze (2000) explains four types of relationships: with God; with our neighbor; with the created world; and with ourselves (2000, p. 22). Schultze notes there has been a religious resurgence around the globe which has contributed to a debunking, of sorts, of secularization theory. According to Schultze, this shift has resulted in an interest “in the religious aspects and origins of communication studies” (2007b, p. 81). It is the ancient rhetoricians, Schultze explains, who have addressed the intersections of epistemology, ontology, and ethics. Augustine’s work is essential to our understanding of faith and communication which influenced Western theological and rhetorical thought. Viewing Schultze’s communication scholarship through the lens of communication accommodation theory provides another avenue for those interested in a biblical approach to communication.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATION

This paper began with reference to the April 2018 GQ Magazine article which put the Bible on a list of 21 classic books not to read. GQ’s article not only made the news, but it also created the opportunity for conversations. Schultze encourages Christians to use their God-given gift to communicate with the aim of bringing honor to God. We each have a sphere of influence; are we using our communication gifts to glorify God? Communication accommodation theory provides a new perspective to consider communicative behaviors. As Christian communicators, will we take the advice of Schultze and have radical action? Schultze states, “According to the cultural view of human communication, people commune dynamically, creatively, and even unpredictably” (2000, p. 137). By taking the step

of considering communication accommodation theory, Christian can think first if the goal of their communication is convergence or divergence and why. The published work of Schultze points to the vital role faith plays in his life. Through the years, Schultze has been a communication sage who has informed and challenged the way Christians communicate interpersonally, speak publicly and use communication technology.

Giles and Soliz (2015) note accommodation and non-accommodations strategies that are consciously invoked has yet to be extensively studied. These less chartered waters are new and exciting ground for communication accommodation theory. Schultze gives words of encouragement that as Christians we can be part of the democratic discourse with kindness and respect (Muehlhoff & Langer, 2017). Meaningful Christian communication is achievable with the exploration of Schultze's communication scholarship and the extension of the tenets of communication accommodation theory. The powerful combination provides Christians with a fresh perspective on how to evaluate modes of communication with biblical truth and positively touch the lives of others through interpersonal relationships, public speaking, and use of technology. Schultze frames his approach to communication as a love of God, God's love for humanity, and as an expression of love towards others as the Bible teaches. 1 John 4:7-13 states:

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way, the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another. No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us. This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us, that he has given us of his Spirit.

Christian faith provides Schultze with rich examples helping communicators be virtuous, communicating love as demonstrated by God. Schultze writes, "As [the Apostle] Paul puts it, servant speakers are part of the message. Their inner character speaks intentionally and unintentionally. They become what Paul calls God's 'letters,' with their 'text' written in their hearts and communicated through their character as well as their actions" (2006, p. 96). Schultze in his decades of published communication schol-

arship and Christian worldview provides others with sincere approaches to communication that glorifies God. As Christians, we can view Schultze's work through the lens of communication accommodation theory and consider how we can with intention accommodate our communication to bring honor to God and others.

By viewing Schultze's communication scholarship through the lens of communication accommodation theory, insights for guiding our communication can be developed. With the power of the Holy Spirit, Christians need not ". . . sound like the rest of the world, hanging out our dirty rhetoric" (Schultze, 2000, p. 158) for others to hear and see. Communication accommodation theory is the process of reducing or magnifying communicative differences in interactions (Giles & Soliz, 2015) and can be combined with Schultze's scholarship to embolden Christians to communicate conscientiously, to accommodate and respond, not react, in love.

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CHURCH DISCIPLINE: A NEGLECTED FORMATIVE  
RESOURCE FOR SHAPING DISCIPLES

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ABSTRACT

Congregational church discipline is at the same time one of the most neglected but vital resources Christ has given to his church. Properly taught, understood, and practiced, church discipline as authorized by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-20 is a most helpful tool in the disciple-making process. Placed in a wider context, one will appreciate church discipline's practice not as an expression of judgmentalism but of love; as an expression of God's love for his people and of our love for him and one another. Further, the practice of church discipline carries great formative power for the one so disciplined and for the church that exercises the rule of Christ when it becomes necessary.

Warrant is always provided by the Scriptures, and the written Word provides many examples of discipline in both the Old and New Testaments. The faithful and effective communication of this truth can and will convince a specific congregation of the practice's value both to the church and any individual so disciplined.

INTRODUCTION

Anecdotally, at least, the subject of congregational church discipline conjures many if not most of those behaviors we identify as among the worst tendencies in historically conservative churches of both fundamentalist and evangelical orientation. A sample of the objections raised to its use include judgmentalism, public invasions of privacy and the perceived destruction of one's reputation as the result, "stone-casting," shunning, ex-

clusion, ineffectiveness, and the repudiation of Christ and his church as the result of one's treatment by his people. And yet, the practice of the so-called rule of Christ is clearly commanded by no less than Jesus himself (Matthew 18:15-20). Despite this, congregational church discipline seems to be rarely practiced.

Is it possible that Jesus' command and the church's praxis can be brought into closer alignment as they relate to the practice of congregational church discipline? In terms of the apparent impasse, is there a way forward for the church? The writer will argue affirmatively. The conclusion he will offer in this paper is *congregational church discipline, when practiced according to biblically faithful procedures and undertaken with a biblically faithful attitude to accomplish biblically faithful purposes, is an effective means of spiritual formation for both an errant Christian and an entire local community of believers.*

The writer will demonstrate this conclusion based on two lines of argumentation. First, since the written Word of God always provides the warrant for the church's faith and practice, the exercise of congregational church discipline will be validated by those individual biblical texts which prescribe the action as well as the wider theological context which informs those texts. In so doing, the writer will confine his discussion to seven primary passages. Three of these passages establish the broader context of discipline and four describe the practice itself. As the result, it will be offered that discipline is best understood as a function of both divine and human love. It will also become evident discipline is primarily intended by God to be formative rather than punitive in nature. In the estimation of this writer, such an understanding will more positively reframe the entire discussion concerning discipline.

Second, the writer will draw on quantitative results derived from his recently completed Doctor of Ministry degree which studied the response of one specific congregation to a series of seven expository sermons examining facets of church discipline.<sup>1</sup> The study, which will be further described

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<sup>1</sup>All following references to the study may be accessed by way of the actual project. Bruce A. Sabados, "The Effectiveness of Expository Preaching: Persuading a Congregation to Practice Church Discipline as an Act of Faith and Obedience to Christ's Word," (DMin project, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2016).

below, indicates followers of Jesus can be persuaded to act in a more biblically faithful manner through the expository preaching of the Word of God despite the influence of more popular negative perceptions relating to the practice of discipline. In short, faithfully proclaiming the Word of God can and will “move the needle” in terms of the hearers’ response.

### THE MINISTRY PROJECT DESCRIBED

John Calvin expresses the confidence of all expository preachers when he writes: “I do not say that wherever the Word is preached there will be immediate fruit; but wherever it is received and has a fixed abode, *it shows its effectiveness*” [emphasis added].<sup>2</sup> While agreeing with Calvin, this writer asked if it is in some way possible to objectively measure Calvin’s claim of the ultimate effectiveness of the preached Word of God. The resultant Doctor of Ministry project demonstrates at least some measurement of the effectiveness of the preached Word of God is possible, and movement toward a greater understanding of and willingness to practice church discipline by a specific congregation when necessary can be quantitatively measured.

As briefly stated above, the project studied the response of one specific congregation, located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to a short series of seven expository sermons addressing facets of congregational church discipline. The study measured cognitive change in terms of understanding the process of discipline as well as the purposes for which it is practiced. The project also measured movement in terms of the congregation’s expressed willingness to practice discipline if it became necessary to do so. Finally, the project also measured both affective and behavioral change. In so doing, the study placed the actual practice of congregational church discipline in a wider biblical context than is often done when the subject is addressed.

Significantly, the study occurred in the context of “peace.” That is, the subject of discipline was considered apart from any actual, existing need to practice it by the church body. Therefore, the actual biblical instruction was considered more objectively, leisurely, and dispassionately than is sometimes the case. Lastly, while the sermons were preached to the entire congregation, participation in the actual surveying was both anonymous

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<sup>2</sup>John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. II, (ed. John T. McNeill; trans. Ford Lewis Battles: Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 1024.

and voluntary.

To establish the congregation's initial and ending baselines, identical written Likert scales were administered both prior to and following the preaching of the sermon series. The Likert scales each consisted of thirty-nine statements addressing a range of themes related to the subject of congregational church discipline. For each statement, respondents were asked to "strongly agree," "agree," "somewhat agree," "somewhat disagree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree." Each response was assigned a numerical value, ranging from six to one, respectively. All responses to each individual statement were totaled and averaged based on the number of participants, thus assigning a corporate average score for that statement. The beginning and ending corporate scores provided the two discrete baselines representing the congregation's outlook both before and after the preaching series. The scores also reflected movement of the individual participants as the result of the series. The difference between the pre- and post-test scores reflected movement generated by the preached Word of God. In many cases, both individual and congregational change demonstrated positive responses to the sermon series. In other cases, the opposite was also true. Some of the findings will be discussed later in the paper.<sup>3</sup>

### THE BIBLICAL DATA

The seven biblical texts utilized by the writer and preached in the following order are Exodus 34:5-7; Hebrews 12:3-11; Ephesians 4:7-16; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; 1 Timothy 1:18-20. It will be observed only the final four texts directly address the subject of church discipline. The first two texts provide a wider context for discipline than often occurs when the subject is discussed. These texts are utilized to relate the practice of discipline to the person and character of God and to the character he desires to cultivate in both the individual and the church. The third text describes the arena in which that character is primarily being developed; namely, the church. In structuring the sermon series this way, the reader can immediately appreciate the contribution of the wider context of church discipline.

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<sup>3</sup>Additional findings were addressed in Bruce A. Sabados, "Measuring the Effectiveness of Expository Preaching," *Journal of Grace Theology* 5.1 (2018): 57-73.

Further, he or she can better identify the relationship which exists between the various theological loci, which are often studied discretely and independently of one another to the hurt of the unity and harmony of all doctrine. The reader will come to appreciate how the instruction concerning congregational church discipline extends its reach beyond the sole locus of ecclesiology.

*Exodus 34:5-7; Hebrews 12:3-11*

The first two texts, Exodus 34:5-7 and Hebrews 12:3-11, together establish the character of God as he reveals himself to his covenant people Israel, as well as the character God desires to cultivate by way of training in his people, whether Israel or the church. The specific divine attribute referenced in both texts is holiness. This forms the basis of God's command to Israel, echoed to the church: "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2; cf. 1 Peter 1:16).<sup>4</sup> Michael F. Bird reminds the reader: "The divine example is meant to be a mimetic contagion that *shapes, forms, and replicates itself* [emphasis added] in disciples."<sup>5</sup>

Reminding the reader of the importance of the Exodus 34:1-9, W. Ross Blackburn writes: "They [verses 1-9] are the longest and most complete description of the Lord's character to be found in the Scriptures, and canonically later Scriptures frequently return to them."<sup>6</sup> God's self-revelation discloses he is a multi-faceted Being who simultaneously possesses and displays many qualities without contradiction or confusion.

In this case, God reveals himself to be "compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet [at the same time] He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished . . ." Important for our purpose are two clusters of attributes possessed by God that at first glance appear irreconcilable: those attributes which are more closely associated with God's love (Exodus 34:6b-7a), and the final attribute which is more closely associated with aspects of God's holiness,

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<sup>4</sup>All Scripture is taken from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>5</sup>Michael F. Bird, *Evangelical Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 542.

<sup>6</sup>W. Ross Blackburn, *The God Who Makes Himself Known*, (ed. D. A. Carson; New Studies in Biblical Theology; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2012), 153.

namely, not leaving the guilty unpunished (Exodus 34:7b). In combining his attributes in this way, God teaches us the categories of love and holiness are not mutually exclusive. Rather, love and holiness can and do simultaneously exist in God. His is a holy love.

The primary meaning of the Hebrew verb translated as “holy,” קָדוֹשׁ, is “to separate from.”<sup>7</sup> Used this way the word expresses God as both separate and distinct from his creation. However, the Scriptures also place a strong emphasis on God’s holiness as his moral purity, that is, as his absolute separation from any trace of sinfulness in his Being and doings. This, in turn, is reflected in God’s attributes of righteousness, justice, and wrath. Taken together this cluster of attributes are reflected in God’s “not leaving the guilty unpunished” (Exodus 34:7b). Moses’ concern in the passage under consideration has to do with God’s maintenance of his moral purity.

Further, God’s attributes of love and holiness as moral purity are traditionally classified as communicable attributes.<sup>8</sup> That is, the attributes of love and holiness are two of those qualities of God’s being “that are transferable and shareable with others [humanity as made and especially renewed in his image] in limited degrees.”<sup>9</sup> This is expressed by God’s repeated call to his people under either the Old or New Covenant to reflect his holiness in our own beings and doings: “You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy” (Leviticus 19:2; cf. 1 Peter 1:16). God intends for these attributes to be “replicated” in his people.<sup>10</sup>

The writer of Hebrews relates this theme to God’s purpose in exercising discipline in the lives of his people: “so that we may share His holiness” (Hebrews 12:10). Further, in his citation of the *locus classicus* concerning God’s discipline of his people, Proverbs 3:11-12, the writer of Hebrews calls attention to God’s love as the driving force for that discipline. He writes, “FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD *LOVES* [emphasis added] HE DISCIPLINES” (Hebrews 12:6a). Therefore, in the cultivation of his own communicable attribute of holiness in the lives of every believer, God is driven by his love to do so by means of his use of discipline.

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<sup>7</sup>Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2001), 871.

<sup>8</sup>Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 156.

<sup>9</sup>Bird, *Evangelical Theology*, 127.

<sup>10</sup>Bird, *Evangelical Theology*, 134

*Ephesians 4:7-16*

The third of seven sermons addressed the primary context in which almost all Christian growth in holiness occurs: the local church. While the experience of conversion is intensely personal, the Word instructs us the same Holy Spirit who regenerates does, at the same moment, “baptize” or incorporate that individual into the mystical body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). This reminds the reader of both the individual and corporate nature of biblical Christianity.

In relation to this, Michael F. Bird offers: “Arguably the foremost Pauline contribution to ecclesiology is his image of the church as the ‘body of Christ.’”<sup>11</sup> Employing the metaphor of “body,” the apostle Paul develops the analogy by reminding his readers just as a human body consists of many discrete “parts” which coexist and function in unity, the church, too, is comprised of many uniquely gifted individuals who contribute to the well-being and growth of the whole (1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 14). This in turn suggests the concepts of mutuality, inter-dependence, reciprocity, and the responsibility for each other’s spiritual well-being. These foundational truths are expressed by what are often called “the one another’s of the New Testament.”<sup>12</sup>

Paul claims specific individuals are gifts from Christ to his church so that through their ministries the wider body might be trained “for the work of service, to the building up of the saints” (Ephesians 4:12). It is safe to say this is a *sine qua non* of ministry. James W. Thompson helpfully reminds his readers “*ministry is participation in God’s work of transforming the community of faith until it is ‘blameless’ at the coming of Christ*” (emphasis his).<sup>13</sup> This intended end, blamelessness, reflects Jesus’ own stated goal for his church: that it be holy and blameless (Ephesians 5:26-27). John Calvin writes “the Lord is daily at work in smoothing out wrinkles and cleansing spots. From this it follows that the church’s holiness is not yet complete.”<sup>14</sup> As such, both Father and Son are conforming not only the

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<sup>11</sup>Bird, *Evangelical Theology*, 716.

<sup>12</sup>See, for example, Gene A. Getz, *Building Up One Another*, (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1984), passim.

<sup>13</sup>James A. Thompson, *Pastoral Ministry according to Paul*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 19-20.

<sup>14</sup>Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1031.

individual believer but also the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church into the image of the Son (Romans 8:28-30).

Paul uses the word τέλειος to express his goal for his own ministry in relation to those to whom he ministers. For example, in relation to preaching, Paul writes that he admonishes and teaches his hearers in the way he does “so that we may present every man complete in Christ” (Colossians 1:28). The same goal is presented in Ephesians 4:13: all the saints together engage in mutual ministry “until we all attain . . . to a mature man.” Thompson adds: “His [Paul’s] pastoral ambition is therefore corporate and eschatological.”<sup>15</sup>

It is at this point the practice of congregational church discipline finds its purpose. Since it is God’s desire to replicate his own attribute of holiness in his people, and since he uses the church as an agent of transformation, the church has been entrusted with the tool of loving correction to assist in the maturation of itself and of its individual parts.

Here, Marlin Jeschke’s definition of church discipline resonates: “Church discipline . . . refers to the ministry of discipling a Christian brother or sister whose spiritual health and life are endangered by a particular act or attitude.”<sup>16</sup> Jeschke’s definition and subsequent discussion helpfully places the practice of church discipline under the rubric of discipleship, thus reframing the discussion in a more positive vein.

The connection between the initial three sermons may be described in summary as follows. God, in his desire to replicate his communicable attribute of moral holiness in his people will resort to correction when it becomes necessary to do so. When God chooses to do so, he is motivated by his great love for his sons and daughters. Therefore, his discipline must be understood as a function of his love. Further, it must be primarily understood as formative and not punitive.

It will also be seen while the Spirit of God directly exerts himself in regeneration, conversion, and progressive sanctification, the Spirit is also pleased to equip each believer and then utilize the gifts of the entire church to accomplish his purpose of bringing both the individual and the church to completion. That our new relationship with every other member of the

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<sup>15</sup>Thompson, *Pastoral Ministry according to Paul*, 22.

<sup>16</sup>Marlin Jeschke, *Discipling in the Church* (3rd ed.; Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1988), 17.

body is deep and permanent is expressed by two foundational “one another” statements: all believers “love one another” (John 13:34-35) because we are “members one of another” (Romans 12:5). One application of these texts is when one member of the body errs, the other members share responsibility to restore that one to themselves and to the head of the body, Jesus the Lord. Taken together, these three sermons provide the wider context for the practice of congregational church discipline.

### *Matthew 18:15-20*

Proverbs 3:11-12 reminds the reader God disciplines each child when necessary and this training is a manifestation of his love for him or her. Matthew 18:15-20 affirms Christ authorizes the church to act as his agent as it relates to the correction of his brethren. In its initial step or steps, such an intervention may be a relatively private matter between as few as two individuals, the offender and the one seeking to restore the offender. At other times, the discipline is more public and may involve increasing numbers of people.

The paragraphs addressing the practice of congregational church discipline are part of a larger context in the teaching of Jesus begins at Matthew 18:1. In his teaching Jesus stresses both the inevitability of offenses and the spiritual risk incurred by the one who offends: he or she is at risk of severe judgment (Matthew 18:7). With this in mind, Matthew 18:15-20 provides the tri-level process of intervention to be undertaken by members of the body who under the circumstances are acting in the best spiritual interest of the offender. The intended outcome at each of the three levels of intervention has to do with reconciliation and restoration rather than punishment. Church discipline is primarily corrective and formative and not punitive in nature.

Jesus' instruction regarding such intervention is without caveat. Jesus says: “If your brother sins [ἁμαρτήσῃ], go and show him his fault in private” (Matthew 18:15a). The Greek word is the most common New Testament noun for “sin;” its verb form also being the most common.<sup>17</sup> Conceptually, the word draws attention to one's “missing the mark” as it relates to fulfilling a specific commandment of God. It betrays a “deliberate decision

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<sup>17</sup>William Barclay, *New Testament Words*, (London: SCM, 1964), 118.

to fail, a voluntary and culpable mistake.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, Jesus does not limit the practice of congregational church discipline to a specific category of sin, such as mortal as opposed to venial sin or public as opposed to private sin. Nor does Jesus confine discipline to a sin mentioned in a list or code, such as can be found in Galatians 5:19-21 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. Rather, the generalization is made because all sin places a believer in spiritual jeopardy. Consequently, the practice of church discipline, besides its concern for reconciliation and restoration, also connotes “rescue.”

Intrinsically related is the biblical concept of forgiveness. So important to the Christian life is forgiveness that Jesus identifies it as perhaps the most significant benefit made possible through his death (Matthew 26:28). Equally important is the biblical concept of repentance. One’s expression of repentance in a given matter provides the basis for the extension of forgiveness by God, as well as an offended brother or sister, a small group, or an entire congregation. Consequently, one’s repentance over a specific sin or, conversely, one’s refusal to repent, leads to that individual’s being loosed from the sin or bound to it (Matthew 18:18). The former outcome results in forgiveness, reconciliation, restoration, and the resumption of fellowship. The latter results in the retention of that sin, and the consequent excommunication from the congregation.

In terms of process, discipline may be private (Matthew 18:15), semi-private (Matthew 18:16), or public (Matthew 18:17). Since the goal of the process is resolution, discipline does not necessarily need to proceed through each stage.<sup>19</sup> The spirit in which discipline is undertaken, however, is critical and should reflect the standard expressed in Galatians 6:1-2. Calvin reminds the reader: “Unless this gentleness is maintained in both private and public censures, there is danger lest we soon slide down from discipline to butchery.”<sup>20</sup>

Based on the teaching of Jesus, it is possible the errant brother or sister will not repent of their sin, even after a gracious intervention occurs. In that case, no less than Jesus considers the expulsion of the individual an acceptable outcome.

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<sup>18</sup>Bird, *Evangelical Theology*, 668.

<sup>19</sup>Possible exceptions to this generalized statement will be discussed in the following section of this paper.

<sup>20</sup>Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1238

*1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11*

While the just-discussed Matthean passage provides the framework for the process of congregational church discipline, these two Pauline passages taken together provide case study of its actual practice. While the two texts do not explicitly link the two passages, there is a significant history of this interpretation by commentators.<sup>21</sup> Whether or not the two passages are related ultimately does not impact conclusions drawn from 2 Corinthians 2:5-11.

The specific sin which must be addressed by the entire congregation is sexual immorality, specifically incest (Leviticus 18:8). The offense is both serious and public, that is, it is known by the congregation. If precedents from the Old Testament era are any indication, the church at Corinth's unwillingness to act places the entire congregation at risk. For example, Achan's violation of the ban resulted in God's anger toward Israel (Joshua 7:1, 11), thus demonstrating the intimate bond exists between the one and the many. The congregation places itself at risk as it comes to be identified with the unchecked sin of the one. Further, the sin is presumably unrepented and continuously practiced by the errant congregant despite the knowledge of others. Consequently, the congregation is called to immediately address the offense at the third and highest level of response. That is, the congregation is to exclude the errant believer from the body as Jesus commands. If the two Corinthian texts refer to the same circumstance, then the congregation appears to have acted as directed.

In the act of discipline, Paul identifies two benefits will accrue, one actual and the other potential. The actual benefit is to the congregation; it will be "a new lump" without the continuous evil influence of the willfully errant congregant (1 Corinthians 5:7). As such, the congregation will cor-

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<sup>21</sup>Representatives of this interpretation include John Calvin, *The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians and the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, (Calvin's Commentaries; trans. T. A. Smail; eds. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 29 and Philip E. Hughes, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 64. For differing interpretations, see Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 225 and George H. Guthrie, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, (eds. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 130.

porately reflect the holiness of Christ (Exodus 34:5-7; Hebrews 12:4-11) in the exercise of its responsibility (Ephesians 4:7-16). It will move toward maturity.

The second potential benefit is toward the errant and yet unrepentant congregant. The intent of this rather frightening language is to “deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1Corinthians 5:5). For our purpose, what is significant is the intent of exclusion, introduced by the conjunction ἵνα: “*so that* [italics added] his spirit may be saved.” This implies congregational church discipline contains a strong remedial intent. While physical suffering and even death may occur at the hands of the adversary, the ultimate restoration of the sinner is at the fore. This is echoed by Paul in a second use of almost the same terminology in a second instance of exclusion, recorded in 1 Timothy 1:20.<sup>22</sup>

Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner suggest the delivery of the unrepentant man to Satan reflects returning that man to the sphere in which he existed prior to salvation, that of Adam in his state of rebellion. They write: “To hand the man over to Satan is to turn him back out into Satan’s sphere, outside the edifying and caring environment of the church where God is at work.”<sup>23</sup> Such is the effect of an unrepentant individual’s sin being bound to him or her through the congregation’s pronouncement of exclusion.

If the brother being restored to the body as recorded in 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 is the same one who had been excluded following the instructions given in 1 Corinthians 5:1-11, then the reader will recognize church discipline may indeed accomplish its goal in relation to the erring brother or sister in Christ. Further, the reader will recognize the accomplishment of that goal may not be immediate. For example, Donald A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo suggest 1 and 2 Corinthians may have been written in AD 55 and AD 56 or so, respectively.<sup>24</sup> If that is the case, then it may have taken nearly one year for the discipline to have accomplished its purpose of cultivating biblical repentance in the life of the errant believer. If the two incidents are unrelated, 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 still reflects a restorative outcome of the use of church discipline.

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<sup>22</sup>For additional discussion concerning the remedial aspect of discipline see Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 222. Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 399. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, rev. ed. (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 231.

<sup>23</sup>Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 208.

<sup>24</sup>D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to The New Testament*, 2nd ed., (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 448.

*1 Timothy 1:18-20*

The seventh and final text chosen for the series was 1 Timothy 1:18-20. In this case, not one but two individuals were excommunicated as the result of their sin of blasphemy. They, too, like the man in Corinth, were handed over to Satan for the ultimately intended purpose of correction (1 Timothy 1:20). However, unlike the man in Corinth, Alexander refused correction. This conclusion is clearly implied in Paul's final guidance to Timothy: "Alexander . . . did me much harm . . . Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching" (2 Timothy 4:14-15).

The contribution of this text to the sermon series is that at times the outcome of the disciplinary process will be positive while at other times it will not be, at least in terms of the successful restoration of the one so disciplined. Alexander apparently continued in his behavior for some time, impacting the congregation at Ephesus during Paul's tenure and subsequently during Timothy's own time there. The reader does well to recall the instruction of Jesus: "if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector" (Matthew 18:17b). Exclusion from the body is, therefore, an acceptable and successful outcome given the refusal to repent.

In summary, the final four sermonic texts establish the body of Christ, the church, is authorized by Jesus its Lord and head as his agent in relation to the soul care of its individual parts as well as itself. This includes the correction and restoration of errant believers who are to be reclaimed through the practice of congregational church discipline as it becomes necessary. Those individual members overtaken by sin are to be lovingly confronted as an act of ministerial care and discipleship by other members. Following such an intervention, the errant member may indeed repent, while at other times he or she may resist doing so. When that occurs, the body may have no remaining option other than to exclude them from the church. When such a step is taken, the result for the church is it progresses in holiness. The intent for the errant believer in this case is that the discipline administered will have a remedial effect; exclusion and chastisement by the adversary may work repentance and restoration in his or her life.

## THE QUANTITATIVE DATA

While the doctoral project this paper is drawn from primarily measures the effectiveness of expository preaching, it is possible to measure the congregation's cognitive, affective, and behavioral change in relation to the practice of congregational church discipline as the result of the data collected by means of the Likert

scales. What follows are several salient findings.

First, the emotional center of the Likert scales resides in Statement Twenty-two: “I am personally acquainted with a professing Christian whose sin seemed to get the better of them to the degree that they no longer attend church.” The writer suggests this Statement functions as an almost sermonic introduction to the entire project. While much has been written on the purpose of an introduction, James W. Cox expresses its function well. He writes:

The introduction . . . is more than a place to state or reveal a fact to be learned. It prepares the hearers psychologically, not just intellectually, for the discussion that follows. They must become *interested* in what is to come—deeply involved, if possible, in the whole message—by seeing quite early that they have a *personal stake* [emphasis added] in it.<sup>25</sup>

In this instance, the personal stake of the participants is their relationship with those who have dropped out of an active presence and participation in at least Christ’s church for reasons detrimental to their spiritual well-being.

Between the first and second scale, the aggregate average score for this Statement rose from 3.85 to 4.23, thus shifting from the categorical response of “somewhat agree” to “agree.” In subsequent conversations, some written and others oral, several participants offered either voluntarily or when specifically queried that the “professing Christian” who came to mind was a member of their immediate family. When asked whether an intervention occurred in that person’s life, not all the respondents were certain. A majority of those who did venture an answer believed that *had* some intervention occurred, the outcome *may* have been different.

The writer would suggest these scores and comments serve as the counterbalance to those more popular objections raised against the practice of congregational church discipline. The reader will recall that included in the wider context of discipline as stated by Matthew is the subject of initiative in the recovery of the solitary sheep [congregant] who wanders away (Matthew 18:12-14). Thomas C. Oden offers that: “Soul care is one way of describing the pastor’s entire task,” since “the whole work of ministry has been called *cura animarum*, “the cure of souls.””<sup>26</sup> Oden defines this as “the care of the inner life of persons, the mending and nurturing of this personal center of affect and willing.”<sup>27</sup> This type of care extends itself

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<sup>25</sup>James W. Cox, *Preaching. A Comprehensive Approach to the Design and Delivery of Sermons*, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 166.

<sup>26</sup>Thomas C. Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1983), 186.

<sup>27</sup>Oden, *Pastoral Ministry*, 187.

in moments of intervention.

Second, concerning sermons, the initial five Statements probed the congregation's sense of understanding of biblical instruction as it relates to the subject of congregational church discipline. In general, the congregation's perception is they are presented with sermons which touch even tangentially on the subject of church discipline on a fairly regular basis, identified as "at least once per year." And, further, the congregation agreed what they do know about church discipline they have overwhelmingly learned from sermons. Two Statements both reflect significant change for the better as the result of the sermon series. Statement Four queried: "The sermon or sermons I have heard on the subject of church discipline have helped me understand what church discipline is and why the church practices it," and the aggregate average rose from 4.08 ("somewhat agree") to 5.31 ("agree" moving toward "strongly agree"). Statement Five queried: "Based on sermons I have heard, I can explain the process of church discipline to someone else," and the aggregate average score rose from 3.46 to 5.15, or from "somewhat disagree" to "agree." The post-sermon discussions appeared to support this, as various participants were able to verbalize both process and rationale. Finally, Statement Fourteen probed the following: "If called on to serve as a witness in a private conversation or be asked to exclude an unrepentant person by way of church vote, I would feel prepared and responsible to do so." The aggregate average score rose from 4.23 to 5.08, thus reflecting an increased sense of willingness to act on the biblical instruction concerning church discipline. The increases reflect the influence of the sermon series. In relation to Statements Four and Five, the increase reflects increased cognition. Statement Fourteen reflects an increased behavioral response.

Third, Statement Twenty-six probed for the respondents' view of the importance of the local church to their spiritual growth and development: "Committed and active membership in a specific local church is of significant value to my growth as a disciple of Jesus Christ." Respondents' aggregate average rose from an already high 5.38 to 5.54, reflecting a strong sense of corporate value for the church and its benefits.

Fourth, four Statements examined the role intervention played in their own lives. Statement Thirty queried: "As I reflect on my own spiritual growth and development across time, I can identify at least one occurrence in which a fellow believer confronted me about my behavior, a confrontation that in turn resulted in meaningful change for the better in my life." The aggregate average score remained constant over the two scales at 3.62, reflecting all participants "somewhat

agreed” they had such an encounter. In terms of their own openness to confrontation by a pastor or by a fellow member of the church if warranted, aggregate average scores rose from 4.69 to 4.85 in relation to pastoral intervention but dropped from 5.38 to 5.23 in relation to a lay leader or peer intervention. These last two responses seem to reflect Oden’s claim: “The corrective task has long been thought to be a central *pastoral* [emphasis added] duty.”<sup>28</sup> Statement Twenty seems to support this conclusion. It queried: “If I was struggling with a specific sin, I would want my pastor to take the initiative and talk with me about it.” The aggregate average score rose following the sermon series from 4.69 to 4.85. This suggests while the participants may be hesitant for a peer to intervene in their lives, they remain open to a known, trusted, and empathetic spiritual guide doing the same.

Fifth, and last, Statement Nine queried: “Church discipline, properly practiced, is always in the best spiritual interest of the individual so disciplined.” The aggregate average score again rose between the two Likert scales, from 5.61 to 5.69, with the final score representing the single highest score of either Likert scale.

One additional outcome from the sermon series is following its conclusion, the researcher and church board developed a new disciplinary procedure which was ultimately presented to the congregation for its consideration. After a season of discussion, prayer, and amendment, the procedure was incorporated into an already existing constitutional policy. In the estimation of the researcher, this step, taken without the researcher’s presence or influence, reflects one determinate cognitive, affective, and behavioral action taken as the result of a short series of expository sermons.

## CONCLUSION

Every thought, value, priority, affection, and behavior must always be adopted and practiced based on the written Word of God. As the old axiom reminds us, “What the Bible says, God says.” This is true even when followers of Jesus are called to do the hard thing, regardless of its immediate outcome. This is so because taking God at his Word and living in light of what he says is the essence of biblical faith and obedience. God’s Word always provides the warrant for our action.

This is particularly true as it relates to the difficult doctrine of congrega-

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<sup>28</sup>Oden, *Pastoral Ministry*, 207.

tional church discipline. Considered in its wider context, the doctrine reflects the love of God for his people, and, the love of God's people for him and for one another. This is so because God's purpose is to form Christ in us. Hence, the doctrine is also related to the biblical concept of discipleship.

While the concept of congregational church discipline does not appear to be widely embraced in our current culture, it can be demonstrated where the Word of God is regularly and faithfully preached, God's people can be persuaded to practice church discipline as in the best interest of the Triune God and his purposes, the church, and the errant brother or sister in Christ. This makes the practice of discipline, when it becomes necessary, a valued resource entrusted to the church in its commission to make disciples of Jesus Christ.



TRANSITION AS A DISTINCT COMPONENT OF CHANGE IN  
HUMAN GROUPS: EXPLORING THE PHASES AND CHALLENGES  
OF TRANSITION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE IN  
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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**THESIS:** Transition is a distinct component of change which poses serious challenges for the implementation of change and must therefore be managed effectively to successfully facilitate change in human institutions such as Theological Education establishments.

**ABSTRACT:** While some people use change and transition interchangeably, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate transition is but a distinct component of change which, unfortunately, is not usually given sufficient attention. To guarantee the successful implementation of change in human institutions, studies on the unique characteristics and management of transition is critical. Many who have ignored the crucial role of transition management in the implementation of change have attracted failure in their change endeavours. While transition poses serious challenges to the execution of change, it nonetheless possesses opportunities which, if properly harnessed, would work for the interest of carrying out change. This outlook is true for most human establishments, Theological Education Institutions inclusive.

Key Words/Phrases: Change, Change Management, Transition, Transition Management, Human Institutions, Theological Education Institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Change is an important constant in life. According to oxforddictionaries.com, change is “an act or process through which something becomes different.” Things are always becoming different in the universe. And not all changes are precipitated by humans. In fact, most changes initiated and implemented by humans are re-

sponses to changes which happen outside of human control. Paul Sanders captures this very well in his definition of change, although he limits the concept of change to only what humans do. Sanders believes change refers to “human adaptations to evolving realities, attempts to bring human life into greater harmony with reality.”<sup>1</sup> Such adaptations involve several aspects. Unfortunately, many who write about management have a lot to say about change but little or nothing to say about transition.<sup>2</sup> This is an unfortunate development because, as William Bridges has rightly observed, without a conscious and proper management of transition, change could still happen, but without producing the desired results.<sup>3</sup>

Thankfully, voices<sup>4</sup> are rising to address this lacuna. This essay is an attempt to project some of these voices. The nature of transition will be considered in the light of its relationship to change. Three phases of transition will be identified and discussed with their concomitant challenges: the beginning of the end, the progressive replacement of the old, and the emergence of the new. This will set the stage for a brief exploration of transition management approaches which guarantee the successful implementation of change in human institutions. Finally, suggestions will be offered as to how the findings of the exploration could benefit the execution of change in the context of theological education institutions.

#### THE NATURE OF TRANSITION IN RELATION TO CHANGE

William Bridges is correct in observing transition is usually used as a synonym for change<sup>5</sup> as can be verified in the Wikipedia article on “Change Management.”<sup>6</sup> This is a grave error with significant ramifications for the implementation of change in human institutions. Many have now pointed out the difference between change and transition and have shown transition is a distinct but very important part of change. But transition is not change itself. Using David Nadler’s simple definition of change will help as a foundation to demonstrate the relationship between change and transition: ‘A change basically involves movement from a current state of functioning to some desired future state.’<sup>7</sup> It goes without saying humans play a

<sup>1</sup>Paul Sanders, “Unit 4 -Leadership and Managing Change.”

<sup>2</sup> William Bridges, “Getting them through the Wilderness.”

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Linda S. Ackerman, “Transition Management: An In-Depth Look at Managing Complex Change”; Bridges, “Getting them through the Wilderness”; Bridges, “Managing Organizational Transitions”; Celeste Mueller DeSchryver. “Leading Change,” amongst others.

<sup>5</sup>William Bridges, “Managing Organizational Transitions,” 25.

<sup>6</sup> Wikipedia. “Change Management.”

<sup>7</sup> David A. Nadler, “Managing Transitions to Uncertain Future States,” 41.

significant role in making such movements possible. While change deals with the movement of states, transition deals with the experiences of people as they participate in the movement of states. The importance of this difference is huge.

Bridges refers to transition as a “psychological process.”<sup>8</sup> For Michael Fullan, transition is principally the “*process of change*”<sup>9</sup> [his italics] and not change itself. But Fullan is not talking about the total process of change which includes factors not related to human experiences. Like Bridges, Fullan has human experiences in mind. He talks of ‘the *multiple* realities of people who are the main participants in implementing change.’<sup>10</sup> A research conducted amongst Jordanian organizations as to the outcome of the implementation of change proved the implementation efforts failed because the “people side”<sup>11</sup> of things was neglected. According to these researchers, the most important determinant of the outcome of the change efforts applied to the Jordanian organisations studied was the human side of change.<sup>12</sup> In other words, transition plays a critical role in change. And because it is such a people or psychological adaptation, those who go through it usually describe their experiences in typical psychological terms: “death, bereavement, the loss of a limb, the destruction of a home, and the end of the world.”<sup>13</sup> It is to these transitional challenges that we now turn.

### THE PHASES AND CHALLENGES OF TRANSITION

There is consensus that change is generally hard on humans. Firstly, change is usually precipitated by crisis.<sup>14</sup> Secondly, humans are caught between wanting things to remain the same and the reality that change can never be ultimately evaded. Celeste D. Mueller<sup>15</sup> and Paul Sanders<sup>16</sup> have pointed this out clearly. In talking about this human abhorrence for change, Tristan Bishop declares how most people most of the time “loathe and despise”<sup>17</sup> change. In fact, people ‘team up to fight’<sup>18</sup> change. And referencing [businessdictionary.com](http://businessdictionary.com) about this human resistance to

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<sup>8</sup> Bridges, “Managing Organizational Transitions,” 25.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Fullan, “Planning, Doing, and Coping with Change,” 186.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Harfoushi, Obiedat, and Khasawneh. “E-Learning Adoption inside Jordanian Organizations,” 49.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Bridges, “Managing Organizational Transitions,” 25.

<sup>14</sup> Sanders, “Unit 4 -Leadership and Managing Change.”

<sup>15</sup> Mueller, “Leading Change,” 30.

<sup>16</sup> Sanders, “Unit 4 -Leadership and Managing Change.”

<sup>17</sup> Tristan Bishop, “Convincing the Resistant.”

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

change, Jennifer V. Miller observes that people's attitude towards change is "the pain is not worth the gain."<sup>19</sup>

Adopting a common-sense three-phase division of transition embraced by several leading authors on the subject, we explore the foregoing challenges in more depth. Bridges refers to transition as "a three-phase psychological reorientation process."<sup>20</sup> In Sanders, transition is defined via this three-phase paradigm: "a process that begins with the ending of a reality, continues into a 'neutral zone' where old patterns die and rebirth is awaited."<sup>21</sup> Ackerman also adopts the same structure when she talks of "three sequential states...old state, transition state and new state."<sup>22</sup> While different authors use different names for the aforementioned transitional phases, their perceptions of the different phases remain similar. This article also uses different names but maintains the same structure.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE END

This is when transition begins. This stage is usually characterised by a lot of resistance to the change being implemented.<sup>23</sup> This resistance is mounted because people know change signifies an end to what they have known, and the progress of change would mean losses on their part.<sup>24</sup> One of the first things people must give up at this stage is the identity they had in the old system. This loss is important because the old identity must be replaced by a new one. However, the process can still be 'very painful and even terrifying'<sup>25</sup> for people. Another significant loss during this initial stage of transition is the disintegration of community and the loss of a sense of direction.<sup>26</sup> It is indeed true when Mueller observes "Change raises deeply human questions about identity and relationships, belonging, meaning, purpose and worth."<sup>27</sup> This is the beginning of a grieving process which, if not properly managed, would cause people to become uncooperative to the extent of being aggressive or even strategizing to defeat the implementation of the new plan.<sup>28</sup> And the challenges only heighten as transition progresses to the next stage where the new order progressively replaces the old.

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<sup>19</sup> Jennifer V. Miller, "Change Management and the Law of Diminishing Returns."

<sup>20</sup> Bridges, "Getting them through the Wilderness."

<sup>21</sup> Sanders, "Unit 4 -Leadership and Managing Change."

<sup>22</sup> Ackerman, "Transition Management," 49..

<sup>23</sup> Bridges, "Managing Organizational Transitions," 25.

<sup>24</sup> Mueller, "Leading Change," 32.

<sup>25</sup> Bridges, "Managing Organizational Transitions," 28.

<sup>26</sup> Bridges, "Getting them through the Wilderness."

<sup>27</sup> Mueller, "Leading Change," 32.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

### THE PROGRESSIVE REPLACEMENT OF THE OLD

This is probably the most challenging time of any transition because this is when Picasso's memorable statement on change rings truest: "Every act of creation is first an act of destruction."<sup>29</sup> As the old order is being gradually transformed to give way to the new, people go through all kinds of conflicting and negative emotions. People become anxious as they wonder what would happen to them.<sup>30</sup> Illusion, uncertainty, despondency, emptiness, but sometimes optimism, are just a few of the many experiences people record as they struggle to respond to their changing world.<sup>31</sup> It is a "no-man's-land,"<sup>32</sup> or a "neutral zone,"<sup>33</sup> or even a "nowhere between two somewheres [sic]."<sup>34</sup> It is the progressive replacement of the old because the new does not appear at once out of nowhere. The old too does not just disappear altogether from one day to the other. It is like a journey where day after day people say goodbye to bits and pieces of the past as they reluctantly embrace bits and pieces of the new vision.

But even the new vision becomes endangered during this phase of transition. Only proper management of the transition can prevent the complete loss of everything. Firstly, the destruction of the old can lead to the destruction of everything. Secondly, as the destruction of the old happens, outside forces can take advantage of this vulnerability and acquire the entity being transformed. Thirdly, as the old is being destroyed, forces it kept under control previously could spring out of control and destroy the group.<sup>35</sup> These dangers inspire varied responses from people in the group. Some would feel like returning completely to the old system. Others would formulate and commit to new but strange tendencies that incorporate some elements from the past. Some would leave the group and become part of other realms they perceive to be better. And yet, others would express desire and push for a faster realization of the new vision.<sup>36</sup> It is from all this chaos the new order emerges.

### THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW

The bulk of the problems people experience with change is not really in relation to opening a new page; it is with closing an old page and transitioning from the old

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<sup>29</sup> As cited in Bridges, "Getting them through the Wilderness."

<sup>30</sup> David A. Nadler, "Managing Transitions to Uncertain Future States," 41-42.

<sup>31</sup> Bridges, "Managing Organizational Transitions," 25.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 29.

<sup>34</sup> Mueller, "Leading Change," 34.

<sup>35</sup> Bridges, "Getting them through the Wilderness."

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

to the new.<sup>37</sup> Although this stage of transition certainly has its own challenges, it is true, as Bridges opines, this last phase of transition is one where final touches are made.<sup>38</sup> But these final touches are only made if the transition was well managed. Usually the challenges and needs during this final phase are not the same as those in the previous transitional phase. Consequently, when the new order emerges, attention must be shifted to the things which make up the new. And the way leadership operated must adjust too.<sup>39</sup> It goes without saying when the neutral zone is poorly managed, the new order would probably never see the light of day or even if it does, it would not be what was intended. Unfortunately, as Ackerman points out, most available examples of human institutions that have attempted to implement change are those that have failed because they failed to manage transition well.<sup>40</sup> We turn to transition management now.

### TRANSITION MANAGEMENT

Just as transition is a distinct component of change, so also is transition management a distinct component of the much broader subject of change management. This section of the paper focuses on managing the core concern in transitions, namely, the psychological experiences people encounter in the process of change. Ackerman's broader categorization of transition management as "a total concept that determines how the organization will be managed as the change is occurring,"<sup>41</sup> could inadvertently lead to the poor statistics in change implementation she grieves over.<sup>42</sup> In order for change management to be successful, the often-neglected aspect of managing the experiences of the implementers of change must take central stage by being a distinct and critical component of change management. Mueller is insistent in her warnings about the dangers of relegating what she terms "the human impact of change"<sup>43</sup> to second place in change management.<sup>44</sup> For Bridges, change implementation has suffered because stakeholders usually insist on being "wise about the mechanics of change and stupid about the dynamics

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<sup>37</sup> Bridges, William. "Managing Organizational Transitions."

<sup>38</sup> Bridges, William. "Getting them through the Wilderness."

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ackerman, "Transition Management: An In-Depth Look at Managing Complex Change," 47.

<sup>41</sup> Ackerman, Linda S. "Transition Management: An In-Depth Look at Managing Complex Change," 65.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 47.

<sup>43</sup> Mueller, "Leading Change," 32.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 32-33.

of transition.”<sup>45</sup> The key to balancing that equation is a renewed interest and commitment to transition management.

It is far beyond the scope of this paper to do justice to the subject of transition management. Doing justice to the subject would mean carefully going through the three phases of transition and addressing their unique challenges, as well as suggesting solutions towards the facilitation of change. What this paper has space for is general pointers and foundational principles for the successful management of transitions. The first order of business in successful transition management is to determine beforehand the extent to which people will stay away from work due to the emotional turmoil change brings. Once this is done, the next step is to develop strategies to cushion the crushing effects of such anticipated impact.<sup>46</sup> Because people experience the sense of loss during transitions, effort must be made to show people the things which will remain during the change. This helps to minimize their sense of loss. Another helpful strategy to pursue is to help people keep their eyes on the big picture because the smaller parts of things as they knew them disintegrate during the change.<sup>47</sup> Finally, Supervisors should be chosen carefully and must be people who understand the critical need to be sensitive to what the people are going through. Fullan has attributed the failure of change implementation to the negligence of change leaders of the circumstances of those who do the work which makes change possible.<sup>48</sup>

### IMPLICATIONS FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

What are the implications of the foregoing discussion to the management of change in the specific context of theological education institutions? First, what is meant by theological education? Theological education could mean many different things, but the scope envisaged here is consistent with the suggestion the term “be reserved for the specialized training for pastors and leaders.”<sup>49</sup> In Theological Education, change usually follows an order and change in the real world. In this sense it is forward looking because when reality is perceived to likely change, theological education institutions begin to adjust their scale of preference in a way which will correspond with future reality. Naturally, this is not always a smooth process as reality does not always evolve as anticipated.<sup>50</sup> However, this forward-looking

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<sup>45</sup> Bridges, “Managing Organizational Transitions,” 25.

<sup>46</sup> Bridges, “Managing Organizational Transitions,” 28.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Fullan, “Planning, Doing, and Coping with Change,” 187.

<sup>49</sup> Ott and Keefer. *Understanding and developing Theological Education*, 7.

<sup>50</sup> Sanders, “Unit 4 – Leadership and Managing Change.”

pattern is an asset for navigating change in theological education institutions because one of the key principles of transition management is anticipating how the introduction of change would impact the commitment of workers.

With the publication of Graham Cheeman's nine areas of anticipated change in theological education (academic relationships, spiritual formation and integrated learning, competence based theological education, distributed learning, widening access, financial challenges, evolving government attitudes, changing staff/student relationships, and tension in church-academy relations)<sup>51</sup>, leaders of change in theological education institutions can be well prepared beforehand to better facilitate transitions. And given that facilitators of change in theological education institutions are already known (Sanders cites the Principal, the Academic Director, the Chair of the Governing Board and other members of the Learning Community),<sup>52</sup> individuals holding these positions can always be required to acquire prior training in psychological processes affecting people during transitions, especially grieving.

#### CONCLUSION

The thrust of this paper has been to demonstrate transition is a distinct and critical component of change in human institutions such as theological education institutions. It is critical and important because it deals with human responses to change. Change leaders in human institutions in general, and theological education institutions in particular, need to pay close attention to the phases and challenges of transition as many have ignored the same to their own detriment. The uniqueness of transition in change should therefore call for a unique approach to the management of transition in the management of change. This approach deals with efforts meant to understand and mitigate the adverse effects of psychological experiences humans navigate during change. Finally, this discussion is very relevant for change implementation in theological education institutions. Transition management principles favor the way change happens in theological education in that both value the practice of operating in anticipation of the foreseeable future.

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<sup>51</sup> As listed in Sanders, "Unit 4 – Leadership and Managing Change."

<sup>52</sup> Sanders, Paul, "Unit 4 – Leadership and Managing Change."

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## MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

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Borrowing from William Shakespeare’s comedy entitled “Much Ado About Nothing,” I want to suggest a challenge to a popularly held theological conviction. Using another simile, when trying to identify someone we often refer to some characteristic unusual enough to set them apart from everyone else; the wart on their nose, the way they dress, their accent. But sometimes what we may think of as unusual or even peculiar for the person we’re describing is actually their very uniqueness in which they take great pride.

Outside of the “Grace Movement” other evangelical Christians have long identified us by our non-practice of water baptism. To them this is the strange thing about us, a mark on our face, which sets us apart. And often it’s not something they view as attractive, but rather as an ugly blemish. On the other hand, within the “Grace Movement” there are those who also think of our non-practice of water baptism as our greatest distinction and wear it quite proudly. Some are quick to call it to the attention of other believers, while trying to persuade them it’s really not a wart but a true beauty mark.

We cannot do much about how other Christians view and describe the Grace Movement. For many of them our non-practice of water baptism will probably always be a wart on the end of our nose. But within the Grace Movement, when we also call great attention to our non-practice of water baptism, then together with them we are creating “much ado about nothing.”

While the Jews were literally the only people of God on earth—when only by becoming a proselyte to Judaism could a Gentile be saved—the physical mark of God’s favor was circumcision (Genesis 17:9-15; Exodus 12:48-49). In many cases this physical mark in the flesh became overly important to the bearer. As proof of his separation from the pagan world around him, for a circumcised Jew this created undue pride of his being in God’s favor, whereas actually his position of favor was

purely by the grace of God. We get a sense of this pride in Paul's letter to the Philippians (3:4-6) where in a list of eight Jewish identities of which he once boasted before he came to faith in Christ, the very first on the list is his circumcision at eight days old in obedience to the Law of Moses.

Throughout Paul's ministry during the Acts period we find other indications of the emphasis placed upon circumcision, even by Jewish converts to faith in Christ. Some of these Jewish believers insisted those Gentiles whom Paul was leading to faith in Jesus must also be circumcised or they could not be saved (Acts 15:1, 5; Galatians 2:3-5). Even the apostles and elders of the assembly in Jerusalem, not having received from the risen Christ the direct revelation concerning Gentiles which Paul had received, were at first unsure whether or not Gentile circumcision was indeed required. We see this as they met "to consider this question" and engaged in "much discussion" concerning it (Acts 15:6-7). What was happening however was in fact a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. The Old Testament prophets had foretold one day a New Covenant with God would be put into effect, replacing the Old Covenant, the Law of Moses. A part of this new relationship with God, spiritual circumcision of the heart would replace physical circumcision of the flesh (Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26). In the early days of the Church, the Body of Christ, those who advocated Christian circumcision did not fully understand the New Covenant was then in effect and Christ himself was spiritually circumcising all who believed (Colossians 2:9-14).

As a "minister of the New Covenant" (2 Corinthians 3:6) Paul addresses those who were confused about circumcision in Galatians 5:5-6: "For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." Paul seems to have a dual purpose here: to counter the pride of Jewish believers in their physical circumcision; and to squelch any pride Gentile believers might take in their physical un-circumcision. His point is, nothing done or not done in the flesh makes any difference in a believer's relationship with God. The only thing which does make a difference is the inner working of the Holy Spirit resulting in progressive righteousness, faith and love.

For most Christians today physical circumcision for religious reasons is not an issue. We understand it was a requirement under Israel's Old Covenant relationship with God, but has now been replaced by the New Covenant. On the other hand, a majority of Christians do see physical water baptism as being very much a part of this new relationship. However, in anticipating the New Covenant it is important to note the prophets foretold not only a spiritual circumcision but a spiritual

baptism as well (Ezekiel 36:25, 39:29; Joel 2:28-29).

Like circumcision, baptism was a ritual of the Old Covenant (Leviticus 13-15, 16:4, 23-24; Mark 7:4; Hebrews 9:10). As the believing Jews of Paul's day mistakenly carried the ritual of physical circumcision over into the New Covenant, so also have believers today mistakenly carried over water baptism. Under the New Covenant neither one is required any longer. Both are accomplished in us spiritually when upon believing, the Holy Spirit of God places us "in Christ" in New Covenant relationship with him (Ephesians 1:13-14; Colossians 2:9-12).

Had the Old Covenant ritual, in which the Jewish believers of Paul's day placed so much pride, been baptism instead of circumcision, I have no doubt Galatians 5:5-6 would read, "For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither baptism nor un-baptism has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." Because baptism, not circumcision, is the Old Covenant ritual still being practiced by much of the Church today, this verse then has great application not only for those believers who practice water baptism but also for those who do not. For not only those who do but also we who don't can make it into "much ado about nothing."

In some churches you cannot be a member or even exercise your spiritual gifts and serve if you have not submitted to water baptism. They may say water baptism has nothing to do with salvation, but it is made a requirement for full fellowship. In many of our Grace churches things are much the same. We deny membership and opportunities for service to fellow believers who will not in effect renounce water baptism and embrace our non-baptism belief. We teach water baptism is nothing for this dispensation of Grace, but then we make this nothing into a something. In this dispensation every true believer is joined to every other believer by spiritual baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13). Why then have we as believers made water baptism and non-baptism reasons for excluding each other? Surely all of us who do are wrong in doing so. God calls upon us to "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3); to recognize and preserve the unity among believers which he has already created. A pillar of that unity is the "one baptism" (Ephesians 4:4), which we proclaim every believer has received at the moment of salvation, even if they wrongly think this passage refers to water. To divide the Body of Christ over water baptism is to make a fuss about something which is a nothing in this Dispensation of Grace. Perhaps others may choose to do so, but it certainly should not be true of us in the Grace Movement.

So if you agree, how can we avoid making “much ado” out of this “nothing?” Here’s a suggestion. In my last pastorate, prior to becoming members of the church everyone was required to attend a “Membership Class.” Included in the class was a review of the church Statement of Faith. This was divided into two sections. Part one was called “Essential Truths” and covered those things foundational and essential to salvation; the Bible, the Nature of God, the Person of Christ, the Person of the Holy Spirit, Humanity, Salvation and Eternal Security. Part two was labeled “Distinctive Beliefs” and covered the church’s beliefs concerning, the Lord’s Supper, the State of the Dead, Baptism, Spiritual Gifts, etc. The latter are important truths, but issues over which true believers sometimes differ. Those desiring to become members were asked to share their testimony of salvation and to state their full agreement with the church’s “Essential Beliefs.” They were also asked to identify which, if any, of the “Distinctive Beliefs” they did not agree with. It was often explained to people that believing these distinctive beliefs was not essential for salvation or required for church membership, these beliefs were central to the church’s theological convictions. They were then asked for their assurance they would not publically challenge or oppose these beliefs causing dissension in the congregation. Upon their confession of faith, their assurance of agreement with the “Essential Truths,” and their promise not to challenge the remaining church doctrines, any true believer was welcomed into church membership. The only restriction placed upon those who could not embrace the distinctive beliefs of the church was not being able to serve on the governing Board. We believed this was necessary to preserve the full distinctive doctrinal foundation of the church. By handling church membership in this manner we were able to avoid saying to another true believer in Christ, “We rejoice you are our brother, our sister in the Lord. We rejoice God has accepted you into his eternal family. But we will not accept you into this church family. We do hope you will keep coming, worshipping, serving where you can, and giving, but you don’t really belong here.” Of course we would never actually say those words. But when we make any doctrine which is nonessential to salvation, a basis for local church membership, this is the message we clearly send and by doing so we help destroy the unity of the Spirit in the Body of Christ.

If we have done so in the past, God forgive us. If we’re still doing so, we need to repent.

## LAW AND GRACE

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The words used in the title of this paper are quite familiar to those who read the Bible often and are used significantly by those studying the Bible. Among the many who desire a fuller knowledge of the Bible are those who call themselves Dispensationalists. The writer of this paper is among those who call themselves Dispensationalists. This paper is my own definition of Dispensationalism and how I understand how the Bible teaches Dispensationalism.

A key to this understanding begins with those words in the title, LAW and GRACE found together in Romans 6:14- 15: “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid.” There is a contrast here of “over” and “under.” There is a connection here between sin and the Law. The KJV translates the Greek word found here as “dominion,” which could also be translated “lording over you” or “be your master,” or even “sin can’t tell you how to live.” (Compare this to any another translation to see how the word is translated.) We might add here that all translations, including the KJV, are commentaries on what the Bible said in the original language Paul used. “Sin” and the “Law” are connected in Romans 3:9 and 3:19-20. In Romans 3:9 Paul uses the phrase “under sin” and in 3:19-20 he uses “under law” and states that the law speaks to those “under law.” There are four facts in 3:19-20, that being “under law” teaches:

That every mouth may be stopped, All the world may become guilty. By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. By the law is the knowledge of sin.

We are here connecting the dots. We are seeing how Paul connects sin and the law. To be “under grace” (Rom. 6:14-15) is to be free from the law and thus free from the dominion of sin. Romans 6:18 clarifies this, “being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” We may be seen as to be hopping and skipping around here in these first chapters of Romans, so we encourage everyone to stop here and read Romans 1-6. Then, hopefully, everyone will be able to fill in the blanks of our minds and the blanks between the dots we have created here. This doesn’t always happen the first time or the first read.

As we move on to Romans 7 we see continuation of this theme to be to be free from the law and thus be free from sin and thus be free from death. Romans 7 addresses those who know the Law. This is should encourage “modern day Romans” to reread the entire Old Testament to bring them up to speed and to the level of understanding that Paul acknowledges the original Romans had. I say the “Old Testament” as Paul also seems to call the Old Testament “tablets of stone” (2 Cor. 3:3, 14).

But, there is more! In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul quotes from Isaiah 28:11 and begins by saying: “In the Law it is written....” Would we be over stating the case that Paul includes the prophets as part of the Law? Paul said it, rather wrote this! The prophets were a commentary on the law. The Lord Jesus quoted from the Psalms in John 10:34 and 15:25. Concerning each of those quoted Psalms, the Lord states that these Psalms are written as the law! Finally, in 1 Cor. 14:34 there is an echo or allusion to Genesis 3:16 as law. Therefore, we might say that the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi is all law. The prophets are a commentary on the law and the Psalms are a commentary of life under the law; Genesis is part of the law as the root, the beginning, the background, and the introduction to the Law. Paul also says in Galatians 3:10 that the Law of Moses is not just Exodus 20 alone, but is a book of writings of the law. In quoting Deuteronomy 27:26, when Moses says “all the words of the law,” Paul gives adds comments of his knowledge of the law saying that those “all the words” make up a book of laws. We say today the five books of Moses are the full the law. If we have only the Ten Commandments without the rest of what Moses teaches, these Ten actually become mere suggestions.

Consider the example of marriage. Paul states in Romans 7:1 that the law has dominion over a person as long as long as they live. In verse two Paul states that a woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. We need to note a close relationship that “dominion” and “bound” have to marriage. But if her husband dies, she is loosed (discharged) from the law of her husband. Paul states it again in the next verse: “but if her husband be dead, she is free from the law.’ Paul

is saying the same thing differently. To be loosed from the law is to be free from the law. Then, in verse four, there is the meaning to the believer of the marriage illustration. Again, Paul says the same thing differently for the believer. Here, he says the believer is dead to the law. The believer is dead to the law through the body of Christ. Then in verse six, Paul repeats this using again the terminology he used with the woman and husband in 7:2; “We are delivered (discharged) from the law.” Paul here includes himself among the brethren.

In the remaining part of Romans seven Paul explains the positive facts about the law, even though he has been teaching that believers are not under law. He answers a question that he asks, “Is the law sin? No! But, the law gives the knowledge of sin.” Paul teaches that having faith in the law does not equal salvation. A false difference between Law and Grace is to teach that today salvation is by faith through grace but salvation before this truth is revealed by Paul is that to have everlasting life then, one had to keep the law and do so by faith. Plainer words states that this is teaching “faith plus works” as the plan of salvation before Paul’s revelation concerning the dispensing of Grace that he received (cf. Gal. 1:11-12; 3:23; Eph. 3:2-5). Paul then states “and the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. Sin is the culprit here, as taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me” (7:10-11). In Leviticus 18:5 extended physical life was the subject under consideration, not everlasting life. Another question asked and then answered. Was that which is good made death unto me? (7:13) No! But it was sin the reason again. But the law is holy and the commandment holy, and just, and good (7:12). The law is also spiritual. So what is reason we move from under the law to under grace? We find the answer in Romans 8:3: “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” But Paul continues and state in the next verse: “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.”

But, then, I asked the question, why be so concerned about the righteousness of the law when our righteousness comes from our standing, our position that is in our Lord Jesus Christ (as 2 Corinthians 5:21 states so clearly)? Since Paul does not say everything about everything in one verse, chapter or epistle, we can take a look at Galatians, which deals with this same subject of Law and Grace. There Paul states: “But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under law” (Gal. 5:18) Then, “If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25, compare this walk then with the walk mentioned in Romans 8:4).

Paul is not arguing with God, Moses, the Prophets, the Lord Jesus or the Twelve Apostles. He is contesting the arguments of the brethren, but these are false brethren as mentioned in Galatians 2:4, “who came in privately to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage” (cf. Acts 15:1-2). That bondage is the bondage of the law (cf. Gal. 5:1). But in this same context and chapter, Paul teaches that you can fulfill the Law without keeping the Law. That is, those who are not under the Law can fulfill the Law who are under grace.

Paul answers the false brethren by showing Paul’s gospel covers all the spiritual bases in a spiritual game of baseball with spiritual words. The law does not teach or preach concerns about eternal life. But it does deal with life. So Paul’s teachings are about eternal life, which we’ll call apples and Moses’ law teachings are about life, which we’ll call oranges. There is a real difference between apples and oranges and there is a difference between life and eternal life and a difference between Law and Grace. But those who have eternal life also live a life. The difference between life and eternal life does not mean you can’t have one and not the other.

When we handle the word of God like Paul did, as our model, we can do it rightly. We can fulfil the law, without keeping the law, with all its jots and tittles. But, we do this fulfilling of the law under Grace and not under Law.

Galatians 5:13-14 “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Romans 13:8-10 “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, ‘Thou shall not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to its neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.”

Our closing thought is to observe that ‘loving thy neighbor as thyself’ comes from the middle of the book of Leviticus, 19:18 and not from the tables of stone and ‘Love worketh no evil to its neighbor’ seemingly is lifted out of the middle phrase in Psalm 15:3.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Glahn, Sandra, ed. *Vindicating the Vixens: Revisiting Sexualized, Vilified, and Marginalized Women of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2017.**

The redemptive work *Vindicating the Vixens*, published by Kregel Publications and edited by Sandra Glahn, exposes “bad girls” of the Bible for who they really were—essential figures in God’s plan. This compilation of scholarly articles carefully examines the stories of fourteen women in the Bible who have traditionally been sexualized, vilified, and marginalized. It challenges readers to see these females as people of God who were being used by God—even in the poorest of circumstances. The contributing authors have varying backgrounds, but hold fast to a faithful hermeneutic, “not questioning the inspiration, inerrancy, or infallibility of the Scriptures... [but] questioning the inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility of our human interpretation of them” (22). Anyone who picks up this book must first acknowledge that humanity has fallen, and unfortunately, interpretations are not immune to the effects of the fall. The church can no longer assume the faith of our forefathers when it often paints a picture of females that creates barriers for them in the church, society, and in their relationship with God. This work restores the reputations of these biblical characters, encourages women to the work God has called them to do in his world, and renews the minds of men to see God’s place for women more clearly.

The book consistently addresses six questions: 1. What does the text actually say? 2. What do I observe in and about the text? 3. What did this text mean to the original audience? 4. What was the point? 5. What truths in this text are timelessly relevant? 6. How does the part fit the whole? (23-26). The diversity and expertise of the contributors will engage the reader and challenge them through faithful exegesis which shifts one’s entire perspective on biblical women. While a majority of the articles are able to be easily read and understood by those familiar with Scripture, some are more scholarly in nature and are thus more challenging to read. The

authors' historical critical information and language studies enlighten everyone with what they wished they had known about these stories all along. The result is a profound image of women in Scripture.

The first section of the book covers the women included in Jesus' genealogy: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and the Virgin Mary. In this section answers to questions like: How could a woman like Tamar be called "righteous"? What does Rahab's rescue and faith mean for outsiders? Were Boaz' feet just his feet? Was Bathsheba really a seductress? And, what do we lose when we neglect Mary?

The second section entitled "A Survey of Sexualized, Vilified, and Marginalized Women of the Bible" covers Eve, Sarah, Hagar, Deborah, Huldah, and Vashti. A personal favorite, this section teaches the fundamentals in the creation of woman and God's intent in her design, the plight of Sarah and Hagar in their patriarchal predicament, and the beauty of Hagar naming God. The reader will also be familiarized with Huldah, learn Deborah's position was indeed not a result of a "good man being hard to find", and discover without verbal speech, God and Vashti were able to reveal women's true honor for their character, not just their beauty.

The third section revisits three women from the New Testament—the woman at the well, Mary Magdalene, and Junia/Joanna. The woman at the well is found to be a trusted religious seeker whose past marriages may be more complicated and earnest than assumed in western civilization. Mary Magdalene is discovered as a true disciple of Jesus, rather than merely Mary the prostitute, adulteress, one with the alabaster jar, or Martha's sister. Mary Magdalene is a faithful student of Jesus, a patron, a participant, an informant, and an apostle of the apostles. The section ends with a real challenge—the lexical and historical study of whether or not Junia was a woman. If she was, Paul's placement of her in association with the term "apostle" might change the way we view women's roles in the church and leadership today.

In summation, the common denominator in all of these accounts is through Jesus and the gospel everything is flipped on its head. Carolyn Custis James says in her chapter on Tamar, "Sometimes our prejudices cause us to miss the power of God's word and avoid narratives that we desperately need in our own stories" (48). In the same way, students of Scripture and those who seek God are implored by this work to put prejudices aside and discover anew these characters who are misunderstood or neglected—seeing them through more well-informed and opened eyes, but more importantly, seeing them as God created them. In the words of Paul the Apostle, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Men and

women alike are “created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10). In this truth, these women are validated for the work they have done and the place they have in the redemptive story of God.

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**Moreland, J. P., Stephen C. Meyer, Christopher Shaw, Ann K. Gauger, and Wayne Grudem, eds. *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical and Theological Critique*. Crossway, Wheaton Illinois, 2017.**

Tim Conklin is fairly well known to most readers of this Journal; his baccalaureate degree is from Grace Bible College (now Grace Christian University), and he has an M.A. in Theology and Ethics from Azusa Pacific University, an M.A. in Educational Leadership from Western Michigan University, and a D.D. from Grace. Tim has 50+ years in Christian ministry, roughly half as pastor of several GGF churches and half at Grace as Professor of Theology and Philosophy, and Academic Dean.

Chuck is a lifetime botanist and academician with degrees from Oregon State University (B.S. in Soil Science); University of California, Riverside (M.S. in Plant Sciences and PhD, in Botany). He retired after several years in his last role as Professor of Applied Botany at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, including six years as Associate Dean of the College of Agriculture. At his retirement, Cal Poly granted him Professor Emeritus status. He has been a lifelong student of the Bible with extensive experience in teaching and writing about the Scriptures. Chuck served as President of Scripture Research for seventeen years. Drs. Asbell and Conklin have been close companions and biblical soul-mates for many years.

*Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique* is a most impressive and extraordinary book. It is edited by J.P. Mooreland, Stephen P. Meyer, Christopher Shaw, Ann Gauger, and Wayne Grudem. There are thirty-one chapters (just over 1,000 pages) written by twenty-five authors from North America and Europe (men and women), each a highly educated professional expert recognized and honored in their field and with multiple peer-reviewed articles and

books to their name.

It is imperative one acknowledges the last word in the subtitle of this work—*Critique*. This book is not in support of theistic evolution. It is an analysis, expose, and a sequential series of arguments opposing theistic and other theorems of evolution. The clear message of the book is theistic evolution (sometimes also called “evolutionary creationism”) is riddled with misunderstandings and is in fact a seriously flawed mindset. Theistic evolution also stands against the core historic doctrines of the church. Theistic evolution is presented as incompatible with the great Christian creeds and is in denial of God as creator and sustainer of all things, the literal existence and behavior of Adam and Eve, the substitutionary atonement for sin by “the second Adam” (Jesus Christ), the existence of angels and Satan, the denial of miracles, and much more.

Nonetheless, most of the book is not about theology but about science and philosophy. The opposition in the book is to the dogmas of Darwinian/Neo-Darwinian evolution. The authors of this book are committed to Intelligent Design (ID) as the preferred approach to understanding origins and being compatible with the historic reading of Scripture. The author’s approach is to use the standard features, vocabulary and methods of science, philosophy and biblical theology to assert their critique of theistic evolution. The result is a remarkably thorough and penetrating.

From his perspective as a scientist, Chuck has been an avid supporter of the Intelligent Design (ID) concept and movement (which is well represented by Discovery Institute Center for Science and Culture in Seattle). He has closely followed the contributions of Drs. Meyer, Behe, and Axe, as well as several other ID authors, and fully supports their science methodologies and consequent conclusions. He believes perhaps the most compelling argument of this book is a serious consideration of the probabilities associated with trying to argue against the ID concept of origins.

Regarding the arrangement of the book, after a clear and insightful General Introduction there are three Sections expounding a collective, complimentary argument running through the book beginning with Science and followed by Philosophy and closing with Biblical Theology. Section 1 (seventeen chapters) is arranged under two parts, The Failure of Neo-Darwinism and The Case against Universal Common Descent and for a Unique Human Origin. Section 2 (nine chapters) is focused on The Philosophic Critique of Theistic Evolution. Section 3 (five chapters) is a cogent survey of The Biblical and Theological Critique of Theistic Evolution.

We believe this book deserves the serious attention of pastors, church and para-church leaders, as well as concerned lay men and women. Both the science and philosophy sections will require the reader's concentrated and astute attention. Those chapters are not dumbed down but full on professional level discussions of the topics at hand. However, the illustrations (literary and visual) are easily grasped and quite helpful. No doubt this book will not be read through quickly but will be a reference volume to return to when needing a specific refresher of the topic under discussion. However, Tim found the book engaging and intriguing, finishing it in less than a week—but he was vacationing in Montana and enjoyed several hours a day for reading. The issues and concepts in this book are of utmost importance for evangelical Christians today; spending quality time with this text is time well spent.

What the authors raise as points of interest, essential questions, or critical contemporary propositions are matters of great import, especially for the church but also for the mindset and worldview of intelligent men and women at large. For purposes of Christian testimony and evangelism, being armed with the awareness and information provided in this book is invaluable. The Scriptures exhort believers to “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15). This book is loaded with help to do that very thing as it explores the flaws of theistic evolution, contemporary culture, and historic biblical doctrines.

Theistic evolution/evolutionary creationism, say the authors of this book, is tangled, convoluted, illogical. And they have put their reputations and careers on the table to back their assertions and arguments about what is truth and what is falsehood in this currently raging debate. We think all Christians who take science, their mind and their Bible seriously ought to engage themselves with this book.

One reviewer of *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique* wrote . . .

The theistic evolution solution to the creation-evolution controversy herein encounters a substantial, sustained, and trenchant critique. The team of scientific, philosophical, and theological scholars assembled by the editors have joined to confront the venerable theory with a stinging challenge that its adherents will have to answer if they value their scholarly integrity. This is necessary reading for those who wrestle with the great questions surrounding the origin of life (Peter A. Lillback, President, Westminster Theological Seminary).

For further reading/research, here is a remarkable and very helpful website: [Aquinas.design](http://Aquinas.design)

Timothy F. Conklin, D.D.

Charles W. Asbell, Ph.D.

**McKnight, Scot. *Colossians*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2018. ix+442 pp.; Hb.; \$55.00.**

McKnight begins this major commentary on Colossians with the observation that the letter is Paul's "apostolic vision that sought to redesign the Roman Empire" (1). That "redesign" is based on Paul's gospel of Jesus Christ and Paul's gospel, McKnight says, can be reduced to the term "mystery," Paul's "term in this letter for God's plan to reconcile Gentiles with Jews, slaves with free, and all manner of social identities into one large family called the church" (4). According to the letter to the Colossians, this new family challenges the dark powers of the present age, whether they are Greco-Roman gods and emperors or the nationalism and imperialism of the modern age.

With respect to the authorship and date of Colossians, McKnight begins with a critique of the method usually used in Pauline authorship discussions. He questions the validity of comparing Colossians to the other letters which are known to be authentically from Paul. The problem, says McKnight, is we really do not have proof Galatians (for example) was written by Paul. In fact, all ancient letters were mediated through a secretary, or perhaps even a series of scribes. Paul's letters were often written along with others who worked with him, Timothy for example.

Although there are differences in vocabulary and style, McKnight lists several clear similarities between Colossians and the other so-called authentic letters: the authority of Paul, Christology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. In each case there

are some unique elements and distinctive nuances, but each theological area does not contrast with the “pure Paul” of Romans and Galatians (16). The doctrine of justification and an emphasis on the Holy Spirit are missing from Colossians, but this is not part of the themes of the letter. He concludes his discussion of authorship with the curmudgeonly conclusion Paul did not write any of his letters, but Paul is behind all his letters (18).

McKnight favors the view Paul was in Ephesus when he wrote Colossians (and Philemon) in the mid-50s, perhaps as late as 57. The traditional view Paul wrote from Rome sometime in the early 60s is problematic because of the travel notes in Colossians and Philemon. Of course the main weakness of an Ephesian origin for the letter is there is no explicit reference to an Ephesian imprisonment. Yet an origin in Ephesus allows the interpreter to hear echoes of the culture of Ephesus in the letter, especially the presence of exorcists and magicians from Acts 19:13-20 and (I would add), the “powers” from the letter to the Ephesians (39).

The other introductory issue unique to Colossians is the nature of the opponents against whom Paul writes. McKnight calls them “the Halakic Mystics of Colossae.” The matter is complicated by the fact we know very little about Colossae compared to other Greco-Roman cities such as Ephesus. McKnight interacts at length with Jerry Sumney’s *Identifying Paul’s Opponents* (Bloomsbury, 2015) and agrees with Sumney’s call for caution in the case of the opponents at Colossae, but he would allow for more evidence to be drawn from the ethical section of the book. McKnight agrees with Ian Smith’s *Heavenly Perspective: A Study of the Apostle Paul’s Response to a Jewish Mystical Movement at Colossae* (T&T Clark, 2006) and “riffs” on Smith’s major points (29). The opponents were operating with a Jewish set of ideas allied with the kind of dualism found both in Judaism and Hellenism. This dualism led to a “world-denying asceticism.” Although they tended to “entangle themselves” with the elemental powers of this world, it is doubtful they actually worshiped angels.

The final section of the introduction to the commentary is a sketch of Paul’s theology in the letter. In reviewing recent scholarly discussion of Paul’s theology, McKnight concludes it is necessary to construct a Pauline theology which “transcends the soteriological schemes of Western theology” (51). He has three recent theological contributions in mind when he makes this statement. First, he acknowledges the contributions of James Dunn’s *Pauline Theology* (Eerdmans, 1998) and N. T. Wright’s *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Fortress, 2013), but also sees recent contributions by Louis Martyn and Douglas Campbell and the “apocalyptic

Paul” to be on the right track and renders the old perspective versus the new perspective passé (46).

The second recent contribution to Pauline studies which bears on Pauline theology in Colossians in John Barclay’s *Paul and the Gift* (Eerdmans, 2015). Barclay’s rich description of Paul’s understanding of grace in the literature of the Second Temple Judaism ought to be required reading before any scholar attempts to sketch out Paul’s theology (or write a commentary on a Pauline letter). Third, McKnight considers recent series of monographs by Michael Gorman “some of the finest articulations of a Pauline theology” (49). Gorman is sometimes cited as an example of participationist theology and balances all the emphases of modern Pauline studies (50). He does suggest a modification to Gorman’s term cruciformity, with a suggestion of missional-Christoformity (a phrase appearing often in the commentary itself).

In his own fourteen page sketch of Pauline theology, McKnight attempts to “slightly reorient Dunn and Wright and Gorman” building on where “Wright ends his *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* and where Gorman lands: reconciliation and mission” (51). Perhaps it is time for McKnight to turn his attention to a fully developed Pauline theology textbook.

The body of the commentary proceeds through the outline of Colossians in smaller units. Each section begins a short orientation and translation of the text with numerous notes comparing the NIV and CEB. The commentary itself moves from phrase to phrase with technical details and Greek grammatical comments relegated to copious footnotes. When Greek words appear in the main body of the commentary they are transliterated so readers without Greek training will be able to follow the argument. Most interaction with scholarship appears primarily in the footnotes, making for a remarkably readable commentary. On occasion he must deal with technical details or theological problems (such as the meaning of baptism in 2:11). In these cases he provides material in the footnotes to point interested readers to more detailed articles and monographs.

McKnight’s prose is engaging and there are occasionally rhetorical flourishes intended to amuse the reader. Rarely does a technical commentary entertain as well as educate. But McKnight also demonstrates his pastoral heart, never straying from Paul’s pastoral purposes in the letter. This commentary will be useful for scholars, pastors, teachers, and interested laypersons who want to dig deep into the text of Colossians.

Usually commentaries on Colossians also include a section on Philemon. Scot McKnight's commentary on Philemon in the New International Commentary on the New Testament series was originally intended to be included with this forthcoming Colossians commentary, However, Eerdmans decided to publish Philemon separately (see my review of his Philemon commentary here). McKnight also contributed a commentary on James in this series (Eerdmans, 2011).

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**McKnight, Scot. *Philemon*. 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 Philipppians). Perhaps editors consider the letter too short to merit 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 problem of 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 master. 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).

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 proves a twenty-two page description of slavery in the Roman world, summarizing a wide range of recent scholarship on Roman slavery. He carefully defines slaving and describes the 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 these subsections are illustrated with some Greco-Roman source and each example could be multiplied. McKnight provides the illustration and ample reference 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 of 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 world of the Roman first century and read Philemon in that context.

This is material valuable, 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 persist 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 its 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, 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.

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**Chou, Abner. *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers: Learning to Interpret Scripture from the Prophets and Apostles*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Academic, 2018. 251 pp. Pb. \$23.99**

This new monograph from Abner Chou has its origins in an undergraduate class in hermeneutics taught by William Verner at The Master's University where he is now associate professor of Bible. Chou's task in this study is to describe what he calls the prophetic hermeneutic (chapters 3-4) and demonstrate the apostolic hermeneutic evidenced in the New Testament was essentially the same (chapters 5-6). With this biblical foundation, Chou then develops a Christian hermeneutical strategy (chapter 7) which he argues is faithful to how the Old Testament prophets read earlier Scripture and how the New Testament apostles read the prophets.

Chou claims "Old Testament intertextuality demonstrates the prophets were exegetes and theologians" (93), they were "scholars of Scripture" (47). In the New Testament the "apostles used the Old Testament contextually" (121) and were "remarkably consistent with each other in how they interpret and apply the Scriptures" (196). For Chou, the "Christian hermeneutic follows the prophets and apostles, and is thereby a hermeneutic of obedience" (23). In order to demonstrate the first two points, he marshals evidence of inner-biblical exegesis (to use Michael Fishbane's term). Chou begins with clear examples drawn from the prophets using earlier texts and demonstrates there are trajectories from earlier texts to later ones. For example, the prophets use the Exodus events to describe a future "new Exodus." This is new revelation, but the later prophetic writer did not find a hidden meaning in the earlier text nor did the later writer change the meaning of the original text. As Chou says, the later writer draws out certain consequences from the earlier revelation (91).

In his second chapter he states three presuppositions. First, a reader ought to seek the author's original intent. The task of hermeneutics is to trace the author's logic and clearly understand what the author intended his readers to understand from a text. Second, there is a difference between meaning and significance. The task of exegesis is to understand the meaning of the text, but Scripture has significance for the lives of contemporary Christians. The meaning of the text has ramifications for Christ-followers in other contexts. Third, intertextuality is found throughout Scripture. Later in the book he argues every Old Testament book alludes to every other book (53). For the most part these presuppositions are not problematic for conservative scholars or evangelical in general.

Since Chou uses the term intertextuality throughout the book, he ought to carefully define what he means by this often used word. Unfortunately, he does not contrast his view of intertextuality with reader-response criticism or other more radical uses of the term. One common problem in intertextual studies is demonstrating an allusion to another text exists. By way of methodology, Chou briefly endorses a modified form of Richard Hays's now standard set of criteria (39-40). In practice, Chou has a conservative view of intertextuality (not surprising given his evangelical commitments). The examples given throughout the book lean toward quotations and clear allusions and rarely fall into Hays's category of an "echo of Scripture."

Chou uses intertextuality (as he defines it) to map redemptive history and to read Scripture in light of previous revelation. This raises the issue of "going beyond the Bible" or what Chou calls "Trajectory Hermeneutics." He is clear his method is not the same as William Webb in his *Slaves, Women, and Homosexuals* (226-7). Chou finds this method problematic since it misconstrues the redemptive historical trajectory with "movement in redemptive history" (228). He is concerned the trajectory some writers trace in Scripture results in a non-biblical conclusion. Given his interaction with Webb and others who use a trajectory method to support a more egalitarian view of the role of women in ministry, it may be the case in that particular issue Chou disagrees with the end point of the post-biblical trajectory rather than the method itself.

Since the prophets "intentionally positioned their writings for later writers to use" (119) The New Testament use of Old Testament texts underscores the continuity between the Testaments. Chou focuses on quotations and clear allusions to Old Testament texts to demonstrate his point that the New Testament is the exegetical foundation of the Old Testament prophets in both the "big picture" of the Old Testament narrative as well as the details of individual texts. This is true for the Gospel writers as well as Paul, James, Peter and John. Chou gives examples for each demonstrating how the author reflects both the redemptive history of the Old Testament as well as citing (or alluding) to specific texts to make their theological points.

Chou makes his case that later writers built on earlier texts and interpreted them within a redemptive biblical theology. The broad examples he uses in the book are designed to support his thesis, although for any given example someone might raise objections. For example, within the canon of the Old Testament there is always the question of precedence. For example, did Joel use Isaiah, or was Joel

written before Isaiah? Arguments can be made for either direction of inner-biblical exegesis in this case, or even for a common source. A second problem for Chou is oral tradition as opposed to textual tradition. Intertextual studies by definition focus on the exegesis of a text, but it is quite likely Isaiah 40-55 is using Exodus and wilderness traditions rather than citing verses from a physical copy of the Book of Exodus as we know it today. Even in the New Testament texts were more often heard than read. If Jesus alludes to a text in his teaching, his audience would quite literally “hear the echo” of Scripture. But modern readers only have the report of the allusion as recorded by a Gospel writer. This adds a second layer of possible inner-biblical exegesis.

Despite these reservations (which in many ways go beyond the scope of the book), Chou’s *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers* is a good introduction to the complexity of the intertextual nature of both the Old and New Testament.

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**Blackwell, Ben C., John K. Goodrich and Jason Maston. *Reading Mark in Context: Jesus and Second Temple Judaism*. Grand Rapids, Mich. Zondervan, 2018. 286 pp. Pb; \$24.99.**

This new volume of essays joins *Reading Romans in Context* (Zondervan, 2015), also edited by Blackwell, Goodrich and Matson. The book works its way through the Gospel of Mark by comparing a section of the Gospel to a particular text from the literature of the Second Temple Period. The chapters are brief and written by experts in the study of the Gospels. But they are also written to appeal to people outside of the insular world of scholarly academics.

One of the important ramifications of E. P. Sanders’s book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* is the importance of Second Temple literature for reading the New Testament in a Jewish context. Sanders challenged scholars to actually read Jewish literature rather than rely on well-worn anachronistic descriptions drawn from secondary literature. Despite the reservations of John Piper and others on the value of using Second Temple literature to illuminate the Bible, most New Testament scholarship post-Sanders recognizes the value of the Second Temple period for

setting the context for Jesus, Paul, and other New Testament writers.

Each of the book's thirty chapters begins by setting the section into the context of Mark's gospel followed by a brief introduction to the non-canonical book used in the chapter. The author of the chapter then offers a short commentary on the text of Mark using the lens of the Second Temple text selected for that chapter. The chapter concludes with three sections entitled "for further reading." First, the author offers examples of other Second Temple texts which may shed light on the particular section of Mark examined in the chapter. The second section lists English translations and critical editions for the Second Temple text used in the chapter. Third is a list of secondary literature bearing on the theology of the particular section of Mark.

There is no need to summarize every chapter of this book, two or three examples will be sufficient. Elizabeth Shively reads Mark 3:7-35 through the lens of the *Testament of the Twelve*, focusing specifically on the binding of Beliar in the *Testament of Zebulon* 9:8 and the *Testament of Levi* in 18:12. This background sheds light on Jesus's exorcisms and the saying "no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house" (Mark 3:27). Her secondary literature section has seven items, three on Jesus as an exorcist and two on Jewish eschatology and two on the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*.

Timothy Gombis discusses the Triumphal Entry (Mark 11:1-11) as a "subversion of triumphalism" by reading the text alongside the "triumphal entry" of Simon in 1 Maccabees 13. Mark presents Jesus as a faithful Davidic ruler while the crowds of disciples want to make him a conquering military hero like Simon (178). Gombis points interested readers to Psalm of Solomon 17 as additional background to the triumphal entry along with relevant parallel material in Second Maccabees and Josephus.

Jonathan Pennington compares the Parables of Enoch (1 Enoch 37-71) and the coming of the Son of Man in Mark 13:1-37. Pennington focuses on two key elements from the Parables of Enoch, its apocalyptic worldview and the use of the phrase "son of man." This chapter is very good as it is, but also frustrating because there is so much in these thirty-seven verses which need to be set in the context of the Second Temple period. Not only is the biblical section too large for a short chapter, the parables of Enoch is a large unit which is difficult to summarize in a few pages. There is about a page of text from 1 Enoch reproduced in this chapter, I would have liked less fully-quoted passages from 1 Enoch and more commentary

on how 1 Enoch and Jesus share a similar “stock apocalyptic imagery” (215).

*Reading Mark in Context* is not a traditional commentary. The authors of each section focus on a single theological issue from the world of Second Temple Period Judaism. In some cases, the teaching or actions of Jesus are quite similar his Jewish contemporaries, but often Jesus subtly subverts what a Jewish listener might have expected to hear from a Jewish rabbi. For any given section of Mark covered in the book there are many other topics and texts which could have been the subject of the chapter. The book focuses only on Jewish literature for the background to the Mark, it would also be possible to write a similar book focusing on Greco-Roman material which illuminates the text. But to paraphrase the conclusion to the Gospel of John, these texts were chosen so that the reader might understand Jesus in a Second Temple Jewish context.

This book will be an excellent introduction for many readers to the literature of the Second Temple period and the application of that background material to the Gospel of Mark. The authors provide enough additional bibliographical material to assist students in finding in-depth studies of this literature.

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**Duff, Paul B. *Jesus Followers in the Roman Empire*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2017. xii+263 pp. Pb; \$30.**

It is common for a modern reader of the New Testament to read their spiritual experience into the earliest Jesus followers. But words like conversion, baptism, and church have modern nuances of meaning which are sometimes quite different than the first century. For example, as the early Jesus movement moved away from Jerusalem and into the Roman world, evangelists reached out to Gentiles; Roman pagans who worshiped both local gods and imperial deities. Duff compares the ancient context of the New Testament to an alien, foreign environment (241).

What would the Roman culture think when someone joined a Christian community? Since Christians worshiped Jesus exclusively, they rejected family and local gods. As Duff explains, what we call “conversion” would be seen by the Romans as a “deserting ancestral traditions as a defection from ancestral customs

for foreign laws” (115-6). By accepting the hospel of Jesus Christ these “converted pagans” were challenging accepted cultural values and they put themselves in mortal danger.

Paul Duff’s *Jesus Followers in the Roman Empire* attempts to set the Jesus movement into the context of the ancient world. This book sets some of his previous more technical work on the churches in Revelation, *Who Rides the Beast? Prophetic Rivalry and the Rhetoric of Crisis in the Churches of the Apocalypse* (Oxford 2001) and his recent *Moses in Corinth: The Apologetic Context of 2 Corinthians 3* (NovTSup 159; Brill 2015) into a more popular form.

In the first section of the book, Duff begins with a survey of the three competing worldviews in which the Jesus movement developed. Chapter 1 sets the stage by tracing the Hellenization of Judea and the rise of Roman power after 63 B.C. In some ways Jews were open to Greek culture, but reacted strongly against the attempt to force Jews to Hellenize by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Having set this context, Duff then gives a short account of the Jesus movement and the “quest for the historical Jesus.” He correctly observes “that all of Jesus’s teaching and actions were performed in a Jewish context” (63) and that the claim Jesus was the Messiah can be traced to Jesus’s own teaching (67). Duff then moves to the development of the movement after the resurrection (although what the disciples of Jesus actually experienced is unclear to Duff (70). He is suspicious of using Acts as a historical source since he dates the book late, written A.D. 80-120 (68) and contains “novelistic interpretations” (74). Duff observes that Paul did not focus on the Kingdom of God as the other Jesus followers did, preferring to call Jesus Lord or Son of God (75).

Chapter 3 traces the movement from idols to the true God. Although Duff is doubtful about the historicity of the book of Acts (101), Acts 14 as a model for understanding paganism and the gods. (Duff defends his use of the term pagan in his introduction.) In the Roman world, there were many gods and those gods were like humans and occasionally interacted with people (90). Sometimes this interaction was good, and humans might cajole a god into acting on their behalf through worship and sacrifice. That Paul and Barnabas could be gods was a real possibility for the people of Lystra in Acts 14. Paul’s sermon in Acts 14 is significant since he declares he worships the “living and true” God (as opposed to the not-living and false gods of the pagan world). Thus God’s wrath is coming on all people and he will judge the world through his son, “whom he raised from the dead.” By accepting the message of Jesus even the pagans can escape this coming wrath.

This preaching was attractive to some pagans and they not only listened to the message Paul preached, but accepted it and turned from false idols to the living God (1 Thess 1:9-10). What was it in Paul's preaching that was compelling to the Greco-Roman world? There were people throughout the empire who were already attracted to Judaism (the God Fearers like Cornelius in Acts 10) and perhaps others who were attracted to Judaism without making a commitment. For Duff, Paul was an "itinerant Judean religious expert" (136) who used the Hebrew Scripture and worked miracles in order to reach people who were already interested in religions from the "mysterious east."

Duff uses Paul's statement in Galatians 3:28 to describe the earliest churches in the pagan world. Paul's ideal church was "neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, slave nor free." The earliest Jesus movement was a family in which women played a significant role. Similarly, Paul's churches had a place for women as well. He surveys the list of women who Paul specifically mentions in this letters (Phoebe, Chloe, Priscilla, etc.) Duff dismisses 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 as an interpolation, although he does not argue this point (162) and does not think Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles, so 1 Timothy 2:11-12 does not represent Paul's churches (166-7). Although there were a few wealthy members, the earliest Christians were from fairly low economic and social status (192).

The third section of the book is a pair of chapters treating the accommodations the Jesus movement made as well as the resistance to the Empire. By committing themselves to the exclusive worship of Jesus, new Christians severed ties with the culture in which they lived. Duff compares early churches with voluntary associations in the Roman world. Like a local house church, these associates met regularly and often had sacred rituals and moral expectations. Baptism and the Lord's Supper have parallels with these associations, but the worship of Jesus as Lord sets the early church apart from any pagan counterpart (207).

Gentiles in Paul's churches would have been under enormous pressure to participate in civic life, including festivals dedicated to various gods. In chapter 8 Duff describes some of these civic festivals or sacred meals at temples. Could a Christian attend a birthday celebration for a family member if the meal was hosted at a local temple? Modern readers are often confused by the issue of eating meat sacrificed to idols in the New Testament, including Acts, Paul's letters and the book of Revelation. Marriage to a non-believer was also a complicated issue, as 1 Corinthians 7 makes clear. Both controversies continue well into the second century; Duff cites Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho and Tertullian as an examples.

Duff succeeds in his goal of immersing the reader in the ancient world, teasing

out the implications living in the Greco-Roman world for the early Jesus movement. In a study such as this I would have expected more on the Imperial Cult (only a few pages, 86-88). In addition, there is little on Paul's view of the Empire (was Paul anti-imperial?) Since Duff is skeptical of the book of Acts, he does not make much use of Paul's activity in Ephesus in Acts 19 or the challenge of the gospel to the cult of Artemis. Nevertheless, *Jesus Followers in the Roman Empire* is a valuable introduction to the study of early Christianity.

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**Richards, E. Randolph and Joseph R. Dodson. *A Little Book for New Bible Scholars*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2018. 116 pp. Pb. \$9.00**

This new addition to IVP Academic's Little Book series is an encouragement to fall in love with the noble calling of biblical studies. Previous books in the series include Kelly Kopic (for new theologians), Paul Copan (for new philosophers) and Josh Reeves and Steve Donaldson, (for new scientists). E. Randolph Richards is a veteran of biblical studies, having written many articles and books, including *Misreading Scripture through Western Eyes* and *Paul Behaving Badly* (both with Brandon J. O'Brien) and contributed to *Rediscovering Jesus* (with David Capes and Rodney Reeves). Joseph Dodson is a professor of biblical studies at Ouachita Baptist University and has contributed several books including *The 'Powers' of Personification: Rhetorical Purpose in the 'Book of Wisdom' and the Letter to the Romans* (DeGruyter, 2008).

Richards and Dodson believe the church needs quality biblical scholars who work with the biblical text, do quality exegesis, or produce material which illuminates the text of the Bible. In this book they offer advice to students who are working towards a career in academia. They point out bad exegesis dilutes and distorts the gospel and can actually hurt members of the body of Christ (49). A career in biblical studies may take the form of pastoral ministry or teaching in the majority world. The church needs well-trained pastors to provide biblical based answers to the sloppy and dangerous use of the Bible common among many congregations.

Some of the advice in the book is familiar. For example, Richards and Dodson

encourage students to work on their own spiritual life, to be involved in church and community (don't be a hermit), and to be aware scholarship can "puff up." The call on biblical scholars is to serve in ministry (101) and take care of their heart (105). They warn new biblical scholars to avoid fads, citing the example of the resurgence of Reformed theology among younger Christians. Dodson sheepishly confesses he did devotions using the Westminster Catechism (he now considers himself a "recovering Calvinist"). The trouble is distinguishing between fad and a serious movement within scholarship, but that is for another book.

Perhaps the most important chapter in the book is their admonition to remember biblical studies is an "equal opportunity vocation." Take a look around most sessions at national scholarly meetings (ETS or SBL); participants are mostly white and mostly male. Richards and Dodson want to encourage people outside western academia to become scholars and contribute to biblical studies. They quote Lynn Cohick at length on her career as a biblical scholar (82-3). But this section of the book wants to avoid putting scholars into pigeon-holes based on ethnicity or gender. A Latino does not only create a "Latino reading" nor should a female scholar's work be considered "a woman's view" of the text. If a person is contributing good scholarship then they should not be put into some subcategory (and potentially disregarded as only offering a female perspective).

The book includes a series of quotes from established biblical scholars. Many of these pass along advice the scholar received from an older scholar.

*A Little Book for New Bible Scholars* is an inexpensive book which would make an excellent gift to a student who is working hard at a biblical studies degree, whether in a Christian undergraduate program, seminary, or at Ph.D level. Older scholars reading this book will recognize some of their own advice to students and perhaps remember their first love for biblical studies.

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**Allert, Craig D. *Early Christian Readings of Genesis One: Patristic Exegesis and Literal Interpretation*. BioLogos Books on Science and Christianity. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2018. 338 pp. Pb. \$36.99**

Craig Allert is a professor of religious studies at Trinity Western University in Langley, British Columbia and an expert on early Christianity and the development of Christian doctrine. His 2002 monograph *Revelation, Truth, Canon and Interpretation: Studies in Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho* (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 64; Leiden: E.J. Brill) discussed how the second century writer Justin understood Scripture.

This new book is the fourth in the BioLogos Books on Science and Christianity series published by IVP Academic. Allert addresses the use and abuse of early church writers to support certain views of Genesis 1. The main purpose of the book is to correct common misconceptions about what the church fathers meant by literal interpretation and “creation out of nothing.” Throughout the book Allert draws on material produced by Answers in Genesis (AiG), Institute for Creation Research (ICR), and Creation Ministries International (CMI). Some of this material appears in popular formats, including blog posts. These organizations generally reject any higher critical approaches to exegesis and “appropriate the church fathers as advocates of a nascent creation science position” (107).

After a preliminary chapter outlining what he means by the church fathers, Allert offers several examples of “how not to read the fathers.” He provides several examples of popular writers on the issue of creation who claim the church fathers read Genesis one as referring to literal days, usually alongside the claim the Church considered the days in Genesis 1 to be literal, 24-hour days until the Enlightenment, Darwinism, and theological liberalism. For Allert, there are several problems with the use of the fathers by most Creationists. First, they proof-text and overgeneralize.

For example, Creationists cite Basil as an example of young-earth creationism in the church fathers, then assume he represents the whole of the “church fathers” (without citing any other examples). Second, among conservative Christianity, there is a general lack of knowledge about the church fathers so it is almost impossible to quote them with any helpful context. As a result, writers who claim Basil was a literal six-day creationist are pulling proof-texts out of context and not taking into consideration everything else Basil said about reading Genesis 1.

In the third chapter of the book Allert discusses what the “literal interpretation” meant in Patristic exegesis. There is a popular misconception that a patristic writer

was either literal or allegorical (or spiritual) in their exegesis of Scripture. But as Allert demonstrates, the situation is more complicated than this strict dichotomy. Patristic writers often took notice of the plain meaning of a text, but then went on to create spiritual readings in order to challenge their listeners.

The main test case Allert uses in the book is Basil of Caesarea (329-379), specifically his book *Hexameron* (“six days”). Written around 370, the book is a series of sermons delivered during Lent on Genesis 1. The ninth sermon in the book is often cited by creationists as proof Basil interpreted the days of Genesis 1 as six literal days. But as Allert argues in this book, Basil is not attacking allegorical readings of Scripture, but “excessive allegorization” by the Manicheans (197). On closer examination, Basil uses the same method of reading Scripture as Origen (a church father usually vilified for his allegorical method!)

In the following two chapters of the book Allert examines two doctrines often cited as foundational by creationists; creation out of nothing (creation *ex nihilo*) and the literal day in Genesis 1. Creation out of nothing has been challenged as a theology not drawn from the Old Testament but rather constructed to respond to the eternal universe in Greek philosophy. For the literalness of the six days, Allert examines several oft-quoted church fathers and finds some support for reading the days as literal, 24-hour days. But there is nothing in Basil (for example) which indicates he thought Genesis 1 was giving a scientific (literal) description of creation (246).

Throughout the book Allert deals with the nature of creation and time. As the church accepted creation out of nothing as doctrine, Christian theologians and philosophers began to ask what God was doing before he created the universe. A possible answer to this question is my favorite line in this book: “he was getting hell ready for people who inquisitively peer into deep matters” (269). Allert examines Augustine’s view of time and eternity more closely in chapter seven. Most Christians have a sense “God is outside of time,” although likely drawn from C. S. Lewis rather than Augustine. Augustine argued God is eternal and created the world “with time” (273), and the days of creation are no more literal than God’s “rest” on the seventh day. Augustine cited John 5:17, “my father is working until now” as evidence God’s rest on the seventh day is not a literal time of rest (278). For Augustine, creation did not happen in “a time measured way” (287).

I have several comments about Allert’s book. First, I am convinced an allegorical method is not good exegesis when the text under examination is clearly not an allegory. For example, obviously Jotham’s fable in Judges 9 is some kind of an allegory, and there are figurative elements of Jesus’s parables, especially the Parable

of the Sower in Matthew 13. Allert addresses this concern with an anecdote from John MacArthur who looked back on an early sermon he wrote as a “horrible” example of allegorizing a text (p. 108). I have to agree with MacArthur, that sort of exegesis is bad. Of course this opens up the question to what an ancient writer was trying to do with a text, but that is a topic for another book.

Second, Allert proves his case the ancient church fathers were not proto-creationists and current creationists ought to stop misinterpreting them. Selective citations in order to proof-text one’s view is dangerous, since there is plenty in Basil or Augustine which would not at all be acceptable to a modern conservative creationist. But there is nothing in this book (or the church fathers) which anticipates other responses to Darwinism, such as progressive creationism (old earth creationism) or theistic evolution. Ancient writers read Genesis within their own worldview, a worldview which did not contend with modern science.

Third, Allert is correct to raise awareness the real problem is the nature of time and eternity. His discussion of Augustine’s view is important, but more theological and philosophical work needs to be done on God’s nature and his relationship with this universe. That creationists who hold to literal days in Genesis 1 do not worry too much about this issue is evident from the lack of citation of creationists in chapters 5-7 in this book.

This book is a necessary contribution to the ongoing discussion of Genesis 1. Allert corrects some serious misconceptions and offers a more contextual reading of Basil, Augustine and others who commented on Genesis 1 in antiquity.

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**Bock, Darrell L. and Mitch Glaser, eds. *Israel, the Church, and the Middle East: A Biblical Response to the Current Conflict*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 2018. 296 pp. Pb. \$24.99.**

Darrell Bock and Mitch Glaser have worked together on the topic of Israel in several books published by Kregel: *To the Jew First: The Case for Jewish Evangelism in Scripture and History* (2008), *The Gospel According to Isaiah 53* (2012), *The People, the Land, and the Future of Israel* (2014), and *Messiah in the Passover* (2016).

In the introduction to this new volume of thirteen essays, the editors point out the relationship between the Church and Israel has been a source of passionate debate for much of church history. They refer here to a historic “replacement theology” in which it is proposed the Church replaced Israel as God’s people, implying Israel has no future restoration apart from the church. Old Testament promises of restoration were more or less spiritualized as descriptions of the present church; Israel as a people had no future hopes. The development of dispensationalism in the nineteenth century was in part a response to this theology. The earliest dispensationalists drew a strong contrast between the Church and Israel, resulting in the belief Israel would be restored as God’s people in the future and therefore the Old Testament prophecies of a messianic kingdom must be taken seriously.

Modern American evangelicalism has embraced modern Israel, although this may be a result of conservative politics more than the remnants of dispensationalism. In some political circles it is fashionable to be critical of the modern state of Israel and in some theological circles it is equally fashionable to dismiss support for modern Israel and wild-eyed dispensational fantasies like the *Left Behind* sort. Glaser and Bock think there is a “significant lack of objective academic responses to books by Christian authors critical of Israel and Christian Zionism.” This collection of essays is an attempt to provide some balance between those who defend Israel and those who have legitimate concerns for the concerns of Palestinians.

The first two parts of the book cover biblical and theological foundations. Each of the authors in these two sections of the book are well-known evangelical scholars associated with major evangelical seminaries. First, Richard E. Averbeck discusses “Israel, the Jewish People, and God’s Covenants.” This essay introduces the reader to the idea of biblical covenants and suggests one of the best ways to understand the overarching story of redemption in Scripture is “to follow the historically progressive sequence of God’s redemptive covenants from the Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New covenants” (30). Based on his analysis of the Abrahamic

covenant, Auerbeck believes the land promises made to Abraham are irrevocable.

Second, Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. focuses on a prophecy concerning Egypt in Isaiah 19. At first this seems tangential to the purpose of this collection, but as Kaiser points out, in the history of the church this chapter has been treated in a symbolic or allegorical way, so that Egypt “stands for” idolatry of the Roman church. But reading Isaiah 19 with non-symbolic hermeneutic leads Kaiser to see the chapter as God painting a picture of “the days leading up to the millennium, a time when three deadlocked nations will be changed by God’s grace and be included in the Gentile harvest of the nations” (Rom 11:26).

Third, Mark Yarbrough outlines “Israel and the Story of the Bible,” beginning with a brief survey of recent suggestions for an overarching plot for the Bible. The most successful, Yarbrough suggests, is the metaphor of a four act play: creation, fall, redemption and restoration. The problem with such a high-level view of the story of the Bible is “we are not supposed to stay where it leaves us” (50). The details of the story matter, and the details, for Yarbrough, include the language of covenants, the promise of an earthly messiah, two messianic advents, a clear offer of a kingdom by the Jewish messiah Jesus, and as yet unfulfilled promises to Israel concerning land, worship and a messianic era.

Michael Rydelnik picks up on the issue of unfulfilled land promises and argues the New Testament is consistent with the Old and reaffirms the idea God gave the land of Israel to the people of Israel forever (82). Rydelnik examines several sayings of Jesus which imply a future restoration to the land, a future temple and a future kingdom ruled by the messiah. He deals with two difficult Pauline passages, Galatians 3:16 and Romans 4:13 which could be read as universalizing the promises of the Old Testament to the church, but concludes neither text is talking about the land promises.

Craig Blaising develops “A Theology of Israel and the Church,” beginning with a clear description of how of supersessionism and traditional dispensationalism understand Israel and the Church. Blaising attempts to chart a course between these two views which he calls Redemption Kingdom Theology (RKT, formerly known as progressive dispensationalism). Like traditional dispensationalism, RKT rejects the idea the church has replaced Israel, but does not see “the church as separate from the ethnic peoples of Israel and the Gentiles in the plan of God” (89). Since the Gentiles in the Old Testament were never excluded from the eschatological kingdom, the church is not excluded from the promises to Israel. In order to support this thesis, Blaising argues the “Kingdom of God has been progressively revealed in canonical theology” (90).

Mitch Glaser's essay warns against "The Dangers of Supersessionism." He begins by defining "Christian Zionism" (see for example Gerald McDermott and the other work by the editors of this volume) against "anti-Christian Zionism" (Stephen Sizer and Gary Burge, for example). The "anti-" in Glaser's description seems a rather polemic way of describing those who universalize Israel's land promises. Glaser argues "anti-Christian Zionism" follow Palestinian evangelicals who are both politically pro-Palestine and theologically supersessionist (108). He sees a statement like the Kairos Palestine Document as politically motivated and creates an environment which destroys the possibility of unity between evangelical Palestinians and Messianic Jews. No dialogue is possible when one side is only described as the victim while the other side is an aggressor in need of restraint (115).

In the final essay in the second part of the collection, Michael Vlach examines "Israel and the Land in the Writings of the Church." Vlach often contributes articles on the historic roots of dispensationalism and in this essay he argues restoration of the kingdom to Israel was the view of the earliest church, but the church largely abandoned this after the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 and the failed messianic revolt in A.D. 135. During the Patristic Era these events were viewed as divine judgments on the Jewish people. The bulk of the article traces a thin thread of restorationism present in the church until the rise of evangelism of the Jews in the eighteenth century and the rise of dispensationalism in the nineteenth century.

The first two of the three essays in the third part of the book deal with two lesser known movements. First, Erez Soref discusses the history of the Messianic Jewish Movement in modern Israel. Soref is the president of One for Israel, a non-profit organization based in Neyanya, Israel. Although there are challenges to Messianic Jews in modern Israel, Soref sees the movement as growing, there are approximately 300 messianic Jewish congregations in Israel today. Tom Doyle looks at the modern Palestinian Church within Israel. Doyle is the Middle East director of e3 Partners and is a licensed guide for the State of Israel. He points out there have been Arab believers since Pentecost (Act 2:11, but Doyle misses the point since these were likely ethnic Jews living in Roman Arabia rather than ethnic Arabs). Yet his point stands, there has been a presence of Christians among the people of the Middle East since the earliest days of the church, including Jews, Arabs, Syrians, Egyptians, etc. His article details how Bethlehem Bible College trains Palestinians to do ministry in the West Bank and includes a short interview with Jack Sara, president of BBC, a Palestinian Christian, and a Christian pastor in the Gaza Strip.

Third, Darrell Bock examines a biblical foundation for reconciliation between Jews and Arabs using Luke's "two-stage program" (promise/fulfillment, already/

not yet). He develops these in Luke-Acts and suggests the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles is a “not yet” expectation for the future. This requires a short survey of several texts in Isaiah which look forward to the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles, but also a close examination of the key text for this entire collection of essays, Romans 9-11. As applied to the “tangled mess” of the Middle East, Bock thinks the already/not yet aspect of reconciliation means modern Israel does not have *carte blanche* to do whatever they like under the guise of self-defense (183). Israel is still responsible for basic human rights in the region.

Finally, in part four of the book, three essays examine current challenges to peace in Israel. First, Mark L. Bailey answers the question, “Should Christians Support the Modern State of Israel?” For some modern evangelicals, the answer is a firm and patriotic “yes,” while those outside of conservative evangelicalism the answer is “of course not!” Bailey acknowledges there are inadequate reasons to support Israel (to jump-start Armageddon or bring material prosperity to America, for example). He believes a proper biblical view would lead to a genuine love of Israeli, Palestinian, and Arab alike (201).

Second, Craig Parshall examines the legal challenges of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Parshall is a constitutional lawyer serving as Special Counsel to the American Center for Law and Justice. His focus in this article is on the status of the modern state of Israel under international law. He concludes there is overwhelming evidence Israel is a legitimate nation, and “deserves more respect than they international critics have afforded it” (215).

The final essay in the collection asks “Is It Sinful to Divide the Land of Israel?” Messianic Jewish apologist Mike Brown responds that support of a two-state solution is not a sin, although the two-state solution is a short term solution since when Jesus returns, the land will be Israel’s alone (226).

The book includes several appendices. First, data from the 2017 Lifeway Survey of evangelical attitudes toward Israel. Second, the editors included a statement from the Alliance for Peace of Jerusalem, including a purpose statement and several affirmations and denials. Darrell Bock concludes the book with a short summary of the book. The volume concludes with an eleven page bibliography, Scripture and subject indices.

Like other recent books edited by Glaser and Bock, *Israel, the Church, and the Middle East* offers a perspective on the current state of Israel which is positive and premillennial. The church has not replaced Israel as God’s people so the eschatological promise of the Old Testament should be taken seriously. The articles

reflect a moderate dispensational viewpoint without the lurid predictions which have come to characterize dispensationalism for many readers.

Surprisingly, the book lacks dialogue. The contributors are all “Christian Zionists” to use Glaser’s term, and to a certain respect, these are the “usual suspects” for this particular topic. Although a few contributors are living in Israel working with Messianic Jewish ministries, only Tom Doyle represents a Christian Palestinian voice. The book could have been improved by seeking out contributions from individuals from a genuinely under-represented community, Christians, namely Arab Christians.

Nevertheless, this collection of essays is a welcome contribution to the ongoing discussion of the nature of biblical Israel, the Church and their relationship with the modern state of Israel.

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**Schreiner, Thomas R. *Spiritual Gifts: What They Are and Why They Matter*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2018. 172 pp.; Pb. \$16.99**

Thomas Schreiner has contributed several major works including a Romans commentary in the BENTC Series (Baker Academic, 1998), a New Testament theology and a recent biblical theology of the whole Bible (Baker Academic, 2008, 2013). This new book from B&H is a popular-level work on the often contentious issue of spiritual gifts. The first half of the book is not controversial since Schreiner discusses gifts in general. Most readers will be interested his discussion of prophecy, tongues and cessation of these gifts in chapters six through eleven. Like most cessationists, Schreiner does not deny there are no miracles in the present age and his view of tongues and prophecy does not imply anything about God healing people in the present age (165). However, he argues both prophecy and tongues do not continue in the present time.

The first chapter is a summary of J. I. Packer’s observations of the strengths and weaknesses of the Charismatic Movement. In the following four chapters Schreiner carefully defines spiritual gifts and clarifies what Scripture says about the gifts. He lists the various gifts found in Scripture and offers brief definitions of them, dividing them into “gifts of speaking” and “gifts of service.” The two chapters

entitled “Five Truths about Spiritual Gifts” seem like ten more or less random topics; any of these ten observations might have made a short chapter by itself. For example, his discussion of “The Baptism of the Spirit at Conversion” is nearly as long as the other chapters in the book. The section is preceded by a few pages arguing the gifts are giving for the edification of the church and is followed by a section on edification coming through understanding one’s gift. The argument of the book may have benefited by separating the discussion of the baptism of the Holy Spirit into a full chapter since the meaning of this phrase is misunderstood, used and abused in contemporary Christian culture.

Schreiner devotes two chapters to the gift of prophecy. He first defines prophecy as a spontaneous revelation from God rather than “Spirit inspired exegesis.” Prophecy can instruct, encourage or warn God’s people (99). He devotes twenty-one pages to Wayne Grudem’s suggestion that New Testament prophecy is different than Old Testament prophecy, specifically that New Testament prophets like Agabus made prophecies which were fallible. In the case of Acts 21:11, Agabus predicted the Jews would bind Paul, but when he is arrested in Jerusalem it is the Romans who bind him. Grudem considered this a prophecy with an error, although virtually everyone else considers the prophecy accurate, the Jews were responsible for Paul’s arrest even if the Romans did the literal binding of his hands.

Unlike Grudem, Schreiner does not re-define prophecy in order to find a place for it in the church. Instead he argues prophecy in the New Testament is consistent with prophecy in the Old Testament. Prophecy is not some private, internal guidance by the Holy Spirit, but foundational revelation given publically to God’s people. Schreiner makes significant use of the phrase “foundation of the apostles and prophets” in Ephesians 2:20. If prophecy still exists, then the foundation has not yet been completed (108).

The following two chapters concern the gift of tongues. First, he argues the common distinction between tongues in Acts and tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 is unconvincing. The tongues are the same, but the situation is different: the Corinthian church lacked an interpreter of the tongues. As he argued earlier in the book, spiritual gifts are given to edify the church and edification requires understanding. If the gift of tongues are not understandable, then there is no edification of the church. For Schreiner, biblical tongues is “speaking in other languages” and “those speaking ecstatic utterances do not have the biblical gift of tongues” (132).

The final two chapters deal with the arguments for cessation of the gifts, first by dispensing with an unconvincing arguments and then offering a positive argument for the cessation of gifts. The key problem is Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians

13:8-12 that “when the perfect comes” tongues will cease. If the “perfect” can be defined as the completed canon or spiritual maturity of the church, then the verse can be used to argue for cessation of tongues. Schreiner argues this is not at all what Paul meant. When Paul said we will see Jesus “face-to-face,” he was referring to the second coming of Christ.

Here Schreiner more or less agrees with a charismatic exegesis of 1 Corinthians 13. Paul is not saying gifts like tongues and prophecy will necessarily pass away at some point prior to the Second Coming, but the need for these particular gifts will cease. Schreiner’s argument for the cessation of gifts is based on his view prophets and apostles were foundational for the church. After the foundational period, Scripture is in the sole authority for the church. Certainly God does miracles in the present age, but Schreiner says “Christians can be as credulous and superstitious as unbelievers” (165). The foundation on which the church stands today is Scripture, not charismatic or ecstatic utterances.

Since this short book on spiritual gifts developed out of Schreiner’s teaching in the church rather than the academy, it is written to a general church audience. Some elements lack the exegetical details expected from a scholar like Schreiner and there are few pointers to more detailed studies (for example, the “perfect” in 1 Corinthians 13 requires more exegetical nuance than Schreiner is able to provide in this book). Schreiner does not make a distinction between revelatory gifts and other service gifts. He includes revelatory gifts in both his categories (“gifts of speaking” and “gifts of service”). This might have served his purpose since the revelatory gifts (prophecy and tongues) can be associated with the foundation of the church.

Some readers will approach this book with a fairly entrenched view on spiritual gifts and either find it affirming or unconvincing. Nonetheless, Schreiner has provided a basic primer on a biblical view of spiritual gifts which will serve well in church Bible studies and small group discussions.

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**Ashford, Bruce Riley.** *Letters to an American Christian*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2018. 239 pp.; Pb. \$16.99.

Bruce Ashford modeled his latest book after C. S. Lewis's *Letters to an American Lady*, or perhaps *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* is a more apt comparison since the recipient of these letters is fictional. In this imaginary, one-way conversation, Ashford present a series of essays on contemporary issues in American culture. This imaginary dialogue partner is a recent convert named Christian who is studying political science and journalism at Dupont University. (It is possible Ashford took the name from Tom Wolfe's 2004 novel *I am Charlotte Simmons*, but it may be a coincidence). His goal in his book is to help Christians "construct a political paradigm that recognizes God's sovereignty over our nation, draws on our Christianity to work for the common good, and respects the dignity and rights of citizens who have differing visions of the common good" (53-4).

The first part of the book develops a Christian view of politics and public life. These first seven chapters argue the Christian faith ought to influence political views and public postures on key issues being discussed in contemporary culture. Although some Christians manage to separate their religious faith from their political views, Ashford argues in this first section even though humanity is fallen and deeply wounded by sin, God's redemption through Jesus began at the cross. Culture is corrupted by the fall but God can redeemed culture and redirect it toward Christ's intentions (29). He follows Abraham Kuyper closely in these first seven chapters. Politics and religion have distinct centers and circumferences. The church has its own "center" and therefore cannot rule politics, nor should politics rule religion (27). However, the circumference of the spheres may overlap and interact, and sometime overreach in an attempt to control the other's center (44). In the end, Ashford concludes conservative better serves this agenda than liberalism.

In part two of the book Ashford treats a series of "hot-button issues." These sixteen chapters touch lightly on a wide range of topics. Some are the typical fare for "hot-button" books since the 1970s (abortion, just war, environmentalism, religious liberty and free speech), but others touch on issues which have pushed their way to the front page of every local newspaper. These include the Black Lives Matter movement, gun legislation, immigration reform, fake news and alternative facts). Several chapters revolve around surging nationalism and responses. Some of the chapter titles are humorous teases, such as "To Shave a Yak" (on environmentalism) or "Beware the Giant Octopus" (on big government).

For some of these controversial issues, Ashford attempts to chart a course between two extremes. For example, on the issue of immigration and DACA, he suggests policy which upholds both the biblical virtues of justice and mercy. Justice requires the government produce and follow a clear immigration policy which protect citizens, but mercy and compassion recognizes immigrants are humans in God's image who ought to be protected and treated well. He therefor advocates in favor of the Dreamers. Within the fiction of the letters to an American Christian, a professor represents a more liberal view, while an Uncle John is a more conservative voice. Both are caricatures set up to make the middle path more palatable.

Given the format of the book and the intricacies of these issues, some readers will find Ashford's treatment sketchy. Two examples are his chapters on same-sex marriage, gender dysphoria and the transgender movement. The issue is so complex it is impossible to adequately address them in nine pages. Although there are a few endnotes for each chapter, most of these issues demand a "for further reading" section to point readers to more detailed studies of the issues. No one should read these short chapters as an end to the discussion. Ashford introduces in summary fashion the broad strokes of a debate and points the way toward a biblical understanding of the issue, but there is much more to be said. Many books have been written covering each "hot button" issue.

One topic which is missing from the book is women's rights. This book was published in 2018 so it is likely Ashford did not address the issue since the book was finished before the #MeToo movement began in October 2017. Given the recent developments with Paige Patterson and the 2018 Southern Baptist convention, a chapter on sexual harassment would have been timely. But other women's issues have been "hot buttons" for many years. For example, the gender wage-gap is a longstanding issue, ordination of women, or perhaps the overt sexual American culture and its effect on boys and girls would have made important chapters in this book. Remarkably, there is no chapter on pornography in the book.

Finally, the final three chapters attempt to hold out some hope for American politics. The gist of these "Why can't Republicans be nice people?" Chapter 25 laments the loss of the "art of Christian persuasion." American political discourse has become insult caricature. The chapter would have been more powerful he had mentioned Donald Trump's hateful use of Twitter. If we do not respect people with whom we disagree, Ashford says "we'll lose. Worse yet, we'll be poor witnesses for Christ. We'll be seen as calloused jerks who are nothing more than a hypocritical and bigoted special interest arm of a major political party" (216).

Since Ashford is Professor of Theology and the Provost/Dean of the Faculty at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and serves as the Provost/Dean of the Faculty for the seminary, the discussion is conservative, but it is not as conservative as some might have assumed. There are a few digs at the predominantly liberal university. For example, the political science department at DuPont University has forty-three democrats and only one Republican. In general I thought Ashford's brief overviews of these issues fell into the category of thoughtful, classic Christian conservatism. By this I mean his views are not knee-jerk, emotional, or hateful. He attempts to present his views as peacefully as possible, but he makes no apology for presenting them as the biblical view. This is not spew from the altar, but it may not make Bernie Sanders comfortable either.

I do agree with Ashford (citing N. T. Wright) that Jesus himself was “inescapably political” (32) even if he never entered into anything we would recognize as politics from a modern perspective. Jesus's challenge to the aristocratic leaders of his day, and the Paul's Gospel to the Roman world was radical and extreme. Jesus challenged the powerful men who held political power and was crucified; Paul was accused of defying the decrees of Caesar and “turning the world upside down” (Acts 17:6).

Ashford's book will a challenge for conservative readers to construct a biblical view of politics as well as their role in American culture, but I suspect Jesus would have pushed for a more radical engagement of the spirit of this age.

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**Beitzel, Barry J. and Kristopher A. Lyle, eds. *Lexham Geographical Commentary on the Gospels*. Bellingham, Wash.: Lexham Press, 2017. 583 pp.; Hb. \$49.99**

As Professor Emeritus of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Barry Beitzel has a well-deserved reputation in scholarship for his contributions to biblical geography. He edited the *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible* (Moody, 2009). His new edited volume contains forty-eight essays written by fifteen New Testament scholars who have contributed to the field of New Testament geography.

The chapters are roughly chronological, beginning with the infancy narratives, baptism and temptation before moving on to the ministry of Jesus. The book could function as a “Harmony of the Gospels” since each of the forty-eight chapters include Gospel parallel passages when available. A chapter on John 4 appears early in Jesus’s ministry, chapters on John 7:37-39 and John 9 are placed in a series of chapters on the teaching of Jesus.

Some of the essays in this book concern geographical problems. For example, Benjamin Foreman’s essay on the location of the baptism of Jesus. Todd Bolen assess the evidence for the location of the “drowned pigs” in Matthew 8:28-42 (Gadara? Gerasa? Gergesa? Kursi?). Benjamin Foreman examines evidence for the burial of Jesus, comparing the Holy Sepulcher to the Garden Tomb and concludes the Holy Sepulcher is more likely even if there is value is far more spiritually uplifting to for Protestants. But most of the essays describe locations which are less controversial, such as Perry Phillips on the Well at Sychar or Todd Bolen’s contribution on the Temple, “Magnificent Stones and Wonderful Buildings of the Temple Complex.”

Other essays in this collection deal with elements of cultural in the background of various stories in the Gospels. Elaine Phillips’s article on domestic architecture in Capernaum, Carl Laney on “Fishing the Sea of Galilee” and Chris McKinney’s “Pig Husbandry in Israel during the New Testament.” Aubrey Taylor’s chapter on the “Historical Basis of the Parable of the Pounds” deals with Roman taxation. (As a side note, this chapter does not have a single illustration in the print version of the book.)

A few of the chapters make a connection between a geographical location and a theological issue. Gordon Franz contributes a fascinating essay on the Valley of Hinnom as a metaphor for Hell. In this revised paper first read at the national Evangelical Theological Society meeting in 1987, Franz points out the earliest ref-

erence to Hinnom as a garbage dump comes from A. D. 1200. He therefore argues the word is not based on a Second Temple reality (a garbage dump), but it refers to a place of eschatological judgment (325).

Each article in this *Geographical Commentary* is well researched and written. Each has detailed bibliography pointing interested readers to detailed studies on the topic considered. The book can be used as reference or as a running commentary as one is reading through one of the Gospels. Since the articles are rich in details, the book would be an excellent companion for someone traveling to Israel for a study tour.

Like most Lexham publications, this book was published in both print and Logos Library formats. The electronic version of the book makes full use of the Logos system, including indexed searching and linking key words to other resources. For example, all biblical text is linked to your preferred Bible, or users can hover over the reference to read the text.

The electronic version of this book has many more images and graphic than the book and can include videos. For example, in the five-page section entitled “Millstones in Capernaum” (Matthew 17:24-18:14), the print edition has two photographs. The Logos format book has a map of Galilee, an info-graphic of the synagogue at Capernaum, and links to two videos, a walk-through of Capernaum which plays in the Logos software itself and a link to a seven-minute video, “Capernaum: Jesus’ Base of Operations in Galilee” on FaithlifeTV.com. This video is from *The Cultural Context of the Bible* series with David A. deSilva (although the narration sounds like it was produced with speech-to-text software). Maps, photographs and other graphics can be copied and pasted into your own documents (Word and PowerPoint, be sure to cite your source!). Many of the infographics and other resources appear in many other Faithlife resources.

The electronic version includes all the same footnotes and bibliography as the print version, and includes a “see also” section which lists all the links appearing in the section. One advantage to the electronic version is the ability to cut/paste these references into a document, or to copy them to BibTex for use in bibliography management software. Usually Logos resources are tagged to open a resource if you own the book, but I noticed Anchor Bible Dictionary articles are not tagged to open the article within Logos.

One feature missing in the electronic version is page numbers. Since the Logos version was published first and was initially intended as a fully interactive multimedia resource, there was no need for page numbers. Now that a “real book”

has been published, Logos could enhance the value of this resource by adding page number tags to the text in the electronic version. Since Logos Bible Software does an excellent job assisting users to properly cite their sources, it would be an improvement to sync the print pages to the text in the electronic book. One other minor quibble, there are a few repeated graphics; this is forgivable in the electronic version but a waste of limited space in the print version (the millstone on page 112 and 311).

The *Lexham Geographic Commentary* on the gospels is a joy to read. The articles are stimulating and well-illustrated. This book will make an excellent addition to the library of any student of the Bible, but especially for those visiting Israel. Lexham has a second volume on *Acts through Revelation* in production; hopefully additional volumes on the Old Testament will follow.

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**Yarbrough, Robert W. *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*. PNTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2018. xxxvi+604 pp. Hb; \$50. [Link to Eerdmans](#)**

This new contribution to the Pillar New Testament Commentary series by Robert Yarbrough offers insightful exegesis of these three important but often overlooked letters. As he observes in his introduction, many readers approach the Pastoral Epistles for their detailed descriptions of church leaders. In fact, these letters do contain “valuable counsel not available elsewhere in the New Testament” (1). But the list of qualifications for elders and deacons in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 are only one aspect of these letters.

The ninety-page introduction to the Letters to Timothy and Titus begins with eight theses on the heritage of the Pastoral Epistles (PE). These eight statements were drawn from Thomas Oden’s *Ministry through Word and Sacrament* (Crossroad, 1989) and adapted to the content of the PE. Although this section is only the first eleven pages of the commentary, Yarbrough clearly sets his agenda for the commentary: these letters are in

Any commentary on the PE must deal with the problem of authorship for 1-2 Timothy and Titus. As Yarbrough observes, according to the consensus opinion, the author and the audience are fictive. Paul did not write the letters and the situa-

tion in Ephesus described in 1 Timothy and on Crete in Titus reflects the late first or early second century (11). He points out that authorship issues overshadow the substance of the Pastoral Epistles (69). Unfortunately, this may be the case for Yarbrough's commentary since he accepts Pauline authorship and does not think the situation in Ephesus or Crete is fictional.

Yarbrough follows Adolf Schlatter's 1936 German commentary on the PE. Since this work was not translated into English it has been sadly ignored, but it does foreshadow what Yarbrough calls the "new look" on Paul's authorship of these letters. This new look started with Luke Timothy Johnson's acceptance of Pauline authorship in 1996. Yarbrough cites Johnson's observation "that the expulsion of the Pastorals was the sacrifice required by intellectual self-respect if scholars were to claim critical integrity and still keep the Paul they wanted most—and needed." (76). If one scans the Scripture index of a typical book on Pauline theology (Wright, Dunn, etc.), there are few if any references to the Pastoral Epistles.

The body of the commentary follows the pattern of other Pillar commentaries. After a short introduction to each pericope and the text of the NIV 2011, Yarbrough moves through the section verse-by-verse, commenting on key vocabulary in order to illuminate the meaning of the text. He intends to follow the discourse flow in order to follow the argument Paul is making and to explain the unusual words Paul uses in these letters. All Greek appears in transliteration with minimal in-text citations to standard biblical studies tools (BDAG, MM, etc.) Detailed footnotes interact with other literature on the passage. The result is a very readable commentary which is focused on the text of the Bible.

One of the most controversial passages in these letters is 1 Timothy 2:9-14, Paul's instructions concerning women in worship, Yarbrough's commentary devotes about 25 pages to these verses. By comparison, Tom Schreiner devotes 62 pages to these verses in *Women in the Church* (Third edition, Crossway, 2016) and the book has about thirty pages of bibliography. Yarbrough does not consider this a "sudden interjection of prudery" (165). Instead, it is an integral part of Paul's instruction to Timothy on worship and church order.

By way of introduction to this problematic text, Yarbrough devotes a few pages surveying the three main approaches, critical feminist, Evangelical feminist (egalitarian view), and Evangelical traditionalist (complementarian view). The first and second view do not think this passage is limiting the role of women in ministry, although the first view does this by dismissing Paul's views as misogynist (although they are probably not Paul's views at all, they reflect the conditions of the much in a much later period). The second view wants to see the Bible as authoritative

so Paul's command that a woman ought not to exercise authority over a woman is referring to some real situation in Ephesus and was not intended as command aimed at all women of all times. The third view also takes the Bible as authoritative and considers Paul's words as applicable to the present church and would therefore limit a woman's role in ministry (usually as a pastor who has authority over men). Yarbrough approaches 1 Timothy 2:11-15 with this complementarian view. But Yarbrough is quick to point out he does not intend to prevent the flourishing and ministry of women" (143). He cites with approval N. T. Wright's title for this section in his translation of 1 Timothy: "Women Must be Allowed to Be Learners" (170).

With respect to the historical situation in Ephesus, there certainly was some particular reason for Paul to prohibit women from teaching. But Yarbrough argues 1 Timothy 2:12 is both distinctive to a particular situation and universal in scope (177). He rejects negative translations of ἀθεντέω (*authenteō*), such as the KJV "usurp authority," preferring the ESV's "exercise authority" (178). The study of this particular word has generated many articles, Yarbrough follows recent research by Al Wolters and Denny Burk which argue the women in Ephesus were trying to gain an advantage over the men by teaching in a "dictatorial fashion" (180).

Like other volumes in the Pillar New Testament Commentary series, Robert Yarbrough has contributed a solid exegetical study of the Pastoral Epistles based on the English Bible which is also faithful to the Greek text. Yarbrough's acceptance of Pauline authorship and his approach to the controversial 1 Timothy 2:11-15 may cause some scholars to dismiss this excellent commentary.

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## 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. Longer articles may also be considered. A “short note” on a text or topic will be between 1000 and 2000 words. Book reviews should be about 1000 words. Several books are available for review; contact the editor for more information.

## GUIDELINES FOR MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION

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- All submissions ought to be double spaced and using Times New Roman, 12 point. For Greek and Hebrew, use a Unicode font (Times, for example). Transliteration of Greek or Hebrew is acceptable (use [www.transliterate.com](http://www.transliterate.com)).
- Use footnotes rather than endnotes
- For other questions of style, consult the SBL Handbook of Style. The guide is available at the SBL site: [http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/SBLHSrevised2\\_09.pdf](http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/SBLHSrevised2_09.pdf)
- Include a cover page with author’s name, article title and a brief abstract of the article (less than 250 words).
- Email articles to the editor: [plong@gracechristian.edu](mailto:plong@gracechristian.edu).

## SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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