TRAINING LEADERS INT'L

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# ABOUT THE JOURNAL OF GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

*The Journal of Global Christianity* seeks to promote international scholarship and discussion on topics related to global Christianity. The journal addresses key issues related to the mission of the Church in hope of helping those who labor for the gospel wrestle with and apply the biblical teaching on various challenging mission topics.

Understanding that there is a lack of trained and theologically educated leaders around the world to lead the Church and prepare future leaders, JGC targets an audience of pastors, missionaries, and Christian workers. The educational level of our audience ranges from those who have completed a bachelor level degree to those who have completed a master level and the second, those in school preparing for ministry; seminary students and professors. We realize that there are theology students, professors, and other scholars who will read and take interest in the content of this journal, but our main focus is on those working with the global church or those who are considering work with the global church. The journal assumes a high level of education among its audience but is not strictly academic.

*The Journal of Global Christianity* is published two times a year online at: www.TrainingLeadersInternational.org and presented in PDF and HTML format. It is also made available in multiple languages. 

## ARTICLES

Articles should generally be about 4,000 to 7,000 words (including footnotes) and should be submitted to the Managing Editor of *The Journal of Global Christianity*, which is peer-reviewed. Articles should use clear, concise English, following The SBL Handbook of Style (esp. for abbreviations), supplemented by The Chicago Manual of Style. They should consistently use either UK or USA spelling and punctuation, and they should be submitted electronically as an email attachment using Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx extensions) or Rich Text Format (.rtf extension). Special characters should use a Unicode font.

## REVIEWS

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# The Priority of Scripture in the Pursuit of Gospel Relevance for the African Traditional Religious Context

Philemon Yong

Over the past 60 years African theologians have questioned the impact of the gospel within the African Traditional Religious (ATR here after) context. In their pursuit of gospel relevance within ATR context, most African theologians give priority to ATR belief system over Scripture. My goal here is to briefly describe some of their approaches to the question of gospel applicability in the ATR context and then make an alternative proposal for the way forward.

At the heart of African theology is the belief that "in order for the gospel to have real encounter with the African man, [we must] translate Christianity into genuine African categories. For without [these cultural categories], Christianity will never really be integrated into African society."[1] It is therefore "The concern of African theology . . . to attempt to use African concepts and African ethos as vehicles for the communication of the gospel in an African context."[2] Behind this emphasis of authentic African Christianity is the desire to maintain African culture because,

> Culture as a way of life must be maintained. It is God's will that Africans, on accepting Christ as their Savior, become Christian Africans. Africans who become Christians should therefore remain Africans wherever their culture does not conflict with the Bible.[3]

Even as western scholars claim that Africa will soon be the center of Christianity and that Africa will become the next "representative of Christianity for the twenty-first century" and the western church will do well to learn from their African brothers and sisters,[4] African theologians continue to herald the need for authentic African Christianity, one in which the gospel is relevant in the ATR context. In other words, African theologians are more concerned with the relevance of the African church in its indigenous context than establishing a conversation about contextualization with the West.

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[1] John S. Pobee, *Toward an African Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1979), 17-18.

[2] Pobee, 18, 39. For a description of the task of African Christian theology by various authors, see *Issues in African Christian Theology*, editors, Samuel Ngewa, Mark Shaw, and Tite Tienou (Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers, 1998), 3-72

[3] Byang H. Kato, "Theological Issues in Africa," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 133 (April, 1976):146.

[4] See Andrew Walls, Africa in Christian History: Restrospect and Prospect," *Journal of African Christian Thought*, no 1 (June 1998): 2; Timothy Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan2007), 105; Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Chirstianity* (London: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4.

There are two common trends that give rise to the call for gospel impact among African theologians: the foreign nature of Christianity for Africans, and their emphasis on the ATR context in which the gospel must make sense.

My goal here is to highlight the call of our African brothers for gospel relevance; but also, to point out the challenges this call creates for the church. These theologians are in agreement in their pursuit of relevance but they are divided regarding the contextual expression of this African relevance. I believe that we must engage this topic with great caution otherwise the African church may experience more harm than good in its pursuit of gospel effectiveness.

## 1. The Foreign Nature of Christianity

In one-way or another, African theologians contend Christianity is a western or "white man's" religion, and they believe that the history of missions in Africa was anything but effective due to the foreign nature of the gospel to the people of Africa. This claim flows from the fact that early missionaries contributed to the destruction of the African traditional religious way of life by requiring that Africans abandon their traditions before becoming Christians. Furthermore for some, Christianity reached Africa via Europe and came with a "European stamp" on it. Therefore, they believe if the gospel is to be relevant in the African context, the "African stamp" must replace the "European stamp."[5]

## 2. Emphasis on the African Traditional Religion Context

Among African theologians, there are two key things to note about ATR: it is a way of life for those practicing it and they believe it prepared the way for Christianity. First, the problem African theologians find with the church is that the European gospel emphasized the salvation of the soul and promised eternal life after death, but excluded other aspects of their religious practice. For example, the church avoids the question of ancestors in relation to Christ and

> As a result, many people are uncertain about how the Jesus of the Church's preaching saves them from the terrors and fears that they experience in their traditional world-view. This shows how important it is to relate Christian understanding and experience to the realm of the ancestors.[6]

In their desire to make the gospel relevant to the African person in all aspects of life, African theologians have devised "Ancestor Christology." African Christology is concerned with the question, "*If Christ were to appear as the answer to the questions that Africans are asking, what would he*

[5] See Pobee, 17.

[6] Kwame Bediako, *Jesus and the Gospel in African: History and Experience* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004), 23.

*look like?"*[7] Ancestor Christology, it is claimed, makes Christ meaningful to the African person.[8] Connecting Christ to the ancestors keeps African men and women from living at two levels (half African and half European) since the non-African Christology of the missionaries is eliminated.[9] The challenge then is to preach Christ in a way that makes sense not to westerners but to Africans.

Second, some African theologians believe that ATR was preparatory for the arrival of Christianity and so contributed to the rapid spread of Christianity because it already contained beliefs about God, man, and the world.[10] As such, some do not see much difference between the god of ATR and the God of Jesus Christ.[11] In other words, these theologians want to return to the African religious context to find ways in which to communicate the gospel to the African people within their religious context. One senses here a priority of religious tradition over Scripture in pursuing gospel relevance in ATR context.

Therefore, African theologians conclude the gospel must be proclaimed in a new way if it is to truly impact the religious context of Africa and produce an authentically African Christianity.

### 3. How should We Respond to the Approach of African Theologians?:

The desire for a relevant gospel in the African context is welcomed. Should the church pursue gospel relevance within her context of ministry? Absolutely! Unfortunately, the marked disagreement among ATR theologians has produced nothing but conflicting paradigms of African Christianity modeled after his or her own image in the name of cultural relevance.

It is my concern that the African call for gospel relevance and subsequent response by the Western Church will cause more harm than good if they overlook four important issues.

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[7] Ibid., xi.

[8] Within Ancestor Christology view, Christ fulfills the role of he ancestors for the people. For a detailed description of Ancestor Christology, see Diane B. Stinton, *Jesus of Africa, Voices of Contemporary African Christology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004), 112-35; Benezet Bujo, *Africa Theology in Its Social Context*, trans. John O'Donohue (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 75-91; Pobee, 81-98; Tennent, 122-32.

[9] Bediako, 23.

[10] Bediako, 21. See also John S. Mbit, *Introduction to African Religion*, 2nd edition (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991), 21.

[11] Bujo equates the god of ATR ancestors with the God of Jesus Christ as identical when he says, "It is not a question of replacing the God of the Africans but rather of enthroning the God of Jesus Christ, not as the rival of the God of the ancestors, but as identical with God." See Bujo, 16.

### *3.1. African Theological Methodologies*

Other than Pobee, who offers helpful guidelines for doing African theology,[12] it is unclear what methods African theologians propose for relating the gospel to ATR contexts. It is difficult to evaluate their theological conclusions because they do not have a defined methodology. In fact, many seem to draw theological conclusions based on their experience of traditional religious practices and many ATR theologians place their previous religious experiences over Scripture. As we listen to African theologians, we must analyze their theological conclusions and determine if they are the result of careful Biblical exegesis or their traditional belief system.

### *3.2. Who is the Voice of African Theology?*

Africa is filled with diverse theologians who promote diverse theological views all based on ATR. Kato rightly points out that many of the theological tensions that exist on the continent result form the fact that over the years Africans have been sent abroad to both liberal and evangelical schools.[13] *The call to learn from African theologians should be heeded with caution since no one theologian speaks for the whole of Africa and no two African theology books are consistent in their conclusions.* Additionally, African theologians are not necessarily representatives of the overall theological views of the people. If we want to hear the theology of the common person in the village, we listen to their songs and stories. Only then will we know who Jesus is to them. Could it be that African theologians and African theology do not represent the views of African Christians?

### *3.3. Influence on Western Scholars*

Many westerners affirm the claims of African theologians that Christianity is a foreign religion. For example, Tennent asserts that in past years, African Christians/theologians were not encouraged to reflect on their own theological questions. They were rather "taught to mimic what they had been taught" concerning any given theological topic. Therefore, their answers to theological questions were whatever the missionaries taught them. For example, on the doctrine of Christ, the Africans mimicked their teachers (missionaries) and they faithfully repeated whatever they had been taught about Christ.[14]

While these statements are passed on as fact, it is unclear how exactly this happened. African theologians writing about these events were not the first recipients of the gospel when it came to Africa. Furthermore, it also assumes that Africans are in some way incapable of grasping the truth

[12] Pobee, 20-23.

[13] Kato, 144.

[14] Tennent, 109.

of the gospel as preached from Scripture unless it is translated into traditional concepts. It was not true then and it is not true now.

### *3.4. The Role of Scripture in Theological Reflection*

In their task to defend African Traditional Religion, some theologians end up defending practices that are incompatible with the Bible. As Kato notes, "Their burning desire to defend African personality is given precedence over scriptural injunctions."[15] Unfortunately, the absolute authority and sufficiency of Scripture is not a recurring theme among many African theologians. This is reason enough to give us pause.

## 4. A Proposed Alternative to African Theology Approach

African theologians raise an important issue concerning gospel relevance in ATR context. Whether one agrees with them or not, the need for gospel relevance in the African religious context (and others like it) is undeniable. The gospel we preach must make sense in our ministry context before it can transform lives and culture.

But, is a local theology such as African theology, the answer to the question of relevance? One alternative is that rather than pursuing an African theology informed by ATR religious past, the African church should systematically explore what the whole Bible teaches on any given topic. Africans can then apply their Christian theology to the daily needs of their every day lives. Kato writes,

> The term 'African theology' has come to mean different things to different people. Furthermore, it has the inherent danger of syncretism. The term therefore is viewed with suspicion. It is more appropriate to talk of Christian theology and then to define whatever context it is related to, e.g., reflections from Africa; the context of marriage in Africa; and the spirit world in Africa. But a continuing effort should be made to relate Christian theology to the changing situations in Africa. Only as the Bible is taken as the absolute Word of God can it have an authoritative and relevant message for Africa.[16]

African theology creates a problem for the church in relating the gospel to culture. It seeks to develop a theological system based on traditional religion rather than Scripture. A Christian theology approach to the question of gospel relevance in ATR context gives priority to the sufficiency and authority of Scripture, is universal, can be evaluated against the content of Scripture, and can be applied in any context.

I believe God's Word (OT and NT) is the singular governing authority over every theological discussion and that any attempt at gospel relevance is bound by its instructions. This means that

[15] Kato, 146-47

[16] Kato, 148.

specific questions raised by African theologians ought to be addressed when pastors, teachers, and missionaries transition from gospel and theological foundations (rooted in thorough Biblical exegesis) to practical application in their specific ATR context.

# The Challenge of the Brain Drain Within Global Theological Education[1]

Christopher Wright

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ABSTRACT

The epicenter of global Christianity is increasingly moving to the south and east as the church continues to increase in South America, Africa, and Asia but decrease in the West. Resources for theological education, however, remain in the West, particularly human resources where many seminary instructors possess doctoral degrees. In recent years some from the west have been recruiting scholars from the global south and east. This takes valuable human resources from areas of the world that need it most. This article encourages western institutions to be aware of the needs of schools in the majority world and encourages majority world scholars to serve the areas of the world in which the church is growing most.

## Nathan's Parable

The Lord sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

"Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."

David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die!

He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."

Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! [2]

[1] This is the text of a paper presented at a gathering of principals and presidents of North American and Majority World seminaries (approximately equal numbers of both), convened under the auspices of the Lausanne Movement, ICETE (The International Council for Evangelical Theological Education), the Langham Partnership and Overseas Council, in Boston in May 2012.

[2] 2 Sam 12:1–7. *The New International Version* 2011 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan).

In the world of evangelical theological education, we have gross disparity of rich and poor. This was a focal point during the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education conference in Chiang Mai, 2006, at which I gave the paper "Addressing the 'North-South' Divide: Issues in Global Theological Education." It is a disparity that exists at many levels—perhaps most glaringly in financial resources, but also, in libraries, campus buildings and facilities, access to conferences, academic networks, etc. At this moment we are thinking of the huge disparity in the availability of adequately qualified seminary faculty members.

- In Rich World theological education—there are more PhDs than we can find jobs for
- In Poor World[3] theological education—there are very few PhDs, and in some countries none or just one—in the main theological disciplines.

The problem is worsened by the continuing 'brain drain'—that seemingly inexorable pull to the west, drawing to itself the brightest and best and most qualified evangelical academics from the poorer parts of the world to the richer.

I do realize that this is a sensitive issue.[4] We represent both sides of Nathan's parable. I feel I must speak as I see and hope that it will be accepted that the point is not to offend anyone, but to address a serious issue within the global body of Christ.

In Langham Partnership, we grieve deeply over this at times. The Langham Scholars Program has been operating for over 40 years since John Stott founded the Langham Trust in 1970. Langham has supported 400 Scholars globally in that time, serving all over the majority world.

Today, it costs about $100k to get a Scholar to PhD—over three to five years. Over 40 years it could be anything between $10–20 million has been spent. We thank God that around 85% of all those we have funded have returned and are in teaching and leadership jobs in their home countries. A very few fail to get their doctorate degree and a few fail to return to their home country, but on the whole we rejoice with gratitude in a high rate of success and return. Increasingly we are funding Scholars doing their doctorate in majority world doctoral programs in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and the risk of non-return is greatly reduced.

The prime vision of Langham Partnership is to serve and strengthen the church in majority world countries, "to see churches equipped for mission and growing to maturity through the leadership of pastors and teachers who believe, teach and live by the Word of God."[5]

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[3] I am well aware that this is a very simplistic 'rich-poor' dichotomy, and that the reality is far more complex and not merely economic. However, I am simply using the polarity of Nathan's parable, and highlighting what is certainly a fact—however nuanced it needs to be—that some seminaries exist in relative wealth, and others in extreme poverty.

[4] This paper was delivered at the ICETE Theological Consultation held at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Hamilton, Massachusetts in 2012 but also at the ICETE Theological Consultation held in Sopron, Hungary (2009).

[5] See Langham Partnership vision statement at http://us.langham.org/who-we-are/vision-mission/.

Our purpose is to serve the church in its mission to the nation but not to foster the individual career paths of budding academics. We tell all our Scholars that very clearly: our investment in you is an investment in the church in your country, not a private gift for your own benefit. So after all that investment (which is far more than just financial, and includes enormous pastoral commitment and personal interest as well), we feel it deeply when a Scholar, after a few years back home, is approached by a US Seminary and offered an attractive post with all the benefits. It can be an irresistible temptation for some!

There is a huge *irony* in this. For to put it bluntly, when this happens, our money has actually helped the brain drain! If they did not have a doctorate, there would be no job offer in the west. If they had stayed with the Masters degree they already had, they would have stayed in their own country. So by helping somebody get their PhD we have made them more self-marketable in the west. They now have a ticket to leave. We were trying to help the poor but we ended up adding to the wealth of the already rich. It is tragic if those of us who are seeking to reverse the brain drain are actually facilitating it. That's why we feel it so strongly.

Here's an important point also: it is not really "our" money. Langham does not have money. All that we give we first receive from faithful and generous donors who are giving the Lord's money to support the Lord's work and to help the church in the majority world. They do not give money to the Langham Scholars program in order to foster the ethnic diversity of US seminary faculties. When that occasionally happens, there is (in us at least) a sense of betrayal that is painful—betrayal by a Scholar of the commitment they made (often very emphatically and repeatedly orally and in writing) that they would serve in their own country; and betrayal by us of the generosity of those who have given to make our investment possible.[6]

## 1. Why Does It Happen?

At this point I will be shamelessly abusing Nathan's parable. I do not pretend for a moment that what follows is an exegesis or exposition of the biblical text, but rather an imaginative jumping off from it to explore some dynamics of the issue we are addressing.

### *1.1. From The Rich Man's Door*

The rich man wanted to impress his external visitor with his cuisine.

[6] I ought to soften the point by saying that I am not talking about senior evangelical theologians, who after many years serving in their own countries, take up significant roles in the west in positions in which their voice, perspective and wisdom can make a major contribution to global Christianity and theological education, without losing touch with their home culture. Rather I am thinking of younger scholars who are hired into positions in the west after very little or no significant contribution to the theological needs of their own country.

US seminaries want to increase the ethnic diversity of their faculty, and thereby to impress government departments, donors, boards, students, etc. That's not bad in itself. Ethnic and cultural diversity is good. We all want to see an end to the mono-cultural dominance of the academy by all-white-and-western faculty who have no awareness or experience of the majority world—culturally or theologically.

US evangelical seminaries increasingly also genuinely want to hear the voice of majority world theologians. They want to expose their students to the vigorous perspectives they bring. Again, this is good. That is part of the long-term hopes for a journal like this. We long to see a genuine conversation of equals in the global theological family.

So there can be very genuine and laudable motives leading the rich to invite the brightest of the poor to come to their table. It may even seem a generous thing to do. It's what the loss of his one single lamb does to the poor man that is the unseen problem. That is where the real hurt and cost is being borne—which the rich may not even notice. What to the rich man was the acquisition of a single lamb for dinner, was to the poor man the loss of something exceedingly rare and precious—as is the loss of evangelical intellectual capital from very poor countries.

### *1.2. From The Poor Man's Door*

Maybe he couldn't feed the lamb anymore. Maybe he was just too poor to look after it. So he entrusts it to the rich man for a while, to help it be better fed, grow more wool, get pregnant and breed a few more lambs of its own, and return later to the poor man's home to build up his flock. He did not expect it to be 'consumed' at the rich man's table and never come back at all.

We have several sad cases of Langham Scholars being told by their home country seminaries—seminaries that had longed for them to be in top positions (sometimes as principal)—"Sorry we have no money to pay you any salary or support your family. You will have to stay in the west till you can raise enough funding to come back." It is a terrible dilemma. Sometimes this happens after years of promising that there would be a job back home as soon as the PhD is finished—only to have the promise withdrawn when the crunch comes and the newly graduated Scholar is prepared to return. We have every sympathy with the person and the institution in such situations. We can also understand that if, in such a dire situation, a post in the States is suddenly offered, then that can even appear as "God's provision." If the Scholar, however, does stay in the west, and gets a nice post somewhere, then the longer it goes on, the less likely it becomes that he or she will ever return at all. The lamb is indeed fattened up, but not for productive wool growing back home where it came from, but for permanent consumption at the rich man's table. The lamb is lost to the poor man forever.

Maybe the lamb itself just fancied the rich man's pastures and the exciting company of his well-fed flocks, and skipped over the fence of its own accord.

When you experience the struggles, anxieties and sometimes loneliness, of scholars in some majority world institutions (sometimes working with no pay for months; often having to do other jobs, e.g. pastor churches as well as teaching in seminary, just to survive; lacking access to all the library resources they once knew in the west), then the rich pastures of evangelical academia in the US can seem irresistibly seductive—and can even be thought very persuasively to be 'the right thing to do' for one's family and future.

## 2. Can We Stop It, Or Better, Can We Change It To Something Mutually Beneficial?

Let us now return to Nathan's parable. What made the story unbearable was the close proximity of the two characters, namely, they lived in the same town. It was something visible to the whole community, something almost unthinkable between neighbours, something that made King David very mad! How could anybody do such a thing?

Today, we in the west are insulated by distance from the true cost of our consumptive lifestyle in general. We see only the fruit and flowers, the clothes, the gadgets, that stack the shelves of our supermarkets, without seeing the deprived places they came from, the sub-human conditions of some who produced them, or the poverty and exploitation they leave behind. We pay the cheap price. Somebody else pays the real cost.

Likewise, when our seminary hires somebody from the majority world, all we see is the interesting, exotic, new faculty member from some other part of the world. They just come to our shores and turn up at our seminary. We rejoice. We welcome them warmly. We shower with an abundance of our good things. We are Christians after all.

What we don't see is the impoverished seminary and church left behind. It is out of sight and out of mind. We may know next to nothing about the country they came from, let alone the statistics of theological education there (which may be minimal), or the desperate need of the church for qualified teachers such as the one we have just added to our brochure and website.

### *2.1. Awareness Has to Be the First Step*

This conference may be such a moment for some of us. Perhaps we just never thought about the issue before. In our globalized world with all its opportunities for communication and information, there is no excuse not to know. So I wonder if one of the actions of this conference could be to send an open message to the Fellowship of Evangelical Seminary Presidents—which is thankfully well represented here, saying something like: "Brothers, please be aware of this issue. When you advertise and plan to hire someone from the majority world—please at least stop and think. Please do your research, not just on who they are and what qualifications they bring (i.e., their attractive résumé). Please also look at what they leave behind in their home country and seminary. Please don't just

fish in the global pond and pull out the most desirable fish for your own table. Please remember that what may be just one more international faculty member for you may be the only faculty member with a PhD in his entire seminary back home. Maybe."

Perhaps we need to give some thought to the possibility that Philippians 2:4 applies to seminaries as much as to individual Christians*: 'Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.'*

### *2.2. Compensation is a Reasonable Request*

David called for compensation (as the Law required). His first angry response was to want to execute the rich man, but he knew, of course, that that was not allowed under Israelite law. You could not be put to death for sheep-stealing in Old Testament Israel (unlike some of our countries until the 19th century). What the law required was four-fold restitution for such a theft. So David gives that verdict and sentence, and probably imagines that Nathan would quickly move on to the next case. How wrong he was!

Can western seminaries build in any kind of compensation when they bring academics from the majority world to lucrative posts in the west? This does not mean 'compensation' in the US sense of salary package for the employee, but re-imbursement to the deprived party in the majority world.

a. Even the Old Testament law and David's application of it would not be out of range for consideration. Four lambs for the stolen one. Suppose US seminaries applied that principle to hiring from the majority world? Hire one, train four. That is, if you take away a man or a woman who has already received the extensive investment and training of getting a doctorate, then pay for four more to have such training. That could be done either by a long-term relationship with the hired faculty member's original seminary, helping them to acquire trained faculty to replace him or her. It could also be done vicariously through investing in a Scholars fund such as Langham, to enable four more to be trained from that country, and thus reduce the long-term loss. It would be, as someone used the phrase at the conference "brain gain."

b. Recognizing that hiring faculty is not really quite the same as stealing sheep (!), one might suggest at the very least a policy of 'Hire one, train one.' This would seek at least to contribute something towards the replacement of the hired faculty by enabling the training of someone else from that country or region.

c. Could we avoid hiring majority world candidates to full-time posts, but rather invite them as visiting or adjunct professors for a semester or two—whether as a once-off, or on a regular basis. Then, let us pay them, not just a token honorarium but the equivalent of what a full-time US citizen would earn in that post. Also, pay that salary not to the individual, but to and through his/her sending institution, so that the remuneration benefits the whole

institution, not just the bank balance of the individual. Such opportunities for visits to western seminaries can be a matter of divisive envy among faculty in majority world institutions, since everybody knows that when somebody gets the chance to go abroad, they will get all kinds of perks, not least an honorarium. A term's salary in the west might support several faculty members in the majority world institution for a year or more.

d. When contemplating hiring a scholar from the majority world, make enquiries to find out if he or she got their PhD through funding from a Christian organization such as Langham Partnership, or Scholar Leaders International, or Overseas Council. If so, then co-operate in the repayment of those funds.

e. In Langham we regard the grant as a loan if the Scholar stays in the west after graduation or goes to a post in the west within ten years of graduation. This policy is made very clear to our Scholars. We require them to pay their scholarship back over time if they do. Since we make this demand on our 'defaulting' Scholars, it would seem right and fair that a western seminary that hires them (sometimes over our protests) should make some contribution to that repayment of the grant. It is important to stress that it is not really the money that is our major issue, but the principle at stake. The individual and the hiring western seminary should surely not simply take it for granted that he or she has a doctorate through the generous funding of Christian donors for the sake of serving the church in their own country, without some sense of responsibility to repay that investment if they default on that commitment.

f. Sometimes it may be possible to arrange an exchange of faculty—sending professors to the majority world institution in exchange visits, to compensate for the loss of a teacher. This can be mutually beneficial, provided there is a good match in terms of subject area, and some cultural sensitivity and a lot of flexibility.

### *2.3. Let Us Consider Positive Investment*

Abusing Nathan's parable with yet another flight of imagination let us consider the following. Supposing the rich man had a conscience and felt distressed about the needs of the poor neighbor and wanted to help him? He could of course send a lamb regularly for the poor man's family to enjoy. He could send gifts from the rich man's table. He could easily spare lambs from his abundant flock, and he wouldn't even notice. He could go on doing that for years.

What would happen with the poor person if that were to happen? The poor man would get fed, but still stay poor.

How much better it would be for the rich man to help the poor neighbor build up his own flock and become self-sufficient? He should not just send lambs to eat, but he should invest in a ram and few ewes to breed. He should enable the poor man to develop his own resources in his own way

in his own fields, sell his own wool, feed his own family. In that way, he helps to build the sense of dignity and self-sufficiency of the poor neighbor and not make him perpetually dependent on the lambs-for-lunch charity.

Can the western theological education community find ways to invest like that in the viability and self-sustaining growth of majority world theological education? It may seem a tough time to be making this proposal, since many western theological institutions are themselves struggling to survive financially. Yet even at that we are much richer than some parts of the world, and some western seminaries are healthily endowed.

What might be some ways that US seminaries could invest in majority world theological education? I'm sure we can be very creative here, and there could be many ways, beyond mere financial giving that the rich world community of theological education could positively invest in helping their majority world siblings grow and develop in sustainable ways. Here are a few suggestions:

a. Invest in majority world doctoral programs by supporting the Beirut Process**.** Check it out: ICETE, Langham, OC, SLI and others are co-operating in a major project to raise the standards of excellence in doctoral education in evangelical institutions on each continent. They need awareness and encouragement from western seminaries; including the possibility of encouraging some western students to actually go and do their doctorates in Africa or Asia, etc.

b. Enable evangelical academics at post-doctoral level, who often serve without a break until exhaustion or extinction, to have time in your seminaries—of refreshment, with some minimal teaching, opportunity and facilities for writing and research, peer interaction, etc. Pay for some of them to attend Evangelical Theological Society, Society of Biblical Literature, etc., and give them the opportunities you extend to your own faculty.

c. Send some students to take modules in majority world seminaries, as part of their program at your seminary, but not as a cheap option. Pay to the majority world seminary the fees they would have paid to the US seminary, so that it is not just a nice cross-cultural trip for the western student, but also a bonus for the majority world seminary.

## 3. When Hosts and Guests Change Places

Let us return now to the parable one last time for one more flight of imagination. The rich man hosted a meal. Supposing it was not for a traveling visitor, but for his poor neighbor? Suppose the rich man had invited the poor man to a slap-up meal at his own table (Note: this is a much changed rich man from Nathan's story). First of all, if they were host and guest in that way, then the rich man would not have had the gall to take the poor man's own lamb for the main course. The host-guest relationship would impose at least that much restraint. So as the theological educators of the richer

and poorer worlds meet like this and get to know one another, can we at least begin to live by the biblical standards of hospitality, of how host and guests relate with mutual respect and consideration—even across economic disparities?

Now supposing the rich man did in fact help the poor man to get on his own feet with a viable, reproducing, sustainable flock, as suggested in point 3 above. The poor man then slowly begins to live with dignity and self-sufficiency. He may never reach the level of abundant surplus of wealth of the rich man, but that is not really the ideal anyway (in Old Testament terms). Then the day would come when the host-guest relationship could reverse. The day comes when the poor man would be the host and invite the rich man to share his table in his own home and enjoy his own home-produced food. Then the dynamic of their relationship would be subtly different. There is dignity in hosting, even if the host is poorer than the guest. We may all have had the experience of hosting in our homes for a good meal people who are materially far more wealthy than we are. Does it matter? Of course not. The relationship of host and guest confers dignity, integrity and friendship, in both directions when you are at table together.

The day has now arrived where the majority world can also serve as the host. For too long the west has simply assumed the host position, and invited the majority world as guests to our table. It is our default mode. We are natural-born leaders and hosts. We have the resources to take that for granted. We do it with the best of motives, of course. We say that it is so that 'their voice can be heard'—but their voice will be heard in our home at our table, where *we* have set the menu and arranged the seating and decided the range of topics for polite conversation that guests will be expected to talk about. Guests don't get to dictate the menu. In the world of theological education, it is still the wealthy western host that makes all the decisions and assumptions about what issues should be on the table, what constitutes a good meal, what qualifications the chef needs, and how everything gets paid for.

We need a reversal of roles, so that the relationship can deepen and be enriched. It may indeed be more blessed to give than to receive, but it is much more demanding and humbling for those who are accustomed to be givers to be willing to receive, to be guests rather than hosts.

My strong hope and plea is that after this consultation, it will be the majority world church and its evangelical theological educators—embodied particularly in ICETE and its constituent associations—who will gently move into the role of host. Then, rather than being perpetually the guests who are invited to enjoy the hospitality (so generously given) of western hosts and organizers, they will be the ones who lovingly and appreciatively invite and welcome their rich neighbors to be guests at their table. May both western and majority world educators enjoy the exciting and perhaps very unfamiliar tastes and smells of a different theological and cultural cuisine, the rich and nourishing theological food with which God wants to bless the whole of his church, north and south, east and west.

# Moravian Missionary Piety and the Influence of Count Zinzendorf

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ABSTRACT

Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) was an influential pietistic leader, and he left a legacy of piety that combined mind, heart, and missionary activism. His piety was a spark for the labors of Pietist missionaries, such as the Moravian Brethren, an eighteenth-century renewal movement that emerged from German Pietism. In order to fundamentally understand the strengths and weaknesses of Moravian missionary piety, it is necessary to understand Zinzendorf's distinguishing piety. The unique features of Moravian spirituality were rooted in Zinzendorf's unique expression of evangelical missionary spirituality. In order to understand such distinctives, a survey of the historical background and evangelical context of the Moravians is necessary. The implications of the missionary spirituality of the Moravians are numerous: some are worthy of our imitation, such as their commitment to personal holiness and their endurance in suffering; and some should caution us against error, such as their misuse of Scripture and unbiblical fanaticism.

The Great Awakening in the American colonies of the mid-eighteenth century was an earthquake of activistic fervor. Spiritual leaders, such as George Whitefield (1714-1770), John Wesley (1703-1791), and Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), fashioned the theological and activistic tenor of that revival. Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) was a contemporary of these great pietistic leaders, and he left a legacy of piety that combined mind, heart, and missionary activism. His piety was a spark for the labors of Pietist missionaries, such as the Moravian Brethren,[1] an eighteenth-century renewal movement that emerged from German Pietism. In order to fundamentally understand the strengths and weaknesses of Moravian piety, it is necessary to understand Zinzendorf's distinguishing piety. What are the unique features of Moravian spirituality

[1] The Moravian missionaries came from Moravia in present-day Germany. Moravia was essentially a refugee region for persecuted non-Catholics. On August 13, 1727, the Moravian refugees experienced a tremendous revival, from which emerged a great evangelical missionary movement. For a helpful discussion of the Moravians' historical roots in the Czech reformer, John Hus (1369-1415), see Kenneth B. Mulholland, "Moravians, Puritans, and the Modern Missionary Movement," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 156 (April 1, 1999):222-23.

and in what ways are they rooted in Zinzendorf's unique expression of evangelical missionary spirituality? In order to understand such distinctives, a survey of the historical background of the Moravians is necessary.

## 1. Historical Context of Zinzendorf's Moravian Piety

One of the influential movements of Zinzendorf's era was Pietism, founded by Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705). Its epicenter of development was under August Hermann Francke (1663-1727) at the University of Halle in Germany. Pietism was a spiritual renewal that arose within German Lutheranism in the late seventeenth century. Pietism emphasized experience in worship as opposed to mastering creeds and outer conformity—a reaction against the doctrinaire attitude of Scholastic theology.[2] Moravian spirituality was fundamentally another phase of Pietism.[3] According to Gillian Gollin, former professor of religion at Columbia College, Moravian piety embraced "a pietistic mode of life in which purity of morals and conduct was stressed over doctrinal uniqueness, [with the] Bible as the sole standard of religious doctrine and practice."[4] As late Moravian scholar, John Weinlick, noted that Moravian piety possessed "a deeply Christocentric faith expressed in personal obedient devotion to the Saviour."[5]

### *1.1. Zinzendorf's Social Development*

Zinzendorf cherished Lutheran doctrine even as a young boy. Partaking of the Sacraments and meditating upon Christ's sacrifice were especially sweet to him. Zinzendorf was impressed with

[2] Three general characteristics as outlined in Spener's *Pia Desideria* were common to Pietism's manifestations: First, a mystical element that emphasized emotional experience and heartfelt expression existed especially in the context of personal Bible study. Second, the practice of holy living and active compassion developed out of this emphasis on experience. Third, emerging from this active compassion, Pietists concerned themselves with the unevangelized heathen. See Philipp Jakob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1964). For a helpful discussion of the six themes outlined in *Pia Desideria*, see Kenneth B. Mulholland, "From Luther to Carey: Pietism and the Modern Missionary Movement," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 156 (January 1, 1999):90-92. See also Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 2nd ed., *The Penguin History of the Church* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1986), 6:224.

[3] The Moravians' own version of Pietism included a five-point mission statement: "(1) The plain, simple, believing, and consolatory preaching of the gospel; (2) To neglect no opportunity of bearing testimony in other places concerning Jesus as the only way to life; (3) An object of primary concern to promote the printing of… useful and edifying works; (4) They considered how they might be useful to…those of other persuasions. (5) They deliberated also upon providing schools for the education of children in a christian-like [*sic*] manner." August Gottlieb Spangenberg, The Life of Count Zinzendorf, trans. Samuel Jackson. (London: Holdsworth, 1838), 445. This is a reproduction of a set of principles drawn up in 1723 by Zinzendorf himself.

[4] Gillian Lindt Gollin, *Moravians in Two Worlds: A Study of Changing Communities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 4.

[5] John R. Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf* (Bethlehem, PA: The Moravian Church in America, 2001), 45.

Philipp Jakob Spener's piety, and Spener prayed over him at a young age that he would further the kingdom of Christ. The Count chose his life-motto, the now famous confession: "I have one passion: it is Jesus, Jesus only."[6] The young Count drew near to Jesus as a brotherly companion. He wrote, "For many years I associated with him [Jesus] in a childlike manner [and] conversed with him as friends for hours."[7] Zinzendorf's predilection to relate to Christ as a companion and as an elder brother largely affected the trajectory of Moravian piety.

### *1.2. The Roots of Moravian Spirituality*

In addition to his early social development, Zinzendorf's experience at the University of Halle powerfully shaped his piety. While in school at Halle in his teenage years, he organized a group of students to worship and work together as Christian leaders. Under the influence of Francke, Zinzendorf began small groups of prayer for boys.[8] Before the Count left Halle, he reported to Francke a list of seven organized prayer meetings. Among these prayer groups, Zinzendorf made lifelong friends who together created a fraternity society called the "Order of the Grain of Mustard Seed." Upon leaving Halle, Zinzendorf and his close friends made a vow to labor for the conversion of the heathen. The essence of this vow was a three-part summary of the Great Command and the Great Commission: be true to Christ, be kind to people, take the gospel to the nations. Due to their prestigious status as nobility, they knew they could not become missionaries because of their obligations to lands, titles, and familial inheritance. Nevertheless, they felt called to raise up an army of prayerful missionaries.[9]

Indisputably, the greatest experience of Zinzendorf's life came during the summer of 1727. Prior to this summer, Zinzendorf created a community house in Herrnhut, which means "The Lord's Watch." Herrnhut saw rapid growth due to Moravian refugees. During the influx of immigration, German Pietists, Lutherans, Reformed, Separatists, Anabaptists, and other religious enthusiasts were attracted to the growing Christian community. And great discord arose due to diversity of opinion and diverse religious enthusiasm. May 12, 1727, became a milestone for the Moravian

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[6] John Greenfield, *Power from on High* (London: Marshall and Morgan, 1927), 24.

[7] August Gottlieb Spangenberg, *Leben des Herrn Nikolaus Ludwig*, in vol.4 of *Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, Materialien und Dokumente: Nikolaus Ludwig Graf von Zinzendorf, Leben und Werk in Quellen und Darstellungen*, ed. August Gottlieb Spangenberg and Gerhard Meyer (New York: G. Olms, 1971), 27, quoted in Craig D. Atwood, *Community of the Cross: Moravian Piety in Colonial Bethlehem* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 45.

[8] See Gollin, *Moravians in Two Worlds: A Study of Changing Communities*, 15.

[9] After leaving Halle, Zinzendorf's aunt presented him with a gold medallion. On one side was inscribed, vulnera Christi ("the wounds of Christ"), and on the other side were symbols of martyrdom and the inscription, nostra medela ("our healing"). This emblem influenced his spirituality as he designed plans for a praying missionary society. See Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, 29.

Church. They confessed their sorrow for past division and pledged to live together in mutual love. This constitution birthed the revival in Herrnhut, from which Moravian spirituality grew. The apex of this revival occurred the following August. Concerted, extraordinary praying preceded it. On Wednesday, August 13, the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit visited the community in a remarkable way. This corporate renewal was the impetus for the hundred-year Moravian prayer movement where they prayed without stopping.

### *1.3. Zinzendorf's Influential Piety*

During Zinzendorf's travels to North America, he labored to unite the divided churches within the colonies. Though incomplete, his Pennsylvania sermons exemplify some of his theological convictions, which bled into the culture of Moravian piety. The main themes of these sermons are evident: "heart-religion" and "theology of the cross." Five observations can be made about his theology. First, his Pennsylvania sermons are strongly evangelical in tenor, highlighting justification by faith, the need for an authentic relationship with Jesus, and the centrality of Scripture, among others. Second, he did not preach to persuade people into his movement. He was concerned more for unity rather than uniformity. Third, he robustly defended the doctrine of justification by faith from the temptation of falling into a Protestant works-righteousness. He emphasized that salvation is entirely in the hands of Christ. Fourth, in these sermons he encouraged encountering the blood and wounds of Christ, which to his discredit became grossly abused. Fifth, Zinzendorf referred to the Holy Spirit as "Mother" in order to describe how Christians experience the Spirit. He said, "The metaphor of motherhood was intended to bring the awakened Christian into a more intimate relationship with the Triune God."[10] Normative for thirty years, the Moravian *Te Matrum* was a prayer to the Holy Spirit: "'O Mother! Whoever knows you and the Saviour glorifies you because you bring the gospel to all the world.'"[11] Such is an example of the eccentricities and unbiblical liberties in his teaching. Overall, his Pennsylvania sermons prove neither intellectually profound, nor exegetically precise. But, they weave together words of tender concern for the church.

## 2. Evangelical Context of Moravian Missionary Piety

David Bebbington, Professor of History at the University of Stirling in Scotland, has argued that since 1734 the English-speaking world has seen the unparalleled rise of evangelicalism, influenced by European Continental Pietism, the Great Awakening in America, and the Evangelical Revival

[10] Julie Tomberlin Weber, *A Collection of Sermons from Zinzendorf's Pennsylvania Journey*, trans. Craig D. Atwood (Bethlehem, PA: The Moravian Church of America, 1999), xviii.

[11] Ian M. Randall, "A Missional Spirituality: Moravian Brethren and Eighteenth-Century English Evangelicalism," *Transformation* 23, no. 4 (October 2006): 208.

in Britain in eighteenth century. Bebbington demonstrates that eighteenth-century evangelicalism contained four components: Biblicism (the centrality of the Scripture), Crucicentrism (the centrality off the cross of Christ), Activism (the centrality of active service and mission), and Conversionism (the centrality of making Christian converts).[12] The "Bebbington quadrilateral"[13] provides valuable descriptions of historical evangelical spirituality; it has become the standard grid through which to understand the evangelical spirituality of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[14]

Moravian missionary spirituality weaves well into these four strands, and crucicentrism and activism remain the dominant two strands in Moravian spirituality. On the one hand, Moravian piety is most negatively remembered for its eccentric crucicentrism, and on the other hand, it is most positively renowned for its global activism.

Moravian spirituality is essentially a missionary spirituality, manifesting itself in a sacrificial activism for the conversion of the heathen, rising out of its enthusiasm for the slain Lamb as revealed in type and shadow throughout the pages of Scripture. Count Zinzendorf spiritually influenced the Moravians in a warm-hearted religion that persisted in night-and-day prayer and was ultimately manifested in unrivaled missionary zeal. Moravian piety is sometimes seen as extremist and though Zinzendorf might not have consciously intended to foster extreme practices, his eccentric personality attracted followers who would exploit the uniqueness of his piety to the detriment of sound biblical doctrine and practice.

### *2.1. Biblicism*

Though spontaneous at times, Count Zinzendorf's ministry was very practical and thorough in its application of biblical truth. Robert Gallagher, professor of missions at Wheaton College, suggests that Zinzendorf believed that "theology simply needed to be presented in such a way that biblical revelation would result in a genuine experience of God's love. The question paramount in his mind

[12] D.W. Bebbington, E*vangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1995), 20. David Gillett also supplements assurance, prayer, and holiness to Bebbington's fourfold filter; see David Gillett, *Trust and Obey: Explorations in Evangelical Spirituality*, (London: DLT, 1993), 34-39. Philip Sheldrake also contends that evangelical spirituality has been historically comprised of communion with God, practical Christianity, and theology; see Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History* (London: SPCK, 1991), 52, quoted also in Ian Randall, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 20. Alister McGrath proposes, more broadly, four features of Christian spirituality: "[First,] knowing God and not just knowing about God; [Second,] experiencing God to the full; [Third,] a transformation of existence based on the Christian faith; and [fourth,] attaining Christian authenticity in life and thought." Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1999), 4.

[13] Timothy Larsen, "The Reception Given *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* Since its Publication in 1989," in *The Advent of Evangelicalism*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008), 25.

[14] Timothy Larsen claims that Bebbington's quadrilateral "is now receiving the ultimate compliment of being cited without acknowledgement, as if it is not one scholar's opinion but simply the truth we all know." See Larsen, "The Reception Given Evangelicalism in Modern Britain," 29.

was 'How does the Bible work in the daily life of the Christian?'"[15] Though the Moravian community grew large, Zinzendorf encouraged fellowship by dividing up the congregation into small groups called, "choirs" or "bands," each based upon age, sex, and marital status. They met daily for discussion and worship whether in a room, under a tree, or at work. They met informally when they felt that the Holy Spirit prompted them. They placed unique emphasis on Christ's teaching from the Sermon on the Mount. The Moravians' practice of abiding with Christ through biblical meditation revealed their conviction that they were adopted into the Father's family and united to their Brother Jesus. Ian Randall observes that the Bible was the ground, root, and sap of Moravian piety, propelling their missional fuel:

> The need for a practical living out of the teaching of the Bible continued to mark the Brethren…. The Moravians encouraged all their people to come together in small groups or 'bands' to study and apply the Bible…. It was this pragmatic application of the Bible that enabled the Moravians to engage in pioneering missional enterprises.[16]

These bands owed much to the influence of Spener's *collegia pietatis*, or devotional meetings, in which small groups of believers would meet to earnestly study and teach the Bible. Influenced by Spener's small group Bible study methods outlined in *Pia Desideria*, Francke in Halle, and the many missionaries who were furloughing in Halle, Randall claims that Zinzendorf "was led to his own commitment to mission. The Bible and mission belonged together in his thinking."[17] Moreover, Gallagher explains how religious education of Moravian children became foundational for missions:

> The Moravian choirs became training schools for missionary candidates, each characterized by severe simplicity. By 1730, more than 50 members of the Moravians had been imprisoned for the cause of Christ, and seven years later, the household of the Single Brethren had provided 56 recruits for foreign missions. Over the years, the choirs placed the training and education of the children in the hands of the church. Those children became the property of the Brethren since they believed that the church had first claim on the lives of its members. The choir houses conditioned the youth for the mission field since the lack of parental and family bonds made it easier to travel to distant places. This was one of the key reasons for their widespread mission work.[18]

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[15] Robert L. Gallagher, "Zinzendorf and the Early Moravians: Pioneers in Leadership Selection and Training," *Missiology* 36, no. 2 (April 2008): 238.

[16] Randall, "A Missional Spirituality," 207.

[17] Randall, "A Missional Spirituality," 207.

[18] Gallagher, "Zinzendorf and the Early Moravians," 239.

Wherever mission communities were around the world, the Moravians sought first to root them in Bible meditation along with ecstatic hymn singing and prayer. The Bible was a book about a missionary Father with a missionary Son who was wedded to a missionary Bride.

Within these small groups, two primary ministries were practiced: The Night-Watch and the Hourly Intercession. The Night-Watch was an assigned night each week where the small group would meet during the sleeping hours and sing Scripture antiphonally. During the Hourly Intercession a band would be assigned certain hours in the day or week to pray and intercede for their community and the salvation of the nations. These both imitated the instructions from the Tabernacle of David.[19] James Weingarth, bishop of the Moravian church, says, "As in the days of the Old Covenant, the sacred fire was never permitted to go out on the altar (Lev 6:13-14), so in a congregation which is a temple of the living God wherein He has His altar and His fire, the intercession of His saints should incessantly rise up to Him like incense."[20] The purpose of these groups was primarily to encourage persevering prayer for the global missions effort. Every week the intercessors would meet for a conference. An important part of this was the reading of letters from their missionaries in foreign lands, and they were directed to pray for specific missionaries. This helped maintain the focus on intercession for the nations.

Every day they would participate in a song service, which commonly opened with the singing of entire hymns and continued with the singing of single stanzas regarding a unified theme. Zinzendorf would preach on a short text, and then the following night, the intercessors would pray and sing out that Scripture until morning came. He regularly preached on confession and repentance, which he saw as necessary for preserving humility and holiness.

### *2.2. Crucicentrism*

The Moravians were not ashamed of the cross of Christ; nevertheless, an unhealthy fascination with "wounds theology" occurred, in which the wounds of Christ's body became the objects of a bizarre and sickly adoration. This was mainly due to overindulgence among the Moravian leadership. This spiritually sick period was appropriately called the "Sifting Period" since it was later viewed as a time when Satan sought to undermine the spiritual maturity of the Moravian communities.

A growing segment of the Moravian community was comprised of religious dilettantes, sensation-seekers, and many from all over Europe wishing to indulge their sensationalist curiosity. Zinzendorf's oldest son, Christian Renatus (1727-1752), was a major culprit in leading the group into this fanaticism. He bore a large hole in the side wall of a Lutheran church in Berthelsdorf, and

[19] See 1 Chronicles 25.

[20] James Weingarth, *You are My Witness: A Story Study Celebrating the 250th Anniversary of Moravian Missions—1732-1982* (Bethlehem, PA: The Inter-Provincial Women's Board of the Moravian Church, 1981), 12.

he instructed the congregation to march through it to experience the Savior's suffering as if it were Jesus' "side wound." Gallagher explains, "They spoke of Christ as 'Brother Lambkin' and themselves as 'little wound-parsons,' or 'worms in the wounds of his side' and 'cross-wood little splinters.'"[21] Going into the side hole became synonymous with being united with Christ. Paul M. Peucker, the Moravian historian, clarifies,

> From being a part of the body of Christ, the sidehole [*sic*] becomes a *pars pro toto* for Christ—the sidehole *is* Christ. In many of the hymns Jesus is addressed as "sidehole," in many variations little hole *(Holchen,* LI5, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40), dearest little side *(liebstes Seitelein,* LI7), divine side *(göttliches Seitelein,* LI2, or *göttliches Seitenholchen,* L23), or charming hole *(charmantes Holchen,* LI7). The sidehole is at once Christ as well as the entrance to His body.[22]

Obsessing with Christ's blood and side wound became the unifying theme of this unfortunate season. Regrettably, Moravian spirituality is often associated solely with such excessiveness.[23]

Wishing to ground everything in Scripture, the Moravians employed an imaginative typological interpretation of Scripture in promoting side-wound spirituality. They cited the following passages as side-wound types: John 19:33-34; 20:20, 24-27; Zechariah 12:10; Revelation 1:7; Exodus 17:6 (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:4); Song of Songs 2:14; and Isaiah 51:1.

However, Zinzendorf later confessed this error and realigned the movement back to the Augsburg Confession of the Lutheran church. Yet Moravian missionaries persisted in the eccentricities of the Sifting Period. The damage had been done, and it was outside of Zinzendorf's control to reform every mission station. The leaders in Herrnhut lamentably exercised deficient discernment in these extravagant practices. The *Litany of the Wounds of the Husband* was introduced in 1744 to the Moravian community of Bethlehem, PA.[24] The diary of the community in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania reported that the singing of this litany led the congregation into "heartfelt discussion

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[21] Robert L. Gallagher, "The Integration of Mission Theology and Practice: Zinzendorf and the Early Moravians," *Mission Studies 25*, no. 2 (January 2008): 189.

[22] P.M. Peucker, "The Songs of the Sifting: Understanding the Role of Bridal Mysticism in Moravian Piety During the Late 1740s," *Journal Of Moravian History* no. 3 (September 2007): 61.

[23] Peter Vogt observes that "Zinzendorf describes the side wound sometimes as the central point and nexus of his theology: 'The holy side of Jesus is a central point, out of which all spiritual matters can be obtained. There we can find, so to speak, the squaring of the circle of all things spiritual, biblical, and heavenly, there we can always obtain an integrated whole, because there we have a point." Peter Vogt, "Honor to the Side: The Adoration of the Side Wound of Jesus in Eighteenth-Century Moravian Piety," *Journal of Moravian History* no. 7 (September 2009): 96.

[24] Here is a sample from the Litany: "Powerful wounds of Jesus, So moist, so gory, bleed on my heart so that I may remain brave and like the wounds…. Purple wounds of Jesus, You are so succulent, whatever comes near becomes like wounds and flows with blood. Juicy wounds of Jesus, Whoever sharpens the pen and with it pierces you just a little, licks and tastes it." See Craig D. Atwood, *Community of the Cross: Moravian Piety in Colonial Bethlehem* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 1.

and [realization of] the importance of bloody grace,"[25] and they swooned with "very bloody and heart-warming"[26] emotion.

Zinzendorf was not a masochist obsessed with suffering. Rather, he exulted in the offense of the *slaughtered* Lamb of God, thus shattering the Deistic composure of eighteenth-century Christianity and Europe's pompous civility. Moreover, Zinzendorf's practice of meditating on the slain Lamb catapulted the Moravian missions movement and fueled ongoing importunity in prayer. They gloried in the promise that they would conquer under this blood. Moravian scholar, A. J. Lewis, aptly observes,

> It was with the "Lamb and Blood" that deliverance was brought to the poor, and refuge to the outcast, and the Evangelical Revival set aflame. It was a "Blood and Wounds" theology that carried the fellowship of all men in Christ to the Negro, the Eskimo, the Indian, the Hottentot, and to the 'separated' Christians in Europe and America.[27]

The slaughtered Lamb became the seal and watchword of the Moravians and their mission—"*vicit agnus noster, eum sequamur.*"[28] Revelation 12:11 was one of their favorite texts—"And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death." Though they could overemphasize the bloodiness of the cross, they nonetheless applied the victory of the cross to their lives and their mission. The cross was not merely a symbol; it was a call to radical discipleship.

### *2.3. Activism*

Zinzendorf's words either emblazoned or soothed the heart. In preaching, he believed that the preacher's heart must be filled with God in order to speak out of its abundance. Weinlick states, "It was this kind of preaching and personal religious conversation on the part of the Count, on every conceivable occasion, which infused vitality into the Brotherhood."[29] The Moravians developed a unique sense of charitable community. Zinzendorf traveled tirelessly to check on the spiritual growth of his people. Not only was he active in missions and missions mobilization, he also was active in shepherding his followers. In Zinzendorf's love for his brethren and concern for missions, he would even travel overseas to refresh suffering Moravian missionaries.

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[25] *The Bethlehem Diary*, Vol. 2, 1744-1745, ed. Vernon Nelson, Otto Dreydoppel Jr., and Doris Rohland Yob, trans. Kenneth G. Hamilton and Lothar Madeheim (Bethlehem, PA: Moravian Archives, 2001), 168.

[26] *The Bethlehem Diary*, 2:154.

[27] A.J. Lewis, *Zinzendorf: The Ecumenical Pioneer* (Bethlehem, PA: The Moravian Church in America, 1962), 70.

[28] Translation: "Our Lamb has conquered, let us follow him."

[29] Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, 91.

Because of Zinzendorf's indomitable endeavor to build unity and his unique love for Jesus, the Moravians were known as the "the Easter People."[30] Winfred Kirkland noted, "It was this sheer happiness which set them singing at all times, and never has a band of Christians sung so much, at their work and in their worship, as these Moravians."[31] Their emphasis on fellowship and holiness was crucial for maintaining the momentum of the prayer and missions movement.

Zinzendorf was also remarkably used by God to birth a pre-modern missions movement. He aspired to send "Diaspora Societies" all over the world, wherever there were Christians and non-Christians alike. These groups of Moravians would promote unified, unceasing worship of the Lamb among all the respective Christian groups wherever they went in the world. The enthusiasm of the Moravian believers seemed to ignite widespread hunger for God, which could only be satisfied by an encounter with the living God. Kirkland said that they went to awaken sleeping Christians "and they had plans in the making for the mutual discovery, enrichment and service of all the denominations."[32] Moreover, they sought to convert the heathen and the slaves.

Zinzendorf cast a vision of the cross of Christ so great that the Moravians found indisputable joy in sharing in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. Twenty out of twenty-nine missionaries died in the first year. They longed to exhibit the likeness of the sufferings of Christ through their sufferings, filling up what was lacking in Christ's afflictions.[33] Lewis claims, "This daring dream of carrying the Christian Gospel throughout the world became an epic of selfless devotion and unbreakable courage and at its very heartbeat the pulse of Zinzendorf's ecumenical vision—all men of every land are one in Christ the Redeemer."[34]

The Moravians first engaged in missions in a dramatic demonstration of reckless abandon and activistic piety. On August 21, 1732, a potter and a carpenter from the Moravian community set sail for St. Thomas in the West Indies to reach the slaves, but in order to gain permission among the slaveholders to minister to the slaves, they had to agree to sell themselves into slavery as well.[35] As they were leaving, they raised their hands and declared: "May the Lamb who was slain receive the

[30] See Winfred Kirkland, *The Easter People* (New York: Flemming H. Revell Company, 1923), 1.

[31] Kirkland, *The Easter People*, 73.

[32] Kirkland, *The Easter People*, 73.

[33] See Colossians 1:24.

[34] Lewis, *Zinzendorf: The Ecumenical Pioneer*, 81.

[35] The potter's name was John Leonard Dober (1706-1766), and the carpenter's name was David Nitschman (1695-1772).

reward of his suffering."[36] Thus Moravian missions were born. They were following their Savior to the slaughter—160 missionaries died in the first 50 years.

### *2.4. Conversionism*

Emerging out of Zinzendorf's crucicentrism and activism was an impassioned cross-centered and missionary-mobilizing conversionism. Zinzendorf was not worried about the number of deaths as mentioned above; rather, he was anxious for the state of the 300 slaves who had become Christians in the first six years of the mission. Jon Hinkson explains that "the source of anxiety for the Count was that mass conversion, as had been the pattern in Europe, made not Christians, only Christendom."37 Also, Zinzendorf did not believe that a mass number of the heathen would be converted till after the salvation of the Jews, which reflected his post-millennial eschatology. But he did see these conversions as the first-fruits of that great eschatological harvest.38 Moravian scholar, David Schattschneider explains that at the heart of Moravian conversionist spirituality was the belief that it is,

> The Holy Spirit who both sends out missionaries and stirs up seekers. The Moravians believed the Spirit went out in advance of them to find single souls chosen by God to be the Bride of the Lamb…. Accordingly the missionary goes out to discover where the Spirit has done His prior drawing work and simply explains that work to the seeker…. If the Spirit does not turn resistance to responsiveness, the missionary may… withdraw and move on.[39]

The missionaries traversed the world in search of truth-seeking converts. Zinzendorf instructed them not to spend time debating gospel truth if it appeared that a veil were still covering their eyes. Speaking of the arrival of William Carey (1761-1834) in Serampore and discovering that Moravian missionaries had already left after seeing no fruit, Schattschneider notes,

> If there was no response after a few years, the [Moravian mission] effort was closed out…. This was the practical result of Zinzendorf's view of the Holy Spirit as the only real missionary. If there was no response,

[36] See David Smithers, "Zinzendorf and the Moravians," Awake and Go, http://www.watchword.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=48&Itemid=48 (accessed October 1, 2012).

[37] Jon N. Hinkson, "Missions Among Puritans and Pietists", *The Great Commission*, ed. Martin I. Klauber and Scott M. Manetsch, (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2003), 40.

[38] David A. Schattschneider helpfully explains the Moravian theology of evangelization: he says, first, souls first often seek "truth on their own;" second, the Holy Spirit sends missionaries "to those who needed them;" third, the new converts are baptized based upon their joyful answer to simple questions about Christ, sin, and redemption. See David A. Schattschneider, "Pioneers in Mission: Zinzendorf and the Moravians," International Bulletin of Missionary Research 8, no. 2 (April 1984): 65.

[39] Schattschneider, "Pioneers in Mission," 40-41.

> it meant the Spirit had not yet prepared the people to hear the message of the human missionaries, and so they were free to move on.[40]

Zinzendorf taught that those prepared by the Spirit would be converted by just the simple reading of the Passion narrative. Zinzendorf promoted what might seem to be a juxtaposition of contemporary friendship evangelism and the eighteenth-century hyper-Calvinist notion of a warrant of faith. Indicative of friendship evangelism style, Zinzendorf told the missionaries: "Do not begin with public preaching, but with a conversation with individual souls who deserve it, who indicate the Saviour to you…. If it is desired of you, then also witness to each man the Gospel publically."[41] The evangelism style of hyper-Calvinism would say that sinners should not be offered the gospel unless they indicate a warrant of faith assuring them that they were among the elect. Though his language of selective evangelism may sound like a foreshadowing of functional hyper-Calvinism, he unashamedly promoted an indiscriminate gospel call. Schattschneider says, "Zinzendorf wanted what he called 'the Saviour's own teaching method' to be remembered and followed. This 'method' was direct and unconditional."[42] The doctrine of election grounded the Moravians' confidence that the Spirit would regenerate all the chosen heathen to be among Christ's Bride. Convinced that the Bible prophesied an eschatalogical multi-ethnic Bride, they liberally spread the gospel knowing that indiscriminate seed sowing must precede the harvest.

They saw foreign cultures and languages as uniquely purchased by the Bridegroom to be part of the Bride. For example, when Zinzendorf was ministering among the Iroquois Indians, he told them his method was different than those the Puritans who came before; instead of preaching long sermons, he informed the Indians that he was going to simply visit with them until he and they had mutually learned to value each other's idiosyncrasies. They were allowed to remain Indians, and the Moravians did not seek to Europeanize their culture. Schattschneider says,

> Missionaries were encouraged to learn the languages of the people whom they served. Many did and soon began translating Scripture and hymns for local use. When it came to relations with local customs and traditions, and even to colonial authorities, the workers were encouraged to maintain a low profile. Zinzendorf hoped that the traditional denominations would simply not be transplanted in new areas

[40] David A. Schattschneider, "William Carey, Modern Missions, and the Moravian Influence," International Bulletin of Missionary Research 22, no. 1 (January 1998): 12. Also, regarding the positive influence of the Moravians on Carey and the Serampore missionaries, see Schattschneider, "William Carey, Modern Missions, and the Moravian Influence," 12.

[41] David A. Schattschneider, "'Souls of the Lamb': A Theology for the Christian Mission According to Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf and Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1975): 77, quoted in Hinkson, "Missions Among Puritans and Pietists", The Great Commission, ed. Martin I. Klauber and Scott M. Manetsch, (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2003), 42.

[42] Schattschneider, "Pioneers in Mission," 65.

> of the Christian world. These structures played their historical role in Europe where he viewed them as expressions of the diverse way in which God works. But for the world of the missions he hoped for something new and he was involved in several ecumenical experiments. Under no circumstances were the missionaries to proselytize from other Christian groups. "It pains me very much," the count wrote, "that I must see that the heathen become sectarians again, that people polish up their churches and ask them of what Christian religion they are." The goal was, rather, an indigenous church, fully and completely in the hands of the local people. As the count warned, "Do not measure souls according to the Herrnhut yardstick"—according to the way things are done back home at headquarters.[43]

Missionaries from other mission societies observed that the Moravians had "the best mode of Christianizing the Indians,"[44] for they were confident in the Spirit's power to convert those chosen to be Christ's Bride. And the Spirit could transform the peculiarities of heathen culture.

## 3. The Good Fruit of Zinzendorf's Influence on Moravian Piety

God used Zinzendorf's tenderness and the Moravians' piety to warm the heart of the great Methodist leader, John Wesley (1703-1791). In a near-death experience at sea, Wesley was astonished at the unwavering peace and unconquerable joy of the Moravians. Having encountered the Spirit of God through the worship of the Moravians, Wesley set out to discover the source of their joy, which led him to meet Zinzendorf. Impressed with the Moravian's stirring affection for Christ and their authentic relationship with Jesus Christ, Wesley and his brother, Charles Wesley (1707-1788), came to salvation. John Wesley discussed personal holiness and piety with the Moravian leader and theologian, August Spangenberg (1704-1792), who served as Zinzendorf's assistant. Indicative of Moravian missionary spirituality, "Spangenberg asked Wesley: 'Do you know Jesus Christ?' It was a strange question to ask a Church of England priest. Wesley replied with hesitation: 'I know he is the Saviour of the World'. True, said Spangenberg, but then he insisted 'do you know he has saved you?'"[45] From this penetrating conversation, Wesley was primed to embrace the Moravian belief in assurance of salvation, which ignited the Methodist Revival.

Fifty years before the beginning of modern missions by William Carey and the Baptist Missionary Society, the Moravian Church had pioneered the way into pagan countries both by principle and example. Their English missionary magazine *Periodical Accounts* inspired Carey. In a meeting of his Baptist brethren, Carey threw a copy of the paper on a table and proclaimed, "See what the

[43] Schattschneider, "Pioneers in Mission," 66.

[44] Hinkson, "Missions Among Puritans and Pietists", *The Great Commission*, 43.

[45] Randall, "A Missional Spirituality," 206.

Moravians have done! Cannot we follow their example and in obedience to our Heavenly Master go out into the world, and preach the Gospel to the heathen?"[46]

### *3.1. The Bad Fruit of Zinzendorf's Influence on Moravian Piety*

Zinzendorf reaped what he sowed in his lack of discernment, letting the "blood and wounds" theology become excessive. As he advanced toward middle age, Weinlick says that the Count became "more domineering in tone, more noble in his dreams, and more foolish in his conduct."[47] For a season, there was a distortion upon the atonement. Weinlick goes on to say that "its outward manifestation was a morbid concentration and wordplay upon the blood and wounds of the crucified Christ and a simulated irresponsibility of behavior supposed to be a demonstration of childlike faith."[48] Zinzendorf's powerful imagination and lavish imagery were a dangerous mixture, inviting foolish fanaticism. He rejected anyone who challenged his excess, and he was not teachable during this period. The longer the overindulgence continued, the more sensual it became. Weinlick observes, "The expression of love for Christ took on strong sexual connotations. There was an undue exaltation of marriage as the symbol of the marriage between Christ and the souls of the believer, and in this exaltation sexual terminology was freely employed."[49] Peucker also notes, "When during the festival of the single brothers in Herrnhaag in May of 1748 the assembled men sang the line 'Now thou be kissed by the entire brethren's choir,' each man kissed his neighbor, representing Christ."[50]

In the final analysis, though their mystical practices presumed to be Bible-centered and even cross-centered, it did not mean they accorded with established sound doctrine. Under the leadership of Count Zinzendorf, the Moravians sought to ground everything in the Bible, and some of them used the most outlandish allegorical interpretations of OT passages to support their graphic "blood and wounds" theology. They claimed mystical experiences of blood appearing on their hands, of swimming as little fish in the blood of Christ, and of even enjoying sensual relations with their "wounded Lover." They believed that everything they did had a Bible verse behind it—that is, a misquoted, misapplied, and misinterpreted one. It was not until they reformed and realigned themselves under the Augsburg Confession that they came back to center. Nevertheless, because of Zinzendorf's profound disdain for organized religious instruction, akin to what he had witnessed in Lutheran scholasticism, the Moravians continued to devalue rigorous theological training. In

[46] Greenfield, *Power from on High*, 19.

[47] Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, 198.

[48] Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, 199.

[49] Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, 200.

[50] Peucker, "The Songs of the Sifting," 67.

spite of their reaffirmation of the Augsburg Confession, without actively pursuing theological education and submitting to the sufficiency of Scripture, the Moravians were prone to wander from evangelical Biblicism. Their misuse of Scripture and adherence to extra-biblical revelation disclosed a defective view of the Holy Spirit's illumination of Scripture and sanctifying work. Though for a season they quoted texts in defense of their spiritual experiences, their spiritual practices went beyond the bounds of biblical spirituality; they did not always accord with the pattern of sound words, the witness of church history, and established doctrinal teaching.[51]

## 4. Concluding Implications

Though Zinzendorf and the Moravians claimed devotion to the Bible, they misused and misapplied it. Without a joyful devotion to a confessional and doctrinal center, the Moravians could quote verses out of context and argue for the validity of their enthusiasm. This propensity to quote the Bible out of historical, grammatical, literary, and theological context and thus appear to be Bible-centered on the surface should be a warning to Christians leaders lest they use Scripture to support their own fancies. If the Bible is not rightly divided, its misuse can cause confusion, misdirection, and even abuse. Moreover, in relation to the centrality of Scripture, the gospel must be heralded rightly in a way that does not confuse the message of the gospel with its implications. The gospel message is a summons from the King that sinners proudly defy; it is not good advice, but rather, it is good news. The gospel must never become socially acceptable advice for living.

The Moravian vision for renewal and mission is certainly something missionaries can learn from today. Throughout the history of the church, often times corporate mission impetus emerges out of extraordinary concerted prayer. The Moravian missions movement demonstrated this historical phenomenon, and the Moravians also showed how ongoing prayer is life-giving for missionaries on the field. To be sure, they employed some extra-biblical practices in their praying, but their devotion to God in prayer was commendable. Furthermore, their relentless devotion to unite mission and prayer is worthy of imitation. Too often prayer ministries err on the side of inaction, and similarly, mission agencies can err on the side of emphasizing strategy and methods over against prayerfulness. Mission agencies and churches should be aware of the modern tendency to elevate pragmatism over piety.

Another implication of the Moravian missionary movement that deserves consideration but not wholesale imitation is their emphasis on Christian unity. The Moravians were renowned for working across denominational lines in order to demonstrate Christian love to a watching world. This emphasis on ecumenism over the years slipped into doctrinal tolerance and liberalism because they did not hold fast to a confessional center, but their initial intentions were noteworthy. On

[51] See 1 Timothy 4:6-7.

the mission field and in non-Christianized areas of the world, kindhearted charity and practical support among various evangelical groups is not only a witness to unbelievers, it is also a source of encouragement and strength for weary and persecuted believers.

The role of suffering in Moravian piety is an implication that should be considered for missionaries and global leaders today. The Moravians viewed suffering in missions as a way to identify with Christ and demonstrate the power of the resurrection in a cruciform lifestyle. In an era of vaccinations, modern medicine, jet travel, and a love for ease, any call to self-denial and suffering is often met with derision. Though their Crucicentrism was misapplied at times, it is no coincidence that Moravian missionaries often chose paths of hardship because of their vision of the slain Lamb who has conquered death. A renewed consecration to follow Christ as the conquering Lamb is needed in contemporary Christianity.

Count Zinzendorf and his Moravian missionary host burned with passion for the Lamb and his renown among the heathen. Their organization of Bible study groups for the sake of practical holiness was innovative and still proves to be useful today. Moravian spiritual formation was charitable and heart-felt. A joyful spirit among the Moravians influenced their passionate prayers for over one hundred years. Regularly emphasizing confession and repentance became vital for the continual purity of the community. Because of their devotion to the slain Lamb, the Moravians were actively committed to reaching the heathen, even at the cost of martyrdom. This cross-centered missionary spirituality kept their prayer gatherings alive as they urgently interceded for fellow missionaries. Affected by Zinzendorf's pervasive "romance of religion,"[52] Moravian piety was the amalgamation of Pietism's small group Bible study and missions activism. The Moravians never stopped praying for over one hundred years, and so pervasive were their missionary stations that the sun never set on them. Therefore, let us consider what the Moravians have done; our Lamb has conquered, let us follow him.

[52] Winfred Kirkland, *The Easter People*, 33.

# "To the Joy of the Church, and the Honour of Christ": A Case Study of Personal Evangelism in Early Chinese Mission[1]

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ABSTRACT

Among China's second Protestant missionary William Milne's (1785–1822) notable contributions was that under his mentorship, hired printer Liang Fa (1789–1855) was converted to Christ and later trained to become the first ordained Chinese evangelist. In this paper Baiyu Andrew Song seeks to answer the question, "how was the gospel finally planted in China by Robert Morrison (1782–1834) and Milne?" With a brief analysis of Milne's famous Chinese tract, Dialogues Between Chang and Yuen (1819), Baiyu represents Milne's personal evangelism and Liang's conversion in the historical and theological settings.

## 1. Introduction

The year 2007 marked the bicentennial of the arrival of Robert Morrison (1782–1834)—the first Protestant missionary to China—at Macau. As part of its celebration, many Christian churches and academic institutes, both in China and overseas, organized conferences and publications. Disappointedly, in the year 2013 very few remembered and celebrated the bicentennial of the arrival of Morrison's close friend and missionary partner—William Milne (1785–1822)—who was China's second Protestant missionary, and under whom the first ordained Chinese evangelist, Liang Fa (1789–1855), was evangelized and mentored. Though William Milne would agree with Nikolaus

[1] The title "To the joy of the church, and the honour of Christ" came from William Milne's prayer upon Liang Fa's baptism on November 3, 1816. Milne hoped that Liang would "be faithful unto death; and as he is the first fruits of this branch of the Mission, may an abundant harvest follow, to the joy of the church, and the honour of Christ." Robert Philip, *The Life and Opinions of the Rev. William Milne, D.D., Missionary to China, Illustrated by Biographical Annals of Asiatic Missions, from Primitive to Protestant Times; Intended as a Guide to Missionary Spirit* (London: John Snow, 1840), 227.

von Zinzendorf (1700–1760) that his mission was to "preach the gospel, die, and be forgotten," it is still unfortunate for the church, especially Chinese churches, to forget such a faithful witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Only recently has academic interest in Milne and his contribution to Chinese church been renewed.[2]

Prior to Morrison and Milne's arrival, in China's five-thousand-year history, twice have the Christian churches in the West attempted to bring the gospel to China, but all failed. The Nestorians failed by being unable to communicate the orthodox faith to their Chinese converts with providing them Scriptures translated in Chinese. The Nestorians also failed by practicing syncretism in their missiological methods, which was to adopt Buddhist and Taoist terminology and symbols. The Roman Catholic missionaries, on the other hand, were sent as political ambassadors, and by their moral wickedness, they became a stumbling stone for the gospel.

Hence, the essential question to answer is: how was the gospel finally being planted in China by the first and second Protestant missionaries, *i.e.* Robert Morrison and William Milne? Undoubtedly, the final author of church history is the sovereign and gracious God. Nevertheless, throughout redemptive history, God uses human means to make his name known and glorified. This paper particularly aims to look at William Milne's personal evangelism of Liang Fa through analyzing Milne's famous Chinese tract, *Dialogues Between Chang and Yuen* (1819).

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[2] Soon after Milne's death (1822), several denominational periodicals published eulogies for this significant missionary, such as the *American Baptist Magazine* ("Death of Dr. Milne," *The American Baptist Magazine, and Missionary Intelligencer* 4.3 [1823]: 109.). A year later (1824), Robert Morrison simply collected Milne's English writings, including his journals, selected correspondences (especially with Morrison), theological writings, etc., and published them with very little editing, entitled (*Memoirs of the Rev. William Milne, D.D. Later Missionary to China and Principal of the Anglo-Chinese College; Compiled from Documents Written by the Deceased; To Which are Added Occasional Remarks* [Malacca: the Mission Press, 1824]).

In 1832, *The Chinese Repository* published a brief sketch of Milne's life and works as a missionary, which was the first brief biographical sketch of Milne's life and work. ([Bridgman, Elijah Coleman,] "A Brief Sketch of the Life and Labors of the Late Rev. William Milne, D.D." *The Chinese Repository* 1.8 [1832]: 316–325). In 1840, Milne's close friend, Robert Philip (1791–1858), published Milne's first biography, which is also the last biography on Milne (*Life and Opinions*, [London: John Snow, 1840]).

In 1979, Brian Harrison published his Waiting for China, in which he explained that he had no interest in the missionary's pastoral ministry, rather, he focused simply on the history of the Anglo-Chinese College. (*Waiting For China: The Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca*, 1818–1843, and *Early Nineteenth-Century Missions* [Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1979]).

In the twenty-first century, there seems to be a revival of academic interest in early Protestant missionaries to China, but such interest is only limited to Robert Morrison. Scholars like Christopher Hancock (*Robert Morrison and the Birth of Chinese Protestantism* [New York: T&T Clark, 2008]), Christopher Daily ("From Gosport to Canton: A New Approach to Robert Morrison and the Beginnings of Protestant Missions in China" [PhD diss., University of London, 2010]; *Robert Morrison and the Protestant for China* [Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013]), and Ching Su ("The Printing Press of the London Missionary Society Among the Chinese" [PhD diss., University of London, 1996]; Su, *Open Up, China!* [Hong Kong: Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture, 2005]) have devoted works to Morrison. As part of their study on Morrison, each of these three scholars also included brief studies of Milne in their works. Not long ago, a academic work devoted to William Milne had been produced by this author on Milne's contribution to Chinese church through his mentorship of Liang Fa (Baiyu Andrew Song, "Training Labourers For His Harvest: A Historical Study of William Milne's Mentorship of Liang Fa," [Magister Thesis, Toronto Baptist Seminary, 2014]).

## 2. From a Swearing Shepherd Boy to God's Ambassador

William Milne was born in April 1785 (possibly on April 26 or 27) at Braeside of Cults, in the parish of Kennethmount, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, and was baptized on April 27, 1785.[3] Milne's father, William Milne, Sr., who was a farm labourer, died when Milne was six years old (1791). His mother "gave [him] the education common to others in the same condition of life."[4] Possibly the oldest of his siblings, Milne had to work as a shepherd boy at a very young age. During this period of his life, Milne learned to swear while shepherding the sheep; later he comments that "the natural depravity of my heart began very soon to [discover] itself" and this led him into many other sins, like "lying, swearing, and blaspheming God's holy name."[5] As Milne grew up in the parish church, he memorized the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (1647) and John Willison's (1680–1750) *Mother's Catechism* in order for him to "be equal with [his] neighbours, and avoid the displeasure of the minister of

[3] Based on Morrison's Memoirs, Su Ching argues that Milne was born in the parish of "Henethmont," instead of Kennethmont (See, Su, Ching, *Open Up, China! Studies on Robert Morrison and His Circle* 中國，開門！馬禮遜及相關人物研究, Ching Feng Series 14 [Hong Kong: Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture, 2005], 130, n. 2). Though the name "Henethmont" was used in Morrison's Memoirs (2), according to Milne's first biographer, Robert Philip, Milne was born in the parish of Kennethmont, where Philip himself grew up (Life and Opinions, 1, 5, 42, 65, 116). Su argues for Morrison's spelling, since he said that "Henethmont" appeared in Milne's application to LMS, but Su did not cite the reference of this application. This writer argues that it was in the parish of Kennethmont that Milne was born. Morrison's "Milne's Account of Himself" was originally published as a tract, entitled *The Ordination Services of the Rev[erend] William Milne and the Rev*[*erend*] *George Thom; Missionaries to the East 1812* (Aberdeen: D. Chalmers, 1813). In the preface of this document, its editor explained that this is a record of Milne's ordination service, which means this document was not in a written form where Milne gave his account of himself, rather this document was stenographically reported. This writer argues, that since the letters "K" and "H" are very similar, it is possible for both the reporter and editors to make a mistake in confusing "K" with an "H." Historically, according to Scotland Places (http://www.scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/), there is no parish named "Henethmont" in Scotland. Geographically, Kennethmont is few miles away from Huntly, where Milne attended church. Therefore, it is certain that Milne was born in the parish of Kennethmount, Aberdeenshire. Robert Morrison, *Memoirs of the Rev[erend] William Milne, D.D. Late Missionary to China, and Principal of the Anglo-Chinese College* (Malacca: Mission Press, 1824); Robert Philip, *Life and Opinions of the Rev[erend] William Milne, D.D., Missionary to China* (London: John Snow, 1840);

According to the discovery of a file entitled as "O.P.R. Births 212/0000100227 Kennethmont" in the Old Parish Registers from ScotlandsPeople (http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk), William Milne was born to William Milne, Sr. in Braeside of Cults, and was baptized at the parish church on April 27, 1785. The entire entry is "April 27—Milne, William in Braeside of Cults had a son baptized, named William—3 [shillings]." H. Withngton, *Old Parochial Regs. County Aberdeen Par. Kennethmount*, vol 212/1, *New Register House Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Genealogical Society, 1978), textfiche, 12, 02C186. In a journal entry dated on April 27, 1820, Milne wrote, "This is, so far as I have learnt, my birth day." Morrison, *Memoirs*, 84.

[4] Morrison, *Memoirs*, 2.

[5] Morrison, Memoirs, 2; Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 7.

the parish."[6] For Milne, "religion was very grievous."[7] As Milne later recorded, he once foolishly imagined that, by the age of sixteen, he would "attain great celebrity as a vain and trifling youth."[8]

What happened to Milne at the age of thirteen, both physically (*i.e.* almost drowned while crossing a river) and spiritually (*i.e.* fear of death), brought Milne to attend Sunday evening schools taught by George Cowie (1749–1806). In the Sunday schools, Milne's knowledge of the Scriptures increased but this made him very proud.

By the age of sixteen, Milne had left his mother and moved into another house, whose owners Milne described as "strangers to religion."[9] But during this time, Milne frequently visited the house of a poor Christian man.[10] In this house, Milne was first introduced to family worship, and as Milne joined with prayers, he was taught and encouraged to pray and read pious books.[11] Milne later recalled:

> From this time my enjoyment and pursuit of pleasure in the world were marred; and a beauty and excellence discovered in religion, which I had never seen in any past period of my life, and which led me to choose and follow after it as the only object deserving the chief attention of an immortal creature.[12]

With this awakening experience, there were two books that deeply shaped Milne's spiritual life: a Scottish martyrological book entitled *Cloud of Witnesses* (1714) and Thomas Boston's (1676–1732) *Human Nature in Its Fourfold State*. As Milne was eagerly seeking the salvation of Jesus Christ, two sermons moved Milne forward to conversion: Thomas Boston's published sermon, "The Soul's Espousals to Christ" (2 Cor 11:2), and George Cowie's sermon on Revelation 22:21.[13] Milne was then led to reason:

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[6] Morrison, Memoirs, 2; Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 7. The full title of John Willison's catechism is *The Mother's Catechism for the Young Child; or a Preparatory Help for the Young and Ignorant* (Edinburgh: Thomas Lumisden and John Robertson, 1747).

[7] Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 7.

[8] Morrison, *Memoirs*, 3; Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 8.

[9] Morrison, *Memoirs*, 5.

[10] Robert Philip in *Life and Opinions* states that he was not able to identify which family Milne stayed at the time and referred to here. Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 12.

[11] Robert Philip records that when at the poor man's place, Milne always went "the sheep-cote, because he would have been disturbed in the barn, by his fellow-servants; and he carried a turf with him to kneel upon, because the floor was foul as well as damp," and prayed. It started there that Milne became a man of prayer. Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 13.

[12] Morrison, *Memoirs*, 5; Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 13.

[13] Milne in his account, named Thomas Boston's sermon as "The Believer's Espousals to Christ," which should be "The Soul's Espousals to Christ," according to Samuel M'Millan's *Complete Works of Thomas Boston. Philip, Life and Opinions*, 16; Morrison, *Memoirs*, 8. Samuel M'Millian, ed., *Complete Works of the Late Rev*[*erend*] *Thomas Boston, Ettrick* (1853; repr., Wheaton, IL: Richard Owen Roberts, 1980), 4:22–31.

> If pardon and salvation were offered, 'without money and without price,' to those who had killed the Prince of Life, and thereby committed the greatest possible crime; then, surely that grace which could triumph over all their guilt, and so richly abound where sins of the highest aggravation once abounded, may be extended to me—pardon my sins, and renew my nature—heal and save my soul. By these two things I was led to discover a glory and suitableness in the Gospel—as displaying the lustre of the divine perfections, and as preserving the honours of the divine law, while at the same time it conferred eternal life on the guilty sinner believing in Jesus. This discovery captivated my heart, and made me willing to devote myself, soul and body, to God for ever.[14]

By having such "earnest desire of devoting [himself] to God," Milne was encouraged to make a personal confession.[15] This conversion experience was accompanied with radical changes in his lifestyle. In Robert Morrison's words, Milne had a "very ardent impetuous determined mind; yet softened by mildness of manner," and after Milne's conversion, "it retained its natural ardor and impetuosity, but [was] directed to new and very different objects from what it previously was."[16]

Soon after Milne's conversion, he felt it necessary to leave the Church of Scotland, as he disliked the shallow sermons preached by the minister. Because of opposition from his relatives, Milne stayed in his old church for two years before moving to George Cowie's Congregational church in Huntly, where he became a member one year later.

Milne's missionary interest was deepened as he read Jonathan Edwards' (1703–1758) missionary biography of David Brainerd (1718–1747) and the stories of missionaries that were published in magazines like the *Evangelical Magazine*. Milne later explained his missionary calling in his ordination service and stated that when he read the missionary stories, he "felt deeply concerned for the coming of Christ's kingdom among the nations."[17] With many prayers for the confirmation of his missionary calling, Milne sent in his application to the London Missionary Society (LMS) in about 1809. While waiting for the committee's response, Milne devoted himself to prayer and reading books like the LMS published *Transactions of the Missionary Society*, and Andrew Fuller's *Life of the Rev. Samuel Pearce*.[18] A month later, the Aberdeen committee called Milne for an interview. Being moved by Milne's servant-heart, the committee accepted Milne's application and supported him to receive missionary training from the Edwardsean theologian and educator, David Bogue

[14] Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 16–17.

[15] Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 17.

[16] Morrison, *Memoirs*, iii.

[17] Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 33.

[18] See Morrison, *Memoirs*, 14; Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 36. Though in the text, the spelling is "Samuel Pierce," it is a spelling mistake of "Samuel Pearce," (1766–1799) the Baptist minister of Cannon Street Baptist Church, Birmingham.

(1750–1825) at Gosport.[19] It was from Bogue that both Robert Morrison and William Milne learned that "the sole business of a missionary is to promote the religion of Jesus," which is the same task as that of a local minister of the gospel.[20]

On July 16, 1812, Milne was ordained at John Griffin's (1769–1834) church at Portsea, Portsmouth.[21] On August 4, 1812, William Milne married Rachel Cowie (1783–1819) at St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, by the curate Robert Crosby (1769–1837).

A month later, on September 4, 1812, William and Rachel Milne sailed from Portsmouth for the Cape of Good Hope (today's Cape Town, South Africa). On July 4, 1813, William and Rachel Milne arrived at Macao and were "most cordially welcomed by" Robert and Mary Morton Morrison (1791–1821).[22] On that night, Morrison prayed, expressing his deep longings, "Thus far (blessed be the great Disposer of events) the door has been opened. O that the Lord's servant [referring to Milne] may be spared in health, may soon acquire the language of the heathen, and be a faithful missionary of Jesus Christ."[23]

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[19] Andrew F. Walls, "Missions and Historical Memory: Jonathan Edwards and David Brainerd," in *Jonathan Edwards at Home and Abroad: Historical Memories, Cultural Movements, Global Horizons*, eds. David W. Kling and Douglas A. Sweeney (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 251.

[20] David Bogue, *Objections Against a Mission to the Heathen, Stated and Considered; A Sermon, Preached at Tottenham Court Chapel, Before the Founders of the Missionary Society, 24 Sep*[*tember*] *1795* (Cambridge: Hilliard and Metcalf, 1811), 11.

[21] At the service, John Hunt of Chelmsford, one of the directors of the LMS, offered opening prayer and Scripture reading. David Bogue made the introductory discourse. John Griffin asked four questions concerning Milne's conversion, missionary calling, missionary strategy, and theology. After answering these questions, Bogue offered an ordination prayer, which was followed by a sermon preached by James Bennet (1774–1862) from Jeremiah 49:14, entitled, "An Ambassador is Sent to the Heathen." William Scamp (1774–1860) concluded the service with a prayer.

The entire ordination service was recorded and published under the title, *The Ordination Services of the Rev*[*erend*] *William Milne and the Rev. George Thom; Missionaries to the East 1812* (Aberdeen: D. Chalmers, 1813). Morrison in his Memoir only kept the questions and answers on Milne's account. Morrison, Memoirs, 1–28.

[22] William Milne, *A Retrospect of the First Ten Year of the Protestant Mission to China* (Malacca: Anglo-Chinese College, 1820), 103. After his theological training under David Bogue, Robert Morrison was ordained in the Scots Church on Swallow Street in London on January 8, 1807. Sailed from England, Morrison had to seek the American Counsel's protection in New York, and sailed again on May 12, 1807. After 113-day's voyage, Morrison arrived Macao on September 4, 1807. Three days later, Morrison was expelled by the Roman Catholic authorities, and was forced to sail to Canton. Due to Morrison's unique linguistic gift and knowledge of Chinese, Morrison was hired by the East India Company as a translator and later served as a linguistic and cultural assistant to Lord Amherst (1819) and Lord Napier (1834), when they visited the Qing Emperors in Beijing. At the early stage of Morrison's mission in China, the LMS directors worried if Morrison would damage the mission due to a cultural clash with the indigenous people. As a result, the LMS directors only viewed Morrison's mission as "a preliminary endeavor" and "instructed him to make no attempt to preach the Gospel openly" (Suzanne W. Barnett, "Silent Evangelism: Presbyterians and the Mission Press in China, 1807–1860," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 49.4 [1971]: 288). Rather, the directors instructed Morrison to devote his time to studying the Chinese language and translating the Bible and Christian literature to help future missionaries.

[23] Eliza Morrison, *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of Robert Morrison, D.D.* (London: Longman, 1839), 1:365. As early as April 29, 1807, Morrison wrote to the LMS directors requesting sending another missionary to China. Though

Early in the morning on July 9, 1813, a sergeant from the Portuguese Governor, Bernardo Aleixo de Lemos e Faria (1754–1826), came to Morrison with the command that Milne "must leave in eight days."[24] Though Morrison was friendly to the Governor, "the Governor's position was clear, and 'unanswerable.'"[25] The Governor's coldness was influenced by the Roman Catholic bishop and clergy, "who were alarmed at the arrival of a Protestant missionary, to whom they could show no indulgence, notwithstanding, at the same time a great number of their own body were hospitably entertained, and even kindly fostered in the heart of England."[26] Meanwhile, Morrison asked if the East India Company (EIC) would hire Milne, which had hired Morrison, but the EIC refused to hire Milne permanently.[27] Morrison was disappointed by the EIC, since he felt "betrayed by friends in the English community."[28] Morrison then sent Milne to Canton for the winter. On July 20, leaving a pregnant Rachel with Mary Morrison at Macao, Milne "went in a small boat to Canton, where [he] remained the ensuing season; enjoying that hospitality among the heathen, which had been denied in a Christian colony."[29] Christopher Hancock concludes that this event "set them [Morrison and Milne] in good stead for the future," as Milne would become "a close friend," "intellectual peer," and "constant help" to Morrison.[30]

Life for Milne in Canton was not easy since Milne had to hide himself in a factory at the port, which cost him "500 Spanish dollars for the season," as the Chinese government was very cautious about foreigners.[31] While he was in Canton, Milne followed Morrison's principles in learning Chi-

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the LMS accepted Morrison's request, it took six years for the LMS to send William and Rachel Cowie Milne to China (Hancock, *Robert Morrison and the Birth of Chinese Protestantism*, 88–90).

[24] Morrison, *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of Robert Morrison*, 1:365.

[25] Hancock, *Robert Morrison and the Birth of Chinese Protestantism*, 94. According to Morrison, under his negotiation the Governor would decide to "extend the eight days to eighteen," is different than Edwin Stevens' account that Milne had to leave in "24 hours." Morrison, *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of Robert Morrison*, 1:366; Edwin Stevens, "A Brief Sketch of the Life and Labors of the Late Rev[erend] William Milne, D.D.," *Chinese Repository* 1 (Dec 1832): 319.

[26] Anonymous, "Memoir of the Late Rev[erend] William Milne, D.D., Missionary to the Chinese," *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* (April 1823): 137–138.

[27] The EIC offered to hire Milne for only two seasons as assistant to Morrison to complete the English-Chinese dictionary. To this offer, both Morrison and Milne refused.

[28] Hancock, *Robert Morrison and the Birth of Chinese Protestantism*, 95.

[29] On October 14, 1813, Rachel delivered their first child, a daughter, named Amelia. At this time, William was able to have a brief trip back to Macao to visit his Rachel and Amelia. Amelia was not baptized until January 23, 1814. Milne, *Retrospect*, 105, 107.

[30] Hancock, Robert Morrison and the Birth of Chinese Protestantism, 96, 93.

[31] Milne, *Retrospect*, 107. William Milne described Canton as "like the New Jerusalem only in one thing; that strangers are not permitted to enter. I have once peeped in at the gate; and I hope yet to enter. A few days ago, I went to the top of a little hill to view this land, … My thoughts were 'O that God would give this land to the churches, that we,

nese. Within six months, Milne's Chinese had improved dramatically, yet Milne still described the language study as "a work for men with bodies of brass, lungs of steel, heads of oak, hands of spring-steel, eyes of eagles, hearts of apostles, memories of angels, and lives of Methuselah! Still I make a little progress."[32]

As early as September 1814, both the Portuguese colonial government and Chinese government made resolutions to the disadvantage of Protestant missionaries.[33] Seeing their situation change for the worse, both Morrison and Milne agreed to establish a missionary station outside of Macao and Canton, where Protestants would be welcomed both by the officials and within Chinese settlements. They found Malacca to be the best place for such a station, since at the time Malacca was a British colony, governed by the friendly Scottish-born Major-General William Farquhar (1774–1839). On April 17, 1815, William and the again-pregnant Rachel Milne sailed to Malacca with their young daughter Amelia. Liang Fa also went with the Milnes as a printer. On April 22, Rachel gave birth to twin boys at sea, named William Charles and Robert George.[34] The Milne family arrived at Malacca, on the Malay Peninsula, on May 21, 1815, and was once again warmly welcomed by Farquhar.

Soon after the Milnes arrived and settled at Malacca, Morrison laid out some significant principles for Milne's mission at Malacca in a letter on July 15, 1815. First, "their vision is to expand the scope of the Mission in keeping with the 'conversion of the Chinese, and of all who speak their

their Messengers, might walk through the length and breadth of it, to publish the glory of His salvation! … I think them [Chinese] exceedingly corrupted in their morals. They are a civilized and industrious people; but their land is *full* of idols!" Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 111.

[32] Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 137.

[33] The Roman Catholic clergy at Macao complained about Morrison and Milne's activities and about the tracts they handed to the Portuguese. On the other hand, the Chinese government ordered "no natives to serve foreigners, but winks at it. The practice goes on till the government wishes to annoy and dismiss the resident foreigners, when the law is then enforced." Morrison, *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of Robert Morrison*, 1:410. Some scholars, like Jean-Pierre Charbonnier, recently argue that the Roman Catholic clergy were peaceful towards the Protestant missionaries, and say that it was the Protestants who refused to cooperate with them. This is contrary to the facts at Macao, since Morrison and Milne thought the Catholics were "peaceable people," and it was the Catholic clergy who complained about jealousy. Compare Jean-Pierre Charbonnier, *Christians in China: A.D. 600 to 2000*, trans. M. N. L. Couve de Murville (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2007), 350–364; with Milne, Retrospect, 128, and Alain Peyrefitte, *Immobile Empire* (1992; repr. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2013), xxiii–xxiv.

[34] William Charles Milne (April 22, 1815–May 16, 1863) was ordained on July 19, 1837, and appointed by the LMS to Canton as a missionary. William Charles later became assistant Chinese secretary to the legation at Beijing. He married Frances-Williamina, daughter of Rev. Dr. Joseph Beaumont (1794–1855), on August 27, 1846. William Charles died on May 15, 1863 of apoplexy, and he was buried at the Russian cemetery, outside of the North gate of Beijing. Robert George Milne (April 22, 1815–November 20, 1882), studied and graduated from Marischal College, Aberdeen University with his twin brother William Charles. Robert George married Catherine Bradley (1816–1860). On April 14, 1841, Robert George was ordained in Providence Chapel, Whitehaven, Cumberland, and became a Congregationalist minister first at Tintwistle, Chester, and later at Southport, Lancaster.

language.'"[35] For Morrison and Milne, they understood that their primary missionary task was to reach the Chinese; they were not to be sidetracked by establishing a station outside of China. Second, "their vision is to establish a headquarters for the work," which they wanted to be "a head-quarters at which to meet and consult, from which to commission persons to go forth on every hand,—a home to which to retire in case of sickness or declining years."[36] In other words, the station at Malacca was a temporary harbor from the persecutions. Third, "their vision [was] to set up a school 'for the instruction of Native and European youth; for the reception and initiation of young missionaries from Europe.'"[37] The Anglo-Chinese College opened in 1818.

According to these three principles, Milne took charge of the missionary station at Malacca. So scholar Ching Su summarized the various works for which Milne busied himself at Malacca:[38]

1. Purchase land and establish mission houses;
2. Oral labors—preaching and teaching;[39]
3. Education, specifically being the principal of the Anglo-Chinese College;
4. Printing;[40]
5. Writing and editing;[41]
6. Establishing the Ultra-Ganges Mission in 1818.

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[35] Hancock, *Robert Morrison and the Birth of Chinese Protestantism*, 113.

[36] Hancock, *Robert Morrison and the Birth of Chinese Protestantism*, 113.

[37] Hancock, *Robert Morrison and the Birth of Chinese Protestantism*, 113.

[38] Su, *Open Up, China!*, 144–168.

[39] A schedule of Milne's "oral labours" is recorded in both Morrison's Memoir and Milne's Retrospect. Milne would preach in three languages, English, Chinese, and Malay. On regular Sundays: preach in Chinese at 7 am; in English at 10 am (as the minister of Dutch Reformed Church, Malacca); catechizing in Chinese at 12 pm; catechizing in English at 7 pm; and catechizing in Malay at 8:30 pm. On weekdays, Milne would have a 10 to 15 minute worship service at the mission house. Every morning or afternoon, Milne would teach his children. Every Tuesday night, Milne would have a prayer meeting with Liang Fa. Every Wednesday and Friday night, Milne would teach A-Kang and Meen-Ko. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 4 pm, Milne would read the Scripture with Liang Fa. Every Thursday afternoon around five, Milne would catechize one or two youth in English, and that night around eight, Milne would preach at Ta-Peh-Kung Temple to around fifty people in Chinese. Every Saturday or Wednesday afternoon, Milne would catechize women. Morrison, *Memoir*, 89–90; Milne, Retrospect, 144–145.

[40] Milne's major contribution to the printed media are, (1) the first Chinese Bible, translated by Morrison and Milne; (2) Gospel tracts; (3) the first Chinese magazine, *Chinese Monthly Magazine*察世俗每月統記傳 (August 5, 1815–January 1821); (4) English magazine, *Indo-Chinese Gleaner* (1815–1822); (5) and other publications, including Milne's *Retrospect*.

[41] During his seven-year ministry at Malacca, Milne wrote seventeen tracts, among which "Dialogues Between Chang and Yuan 張遠兩友相論" (1819) was the most influential. It was revised and well-read in China until 1949. Milne also translated David Bogue's commentary on Ephesians, and several Chinese classics in English. Until his death, Milne was the chief editor of the English magazine *Indo-Chinese Gleaner*.

In addition to these six labours, Milne also devoted time to discipling and mentoring his printer Liang Fa, leading him from being a heathen to a believer, and from a new convert to a solid gospel apologist and evangelist.

### 3. "Before I Came Hither, I Knew Not God; Now I Desire To Serve Him."[42]

Liang Fa, or Leang Kung-Fa, was born in 1789, in Gulao village, Sanzhou ("three islands") town, Gaoming ("lofty clearness") county, Zhaoqing Fu (肇慶府高明縣三洲古勞村), about seventy miles from Canton, in Guangdong province.[43] Like Morrison and Milne, Liang's "origins were humble but his achievements remarkable."[44] Liang's parents were poor, yet they sent him to a village school at the age of eleven. During his four years of school, Liang "committed to memory the Four Books, the Five Classics, and the Sacred Edict, [which] the two former sets bring the ancient Confucian classics and the last a series of moral maxims written by the second emperor" of the Qing dynasty.[45] In 1804, Liang left his village for Canton where he "found work with a maker of Chinese brush pens, but very soon left this occupation and apprenticed himself to an engraver of wooden printing blocks."[46] In 1810, Liang was called home on account of the death of his mother and soon returned to Canton and was employed at a printing house around the Thirteen Factories. In September, Morrison was looking to publish his translation of the book of Acts, and Liang was hired to carve its wooden printing blocks. It is because of Liang's steadiness and excellent skills in carving that he soon gained Morrison's trust and continued being employed in Morrison's Chinese translation of the New Testament during 1811 and 1812.[47]

In April 1815, when Milne sailed to Malacca, Liang was with him, "to assist in printing Chinese books."[48] Shortly after arriving in Malacca, Liang "fell into deep despair over his years of gambling and intemperance in Canton," and Liang "saw his anxiety in spiritual terms."[49] In a sense, like his

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[42] Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 225–226.

[43] Li Zhigang, *History of Early Christian Missionary in China* 基督教早期在華傳教史 (Taiwain: Commercial Press, 1985), 175, n. 17; George Hunter McNeur, *China's First Preacher Liang A-Fa 1789–1855* (Shanghai: Kwang Hsueh Publishing House, [1934?]), 7.

[44] Hancock, *Robert Morrison and the Birth of Chinese Protestantism*, 93.

[45] McNeur, *China's First Preacher Liang A-Fa*, 11–12.

[46] McNeur, *China's First Preacher Liang A-Fa*, 14.

[47] Li, *History of Early Christian Missionary in China*, 175, n. 17.

[48] Alexander Wylie, *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1867), 21.

[49] P. Richard Bohr, "Liang Fa's *Quest for Moral Power*," in *Christianity in China: Early Protestant Missionary Writings*, eds. Suzanne Wilson Barnett and John King Pairbank (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 37.

mentor Milne, Liang was raised in a religious culture. Though he had participated in Buddhist Pure Land rites, which are commonly practiced by the Chinese focusing on Amitābha Buddha, Liang had later "regarded religious matters with careless indifference."[50] For Liang, at Malacca, there were many uncertainties, as to whether to stay far away from home and whom he would marry. According to Chinese traditions, Liang went to the local temple of the Overseas Chinese community in Malacca on the first and fifteenth day of every month to burn incense and "to implore Kuan-yin's compassionate intercessions for protection, blessing, and eventual entrance into Amitābha's Western Paradise."[51] One conversation with a Chinese Buddhist monk made Liang start to detest Buddhism, as the monk advised him to "accumulate sufficient merit to outweigh his misdeeds," which is obtained through "joining the sangha (by which he could remit the sins of himself and his entire family), donating money for temple repair . . . , and the daily recitation of sutras."[52] For Liang, the monk was carrying on a business, rather than helping him to save his soul.

Meanwhile, William Milne had finished his 71-page tract, "Life of Christ" (求世者言行真史記), which was a booklet that "notices the creation, providence, sin and misery of man."[53] Liang was hired to carve the blocks for printing this tract. Later, before Liang's baptism, he told Milne that, while he was labouring on the carving, the text brought to him some new ideas about Christianity.[54] Liang then began to read Morrison's New Testament, attend Milne's preaching, and seek Milne's help on certain difficult biblical passages. P. Richard Bohr states "Christianity's greatest attraction for him [Liang] was the notion of filiality and moral seriousness emerging from the concept of monotheism."[55]

In the summer of 1816, Milne wrote in his journal that Liang "professed his determination to take up his cross and follow Christ."[56] After private conversations, testing his faith and prayers, William Milne baptized Liang Fa on November 3, 1816. Milne recorded in his journal that "the service was performed privately, in a room of the Mission-house. Care had been taken, by private conversation,

[50] Bohr, "Liang Fa's *Quest for Moral Power*," 37. Pure Land Buddhism was first appeared in India, and was brought to China as early as 147 BC by a Kushan monk Lokaksema. Based on the doctrine of bodhisattva, Pure Land Buddhist teaching focus on Amitābha Buddha, whose region locates in the western direction and offers respite from karmic transmigration.

[51] Bohr, "Liang Fa's *Quest for Moral Power*," 37–38.

[52] Bohr, "Liang Fa's *Quest for Moral Power*," 38.

[53] Wylie, *Memorials*, 14.

[54] Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 225.

[55] Bohr, "Liang Fa's *Quest for Moral Power*," 39.

[56] Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 224.

instruction, and prayer, to prepare him for this sacred ordination."[57] Milne found clear spiritual change in Liang's life as "he was formerly stiff and obstinate, and occasionally troublesome," but now "there has been scarcely any thing of this kind to complain of."[58] As Milne found no reasons to delay baptism, he posed five questions to Liang at his baptism:

***Question 1:*** Have you truly turned from idols, to worship and serve the living and true God, the creator of heaven and earth, and all things?

***Answer:*** This is my heart's desire.

***Question 2:*** Do you now feel that you are a sinful creature, totally unable to save yourself?

***Answer:*** I know it.

***Question 3:*** Do you really, from your heart, believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and Saviour of the world; and do you trust in him alone for salvation?

***Answer:*** This is my heart's desire.

***Question 4:*** Do you expect any worldly advantage, profit, or gain whatever, by your becoming a Christian?

***Answer:*** None: I receive baptism because it is my duty.

***Question 5:*** Do you resolve from this day till the day of your death, to live in obedience to all the commandments and ordinances of God; and in justice and righteousness of life before him?

***Answer:*** This is my determination; but I fear my strength is not equal to it.[59]

Milne later wrote in his journal, "since his [Liang's] baptism, some private means have been used to increase his knowledge; to impress his heart more deeply, and to strengthen his faith."[60] Milne began his discipleship and mentorship with Liang. Under Milne's supervision and editing, Liang wrote a 37-page tract, "Miscellaneous Exhortations (救世錄撮要略解)," which contains "a preface concerning God as the Creator, and object of worship, to which the Ten Commandments are attached," along with some New Testament passages, and "three hymns and prayers."[61] Under

[57] Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 224.

[58] Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 225.

[59] Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 226–227; also see McNeur, *China's First Preacher Liang A-Fa*, 28–29.

[60] Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 227.

[61] Wylie, *Memorials*, 22.

Morrison's approval, 200 copies of Liang's tract were printed so that he could distribute them to his relatives and neighbours.

In 1819, Liang went back to his home village and married a woman whose maiden name was Lai. While at home, this "new-born" Liang was burdened with his friends' sin, especially their idolatry, and decided to share his tract with them. Possibly, some printer secretly reported him to the police, and both his tracts and blocks were destroyed. Liang was put in prison. As soon as Morrison received this news, he tried to ask the Thirteen Factory traders to help obtain Liang's release, and as a result, Liang received "thirty blows with the bamboo, and had seventy dollars extorted from him," with the charge of having been overseas.[62] Liang was then released. Later, after Liang's release, his wife was converted and baptized by him.

In the spring of 1820, Liang went back to Malacca to study and work with Milne, until Milne's death in 1822. On November 20, 1823, Liang's son was baptized by Morrison, and named Liang Jinde (梁進德). Liang now was employed by the LMS as a native teacher. In 1827, Liang was ordained by Morrison as China's first evangelist. For many years, Liang "continued zealously to compose, print and distribute Christian books among his countrymen in the province of Guangdong, frequently attending at the literary examinations for that purpose, as well in the district cities as in the provincial capital."[63] Though Milne was not able to witness Liang's contribution to the early Protestant mission in China, especially in places where Morrison and Milne were not able to visit, God listened to Milne's prayer that Liang would "be faithful unto death; and as he is the first fruits of this branch of the Mission, may an abundant harvest follow, to the joy of the church, and the honour of Christ."[64] On April 12, 1855, Liang died at home at the age of sixty-seven. By this time, due to the labour of Morrison, Milne, and other missionaries who had laboured, the seed of the Gospel was deeply planted in China. For Liang Fa, he also left a pious legacy to both the Chinese church and his family.[65]

## 4. But Only God Who Gives the Growth[66]

As Edwardsean missionaries, Morrison and Milne understood the core task of their mission was to make disciples of Jesus Christ among the Chinese, and as a result, they sought opportunities to evangelize both large groups of people and individuals such as Cai Gao (or Tsae a-ko, who was the

[62] Wylie, *Memorials*, 22.

[63] Wylie, *Memorials*, 21–22.

[64] Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 227.

[65] McNeur, *China's First Preacher Liang A-Fa*, 117–123.

[66] This section has first appeared as the part of the third chapter of my thesis, "Training Labourers for His Harvest," 57–65.

first Chinese Protestant convert, baptized on July 16, 1814 by Robert Morrison), Cai's two brothers, and Liang Fa, whom Morrison and Milne hired for the printing press. By faithful presentation of the gospel in both their words and life examples, Morrison and Milne eagerly hoped that God might let them see the fruits of Chinese conversion, which is the work of the Holy Spirit.[67]

From this brief biographical sketch, it is clear that Liang Fa became a seeker of Christian faith under Morrison's influence and through his own labor in making the New Testament blocks; this was soon after he arrived in Malacca with Milne.[68] After rejecting Buddhism, Liang "began to recite the prayers" and sat under Milne's sermons.[69] McNeur records Liang's testimony of his journey toward the recognition of his sin and of his need of Jesus the Saviour:

> . . . I heard the missionary [William Milne] preach the doctrine of atonement through Jesus, and at my leisure I examined the Scriptures … Then I thought 'These are good books, exhorting men to depart from iniquity. Moreover the doctrines are attested by the miracles of Jesus, therefore the book must certainly be true.' I then listened to the expounding of the Scriptures, and on the Sabbath read the Bible more attentively, requesting the missionary [Milne] to explain it to me. I asked what was meant by Jesus making atonement for sin. The missionary [Milne] told me that Jesus was the Son of God sent into the world to suffer for the sins of men in order that all who believe in Him might obtain salvation. Feeling myself to be a sinner I asked how I was to obtain pardon. The missionary [Milne] said 'If you believe in Jesus Christ [he] will receive you as His adopted son, and in the world to come bestow on you everlasting life.' … On returning to my room I thought with myself 'I am a great sinner, and if I do not depend on the merits of Christ how can God forgive me?' I then determined to become a disciple of Jesus and requested baptism.[70]

Though there is no recorded report of the conversations between Milne and Liang on questions Liang had about God, Scripture, sin, and salvation, it is certain that Milne spent time answering Liang's questions concerning the gospel truth with patience, and walked with Liang along his way as he sought his Saviour. Liang was baptized by Milne in 1816. Three years later, in 1819 at Malacca, Milne wrote and published *Dialogues Between Chang and Yuen* (張遠兩友相論), a novelistic and catechistic tract based on the conversations of a Chang, who is a Christian, and a Yuen, Chang's heathen neighbor. Milne summarized these dialogues between these two friends:

> 1. Questions proposed by Yuen concerning Christian principles and character; the being of God. 2. Evangelical repentance. 3. Character of Christ, and faith in him. 4. Good men seek their chief happiness in heaven; annihilation of the soul considered. 5. Chang relates his first acquaintance with the New

[67] Philip, *Life and Opinions*, 111.

[68] McNeur, *China's First Preacher Liang A-fa, 23; Li, History of Early Christian Missionary in China*, 175, n. 17; Bohr, "Liang Fa's Quest for Moral Power," 36–40.

[69] McNeur, *China's First Preacher Liang* A-fa, 24.

[70] McNeur, *China's First Preacher Liang* A-fa, 24–25.

> Testament. 6. Yuen having retired, is struck with horror at his own neglect of the true God; visits Chang and finds him with his family at prayer; the resurrection of the dead. 7. Nature and qualities of the raised bodies; doubts and objections. 8. Yuen on visiting Chang in the evening, finds him in his closet, which leads to a discussion on the object, and kinds of prayer; worshipping the dead, &c. 9. The awful judgment to come; a midnight prayer under the Woo-tung tree. 10. Yuen objects to Chang's last night's prayer, be cause he confessed himself to be a sinner; 11. Yuen deeply impressed with the ideas of eternity of sin, spends a whole night in his garden, bewailing his miserable condition. 12. Chang explains to him the method of salvation by Jesus Christ; the felicity of heaven; and misery of hell.[71]

Historically, Milne's *Dialogues* constituted the first missionary novel in common Chinese, and became the most famous and best-selling Christian tract in China. The work received a wide arrange of reading, since it was not only famous among the Chinese, but also was translated and sold in Korea, where it had significant influence upon the church.[72]

Although Milne's *Dialogues* had been reprinted and revised various times after its first publication, until recently there have been few academic studies done on the tract.[73] Most of these studies are conducted from a literary perspective. In other words, scholars are interested in the literary value of the tract. By neglecting Milne's and the tract's historical and theological context, they assume that this tract is completely fictional, and that by choosing to use this kind of genre, Milne aimed at attracting Chinese readers. Comparing Milne's *Dialogues* with Liang's personal testimony concerning his conversion, it is not hard to notice the similarities between them. In many cases, Liang was in a similar situation to Yuan, as both of them were interested in Christianity, burdened with sin, and were counseled by Christian friends (especially compare *Dialogues* chapter ten: Yuen's reflection on sin). Thus it is clear that Milne's *Dialogues* is not completely fictional; it rather communicates

[71] Milne, Retrospect, 281–282.

[72] Sung-Deuk Oak noticed the influence of Milne's *Dialogues* in the conversion of Kil Sonju (1869–1935), "one of the first seven Presbyterian ministers ordained in 1907." Sung-Deuk Oak, *The Making of Korean Christianity: Protestant Encounters With Korean Religions*, 1876–1915 (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013), 246–250, 251–252, 283–284. Also see Soon-Bang Oh, "The Spread and Translation of Chinese Christian Novels in the 1890s' Korea," Dong Hwa Journal of Humanities 9 (2006): 215–250.

[73] Most studies are on an introductory level without deep analytical and theological study. See Patrick Hanan, *Chinese Fiction of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2004), 58–61; Song Lihua, *Chinese Missionary Novel Studies* 傳教士漢文小說研究 (Shanghai: Ancient Books Publishing, 2010), 60–77; Song Lihua, "The Morden Development of Chinese Missionary Novels and Chinese Literature 傳教士漢文小說與中國文學的現代變革," *Literary Criticism* 文學評論 1 (2011): 57–62; and Song Lihua, "The Spread and Influence of the First Chinese Missionary Novel: Studies on William Milne's *Dialogues Between Chang and Yuen* 第一部傳教士中文小說的流傳與影響—米憐《張遠兩友相論》論略," Institute of Literature, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, http://www.literature.org.cn/Article.aspx?id=8730 (accessed on February 13, 2014). For a more detailed theological study see Daniel H. Bays, "Christian Tracts: The Two Friends," in *Christianity in China: Early Protestant Missionary Writings*, eds. Suzanne Wilson Barnett and John King Fairbank (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 19–34.

the method of personal evangelism, Milne used in leading Liang to Christ. Milne's *Dialogues* is evangelistic in its nature.

On the basis of the conversations of Pan Chang (潘長) and Cao Yuen (曹遠), three evangelistic characteristics can be observed that are possibly applied by Milne in conversing with Liang. First, there is clear communication of the gospel in conversation. In *Dialogues* chapter one, after a very brief introduction of the setting, Milne wrote about Chang's explanation of the uniqueness of Christians in their ways of worshipping the one true and only God (真的惟一上帝, lit., "true and only supreme ruler" ), and acknowledgement of one's depraved nature which leads to one's eager desire for redemption (信耶穌者皆知自己有罪, 苦心懺悔).[74] For Chang, it is clear that "there is but one only living and true God," who is the Creator, the origin of all things (天地萬物之原本是也, lit., "origin of everything in heaven and on earth").[75] The attributes of God are his sovereignty (全能), omniscience (至智), mercy (至恩), righteousness (至義), holiness (至聖), and grace (至憐).[76] In nature, the true living God is one God in three persons (上帝止一, 但其體有三位, lit., "the supreme ruler is only one, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons"), namely the Father (聖父, lit., "Holy Father"), Son (聖子, lit., "Holy Son") and Holy Spirit (聖神, lit., "Holy Spirit").[77] These three persons are not three gods, but one God.[78] The second person of the triune God is called Jesus, which is a "foreign" name that means "save." This name was given to the Son of God since he came

[74] William Milne, *Dialogues Between Chang and Yuen* 張遠兩友相論, rev. William Charles Milne (Hong Kong: Anglo-Chinese College, 1851), 5, 7.

[75] Westminster Assembly of Divines, "The Westminster Confession of Faith, 1647," in *The Creeds of Christendom With a History and Critical Notes*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1983), 3:606. In answering Yuen's question concerning the difference between God and heaven (which is a term substitute for "God" in common Chinese idiom. For instance, 天子 [lit., "son of heaven"] is the title used to emperor, which refers the emperor's divine right), Chang explains with an illustration of the difference between a table and a craftsman, and points out that "heaven is created, but God is the Creator (天是受造之物, 上帝是造物主也)." Milne, *Dialogues*, 6.

[76] Noticing the use of Chinese adjective "至" ("most") in describing God's attributes, which makes the translation literally be: God is sovereign, most wise, most merciful, most righteous, most holy, and most gracious. Milne, *Dialogues*, 6.

[77] It was not easy for early missionaries to translate theological terms into Chinese. The choice of the word "體" for the word Godhead is wise, since the word literally means "a whole set, wholeness," thus the unity of the three persons in the Godhead is communicated. The word "位" is a word of measurement (it expresses a quantity), and is used particularly in reference to humans, and the word is rightfully chosen to communicate the meaning of "being," or "substantive reality."

Concerning the translation of the name "Holy Spirit," Milne did not follow the Nestorian and Roman Catholic translation, which translated literarily means, "original/abstruse wind," or "pure wind." Rather, Milne used the word "神." When "神" is used as a noun, there are multiple possible meanings in classical Chinese, which are (1) deity, (2) spirit, mind, or vigor, and (3) look or expression. The use, which refers to the Holy Spirit, then carries a meaning of a combination of "deity" and "spirit and mind." Milne, Dialogues, 10. On the translation of theological terms in Chinese Bible versions see Toshikazu S. Foley, *Biblical Translation in Chinese and Greek: Verbal Aspect in Theory and Practice* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2009), 5–34.

[78] Milne, *Dialogues*, 10.

into the world to save people.[79] Chang clearly points out that Jesus and God are one in nature and Godhead (or "wholeness;" 耶穌與上帝一性一體), and share in the same divine attributes (至聖全能是也, lit., "he is most holy and sovereign").[80]

Concerning humanity, Chang points out in the conversations, that people are morally depraved, which means, that man's heart is evil (惡) and, what is worse, men do not know their iniquities.[81] Chang further tells Yuen that "all have sinned against God," and that the destiny for sinners is to suffer the eternal punishment of hell.[82] Chang points out that "repentance is the path to the Truth," and for those who believe in Jesus, God is gracious, and their sins are forgiven.[83] Chang further explains in chapter two that it is only through the atonement of Jesus, that sins can be forgiven; Jesus' atonement is penal and substitutionary (代萬人受難 lit., "[he] suffered as a substitute for many;" 以贖人罪 lit., "in order to redeem man from sin;" 甘心代我受之 lit., "[he] willingly takes the place of my suffering").[84] Chang clearly teaches Yuen that conversion is the work of God, the Holy Spirit in particular.[85] Overall, for Milne, it is essential to communicate the gospel faithfully to people, regardless of whether it is contradictory to their worldviews or not.

Second, Chang witnessed to Yuen by a Christian example, which means Chang's lifestyle was coherent with his faith. Though Milne chose the catechistical genre in writing this tract, *Dialogues* is not a catechism, since the gospel was not simply communicated verbally in the conversations of Chang and Yuen; the gospel is also witnessed by the way Chang lives both in public and in private. In public, Chang has an excellent reputation, since "everyone knows he is a good and honest person (人人都說他是個善良之人)," and is known to "do good daily (日日行善)."[86] Chang also comments on the change that follows his conversion, he no longer does things that do not please God, for instance, idolatry, drunkenness, adultery, lying, and fraudulence.[87] When approaching people, Chang was not only "always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks … for a reason for the hope that is in [him]" (1 Pet 3:15), he also does it "with gentleness and respect" (1 Pet 3:16), as is demonstrated by his humble tone of expression, and several special words which were

[79] Milne, *Dialogues*, 10.

[80] Milne, *Dialogues*, 11.

[81] Milne, *Dialogues*, 9.

[82] Milne, *Dialogues*, 10.

[83] Milne, *Dialogues*, 10.

[84] Milne, *Dialogues*, 13.

[85] Milne, *Dialogues*, 6, 15, 17, 42.

[86] Milne, *Dialogues*, 45.

[87] Milne, *Dialogues*, 7.

used repeatedly, such as *junjia* (尊駕, lit., "honoured sir," which is a very respectable way to address "you" in classical Chinese) and *qigan* (豈敢, lit., "you flatter me").

In private, Chang devotes himself to pursuing growth in God. In chapter four, Chang shares some things that affected him from his reading of Scripture.[88] In chapter twelve, toward the end of the tract, Chang introduced Yuen to reading the New Testament, and held a small Bible study with Yuen on John 3:15.[89] Chang is also a man of prayer. Through his personal devotion and public prayers (Chang leads a prayer with Yuen in chapter eight), Chang sets up a model for Yuen. Another practice that influenced Yuen was Chang's family worship (chapters five and seven). This second evangelistic characteristic of the *Dialogues* reflects Milne's understanding of how to witness to unbelievers, that is to live the message he wanted others to believe, and to approach people in love.

Third, in Chang's conversation with Yuen, whenever he comes to apologetic matters, Chang uses a presuppositionalistic method. Though the term "presuppositionalism" was not yet used during Milne's time, in the dialogues between Chang and Yuen, it is clear that Milne understood and applied what is today called presuppositionalism in apologetic practices. First, Milne understood that no one is neutral, since everyone is committed to a worldview. In *Dialogues*, Milne clearly distinguished the Christian worldview from heathen worldviews. For those who follow Jesus, they worship the one true living God, but for the world, they worship "manmade useless idols" (人工所作, 無用無能的偶像, lit., "made by man's labour, useless and disabled idol").[90] It is also because of this unique theocentric worldview that Chang cannot tolerate the idea of making heaven—a creature—equally to be called God, who is the Creator.[91] Even though Milne borrowed some heathen terms to make the message understandable to the Chinese, his core message of the gospel has never been affected, changed, or watered down.

Milne also understood that divine revelation is the foundation of all knowledge. In *Dialogues* chapter two, when explaining the meaning of faith, Chang points out that "God issued the Holy Book, expressing to us the understanding of our sins, knowing our unrighteousness, sincerely have faith in Jesus in order to be saved, that we do not rely on ourselves … but on Jesus alone… (上帝傳下聖書, 明示我凡實知自罪, 覺自己不義, 真心信耶穌以得救, 不賴自己 …獨賴耶穌)."[92] By such understanding, Chang used both general revelation (for instance, Chang used a bird as an illustration to explain the difference between spirit and body in chapter three, and used the stars to

[88] Milne, *Dialogues*, 26.

[89] Milne, *Dialogues*, 56–57.

[90] Milne, *Dialogues*, 6.

[91] Milne, *Dialogues*, 7.

[92] Milne, *Dialogues*, 14.

explain God's work of creation in chapter four) and special revelation (quoting from the Scripture, and leading Yuen to read the Scripture) to help Yuen to establish a worldview, for which the "primary ontological axiom is the one living God, and [the] primary epistemological axiom is divine revelation."[93]

Furthermore, it is clear that Chang converses with Yuen with the conviction that all people are without excuse for their rebellion against God, since all people know God by means of general revelation. Chang points out from the beginning that all have sinned in failing to worship the only true one and living God.[94] Though Yuen warns Chang that people might not be pleased with what he is saying about sin, Chang maintains his conviction. This conviction of total depravity is hard for Yuen to understand, since he thought Chang was righteous for living a moral life. However, Chang replies, "man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Sam 16:7).[95] This conviction asserts what is proven in Milne's *Dialogues* demonstrates that a heathen worldview is not and cannot be self-consistent.

In conclusion, through this brief study of the evangelistic characteristics of Milne's *Dialogues Between Chang and Yuen*, it can be seen that Milne understood the importance of conversion. Milne followed the Pauline example in evangelism, that is "going out in love, as Christ's agent in the world, to teach sinners the truth of the gospel with a view to converting and saving them."[96] Such evangelism acknowledges the sovereignty of God, which according to David Bogue, implies missionaries are honored to be God's "instruments for conveying the knowledge of salvation to those miserable nations, which are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death."[97]

## 5. Conclusion

When William Milne died on June 2, 1822, at the age of 37, he had labored for the sake of the gospel among the Chinese people for about eight years.[98] In these eight years, Milne only baptized two

[93] Carl F. H. Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief: The Rutherford Lectures* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1990), 49.

[94] Milne, *Dialogues*, 6.

[95] Milne, *Dialogues*, 45–46.

[96] J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 56.

[97] Bogue, *Objections*, 4.

[98] From May 24, 1822, Milne's body became weaker and weaker. Though "during his last illness he seldom spoke," Milne expressed his wish that, "if his illness should end in death, that his body should be opened." On June 2, 1822, Milne died, and as his body was opened. His colleague found his lungs, "on the right side, adhered to the ribs; they had lost their natural colour, and were covered with small swellings." At four o'clock the same day, Milne's body was carried from the Anglo-Chinese College to the Dutch cemetery of "St. Anthony on the side of St. Paul's Hill." Milne was buried with his Rachel and two pre-deceased children, David and Sarah. The funeral was held at the Dutch Reformed Church with numerous attendees, and "there were also hundreds of natives, both Chinese and Malay, as spectators." Philip, *Life*

converts, Liang Fa (on November 3, 1816), and a Malay woman called Johanna (on July 1, 1821). Compared to later missionaries, such as J. Hudson Taylor (1832–1905), Milne harvested little, Milne understood David Bogue's statement:

> People consider missionaries going forth among the heathen as mere men, with no wisdom superior to their own, with no strength above human, and they are greatly dispirited; but did we view a missionary as we ought, and as he is, with Jesus his Master at his right-hand, accompanying him on the way, and the Holy Spirit resting on him like a flame of fire, with all his powerful energies, we could not be cast down, but maintain a cheerful hope amidst the [dark] appearances of Pagan ignorance and obstinacy, and persevere, trusting in the Lord, and in the power of his might.[99]

Such a statement vindicates the glory of the sovereign God of history, and testifies that "for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28).

Certainly, God prospered Milne's discipleship of Liang Fa, as Milne had prayed, in making the gospel take root in China. Many scholars today are attracted to the political and cultural impact of the Taiping Rebellion (December 1850–August 1864) led by Hong Xiuquan (洪秀全, 1814–1864), which was influenced and inspired by Liang Fa's *Good Words Exhorting the Age* (勸世良言).[100] Yet, behind Hong's Taiping Heavenly Kingdom there was a religious conviction, an eschatological agenda—to establish the heavenly kingdom on earth, in replacement of the Manchurian Qing dynasty.[101] Theologically speaking, Hong Xiuquan and his Taiping Heavenly Kingdom movement is a form of syncretism, and therefore a heresy as far as the Christian church is concerned. However, the Taiping Rebellion in its religious nature reflected the fact that the Chinese intellectuals then considered Christianity to be a third philosophical option in addition to the established Confucianism and Buddhism in imperial China. This, the Nestorians and the Roman Catholics were not able to achieve.

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*and Opinions*, 110–111; Brian Harrison, *Waiting for China: The Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca, 1818–1843, and Early Nineteenth-Century Missions* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1979), 66.

[99] Bogue, *Objections*, 15.

[100] Chinese communist politician Mao Zedong praised the achievement of the Taiping Rebellion as foreshadowing the communist revolution (Mao Zedong, *Collected Writings of Chairman Mao: Politics and Tactics*, ed. Shawn Conners [El Pasco, TX: EL Paso Norte, 2009], 116–117, 125–126, 152.). Other contemporary political and cultural studies of the Taiping Rebellion see Jonathan D. Spence, *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 1996); Stephen R. Platt, *Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom: China, the West, and the Epic Story of the Taiping Civil War* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012); and Philip A. Kuhn, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China; Militarization and Social Structure, 1796–1864* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

[101] On the religious root of Taiping Rebellion see John Foster, "The Christian Origins of the Taiping Rebellion," *International Review of Mission* 40.158 (1951): 156–167; P. Richard Bohr, "The Heavenly Kingdom in China: Religion and the Taiping Revolution, 1837–1853," *Fides et Historia* 17.2 (1985): 38–52; E. M. Wheeler, "Were the Taipings 'Chinese Hussites'?," *Communio Vitatorum* 7.2 (1964): 223–224; Rudolf G. Wagner, *Reenacting the Heavenly Vision: The Role of Religion in the Taiping Rebellion* (Berkley, CA: University of California, Institute of East Asian Studies, 1982).

Moreover, Morrison and Milne also followed the Edwardsean root they had inherited from Bogue, and planted Chinese churches characterized by their self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating nature, which was later coined by Henry Venn (1796–1863) and Rufus Anderson (1796–1880) as the "three-self" formula.[102] In the historical and social context of the Qing dynasty, with Morrison and Milne, it is far more important to make a spiritually matured Chinese convert who would be able to deliver the faith, than to baptize a thousand yet failed in making them disciple-makers. A gospel foundation had been established in China, from which the later missionaries (such as Walter Henry Medhurst [1796–1857], Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff [1803–1851], etc.) were able to reap a vast harvest in the mission field of China.

[102] See Peter Beyerhaus, "The Three Selves Formula: Is It Built on Biblical Foundations?" *International Review of Missions* 53.212: 393–407.

# The Promise & Peril of Globalization: How Local Churches Should Respond to Globalization

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ABSTRACT

The dramatic changes brought about by globalization present both theological and ecclesial challenges to the American church. Scholars are engaging these problems from a variety of directions. Since scholars like Philip Jenkins and Mark Noll revealed the new realities of global Christianity, others have sought to understand how these new realities should influence Western theology. On an ecclesial level, American church leaders, like Mark DeYmaz, have increasingly written about how to develop and lead multiethnic churches in America. What is still developing, however, is how local churches should respond to the globalizing forces confronting the American church. This paper, therefore, aims to briefly define globalization, identify some aspects of its increasing impact on American churches, and then finally suggest how local churches should plan, practice, and build for multi-ethnic congregations.

When William Carey published his *Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (1792) he could not have imagined the dramatic changes globalization would bring to the political, economic, and religious landscape in just over two centuries. In 1792 America was a fledgling country, the steam engine had not yet revolutionized European economies, and Christianity was predominantly a white European religion. To westerners, the rest of the world existed as uncivilized and unconverted heathens. Carey did dream of a day, however, when by the faithful work of missionaries those same heathens might contribute "by their preaching, writings, or practices to the glory of our Redeemer's name."[1] Indeed, he envisioned, however dimly, the reality of global Christianity that exists today.

Since Philip Jenkins' seminal book *The Next Christendom* (2001) exposed the western world to the incredible new realities of this global Christianity, dozens of other authors have explored

[1] William Carey, *Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (1792), *William Carey Center*. [Cited 30 April. 2013] Online: http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/enquiry/anenquiry.pdf. Also see Travis Myers's "Tracing A Theology of the Kingdom of God in William Carey's Enquiry," *Missiology:* Jan. 2012 [cited 30 April. 2013]. Online: http://mis.sagepub.com/content/40/1/37.full.pdf. I am thankful for Myers's article pointing me to this language in Carey's publication.

Christianity as a truly global faith.[2] Every book wrestles to some degree with the phenomenon of globalization—which is the dynamic process that integrates the world—because "Christianity can be seen as both an agent in and a product of globalization."[3] One amazing evidence of the global and globalizing nature of Christianity is that the very people William Carey called heathen are now sending missionaries to evangelize the post-Christian West. Mark Noll states in *The New Shape of World Christianity* that, "More than 10,000 *foreign* Christian workers are today laboring in Britain, France, Germany and Italy—more than 35,000 in the United States" [emphasis mine].[4] The great promise of globalization comes through its immediate facilitation of the vision for missions to be *from* everywhere *to* everywhere, which prepares for the final fulfillment of the Apostle John's vision in Revelation 7 that will come on the last day. Today, however, the imperfect anticipation of that vision is possible in our churches as globalization enables the coming together of people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. In America, perhaps more than most countries, this vision has the potential to materialize with multi-ethnic churches.[5]

Yet, many local American churches are both unaware and unprepared for the unique opportunity globalization offers for building multi-ethnic churches that prefigure the worship we will experience in heaven. Globalization has introduced at least two interrelated phenomena that hold both promise and peril for the American church. First, globalization introduces a tension between growing cultural-religious pluralism and homogenization. The homogenizing forces of globalization tend to obscure the beauty of ethnic identity.[6] Ironically, it also encourages *extreme* ethnic

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[2] Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Craig Ott and Harold A Netland, *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006); Jehu Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration, and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2008); Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Ogbu Kalu and Alaine M Low, *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and Local Identities* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Releasing the Church From Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009); Mark A Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009).

[3] Craig Ott and Harold A Netland, *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 24.

[4] Mark A Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grove, IL.: IVP Academic, 2009), 10.

[5] Although this article focuses primarily on how globalization is uniquely challenging the American church, the principles on how to plan, practice, and build for multiethnic churches discussed in section three of the article could apply to any region experiencing the impacts of globalization.

[6] Miriam Adeney notes in her article *Is God Colorblind or Colorful* that, "ethnicity counters" this "dehumanizing bent of globalization." (Ralph D Winter et al., *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader* Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009, 418).

identity, which creates a new kind of tribalism.[7] In his book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree,* Thomas L. Friedman explains that the desire to retain one's identity and traditions motivates this extreme tribalism.[8] This aspect of globalization has the potential to reinforce latent forms of the Homogenous Unit Principle (HUP) that still permeate American ecclesial models. Part of the church growth movement, HUP argues that Christianity works best when *like reaches like*, meaning we should build churches around cultural and ethnic identity. This will either further segregate American churches or obscure the beauty of appropriate ethnic expression.

Second, as part of the increasing pluralism, large contingents of Christian immigrants, with indigenized forms of Christianity, arrive every day in American cities. These Christians come from pluralistic contexts that force them to ask different questions of the biblical texts. These Christian immigrants have the potential to offer insight to typical western approaches to biblical texts, not by undermining centuries of western theology, but by raising questions that western blind spots ignore. Churches that seek to welcome, understand, and affirm these Christian immigrants will not only understand their Bibles better but also better image the heavenly worship described in Revelation 7.

This article therefore seeks to examine how these two specific aspects of globalization—the tension generated between homogenization and pluralism and the impact of Christian immigrants—create the opportunity for American churches to move toward multiethnic congregations. I proceed by first demonstrating the difficulty of a comprehensive definition for globalization yet still offering a working definition. Second, I identify how these two phenomena of globalization confront the American church by challenging westerners both to learn from indigenized forms of Christianity and to abandon the dominant ecclesial paradigm of the Homogeneous Unit Principle. Finally, I suggest two ways the American church should respond to these perils: first by listening to and learning from a globalization of theology and second by planning, preparing, and building for multi-ethnic churches.

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[7] In a 1995 interview on PBS, Neil Postman foresaw this phenomenon and identified it as an outcome of globalization. He states in the interview, "[A]ll over the world, we see a kind of reversion to tribalism. . . . We see it in Russia, in Yugoslavia, in Canada, in the United States. . . . What is it about all this globalization of communication that is making people return to more—to smaller units of identity?" Charlayne Hunter-Gault, "Visions of Cyberspace," *PBS Online Forum*, 25 July 1995. [cited 25 April. 2013]. Online: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/cyberspace/cyberspace_7-25.html.

[8] Thomas L Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization* (New York: Picador, 2012), 280–82 and 320–29. Ironically, this extreme tribalism reacts to the homogenizing forces of globalization while at the same time employing the very tools offered by globalization to build a 21st century tribalism. The title of Benjamin Barber's book *Jihad vs. McWorld* best captures the conflict between homogenization and extreme tribalism (by "Jihad" Barber does not merely refer to Islamic fanaticism or holy war but more generally to religion and nationalism). Thus, globalization threatens to obliterate ethnic cultural distinctives while simultaneously enabling extreme tribalism at the margins (Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld,How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World, 1996 publication*, Ballantinr Books,1996, 1996).

## 1. Toward a Definition of Globalization

Despite its universal popularity, few concepts today are as controversial or polarizing as globalization.[9] Disagreement about the origins, causes, and results of globalization leads contemporary scholars to arrive at diverse and often contradictory definitions.[10] Definitions can quickly explode into a 'theory of everything' because of the complex nature of globalization. In their book *Globalization and the Mission of the Church,* Neil Ormerod and Shane Clifton declare that, "the complexity of the phenomenon belies simplistic conclusions."[11] To move toward a definition, then, it is helpful to note what things theorist attempt to describe. "Globalization theory," Ormerod and Clifton explain, "seeks to describe the nature of society given worldwide social relations, and in this sense globalization can be understood as a heuristic label intended to encapsulate the complex and globally ranging set of experiences, relationships, structures, technologies, institutions and cultural symbols which are determinative for life in a compressed world."[12] Since globalization is a heuristic label describing almost an infinite number of daily events contributing to a broad number of realities, we cannot expect a simplistic definition.[13] Therefore, we will consider two characteristics of globalization, identify its main paradoxes, and finally suggest a working definition.

First, however, we must consider that the controversy in scholarly debate about whether globalization is inherently good or bad influences any attempt to characterize it. Pro-globalization advocates define it "in terms of its economic and technological structures" identifying it more as "global capitalism."[14] Critics of this economic and technological globalization define "globalization more as a tool of oppressive violence" against the poor.[15] Scholars further divide over whether the homogenization of culture is good or bad. Amidst the scholarly debate, John Paul II offers sage advice: "…globalization, a priori, is neither good nor bad. It will be what people make of it. No system is an end in itself, and it is necessary to insist that globalization, like any other system, must be at

[9] Ott and Netland, *Globalizing Theology*, 18.

[10] Jehu Hanciles offers a historical analysis of globalization in the first part of his book and he demonstrates by taking issue with Thomas Friedman's historical representation of globalization in his book *The World is Flat* that even identifying the historical origin of this phenomenon is controversial. Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration, and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2008), 16.

[11] Neil Ormerod and Shane Clifton, *Globalization and the Mission of the Church* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 8.

[12] Ibid., 11.

[13] Hanciles offers six helpful definitions of globalization that all represent some particular emphasis on the phenomenon. Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 15.

[14] Ormerod and Clifton, *Globalization and the Mission of the Church*, 4.

[15] Ibid.

the service of the human person; it must serve solidarity and the common good."[16] Only in so far as humans use the system of globalization to advance or hinder human flourishing can it be evaluated as good or bad.

From that starting point, two characteristics of globalization emerge. First, globalization means an increasing consciousness that the world is one single place. Tragedies like the 2004 Tsunami, which devastated the coast of 13 Southeastern Asian countries, pulled the world into a shared experience because it also killed tourists from hundreds of countries. In a different way, the World Cup Finals, perhaps even more than the Olympics, demonstrates a shared language of sport through the game of soccer (or fútbol). Through the almost universally accessible modern media, these events created a sense of shared global space. A second characteristic is globalization's compression of time and space. Jet planes, email, and satellite video represent this globalizing process most prominently. Most definitions highlight these characteristics but it is the paradoxes of globalization that cause the most confusion with the term.

While globalization engenders many paradoxes such as forces of integration (cultural homogenization) with opposing forces of fragmentation (growing ethnic tribalism), perhaps the most significant paradox lies in the interchange between the global and local. Globalization is not merely, as Princeton's online dictionary simplistically puts it, "growth to a global or worldwide scale." Rather, there is a two-way street between global and local. Economic, technological, and social inventions invade local cultures and yet the reverse happens when local customs and knowledge are exported to the rest of the world. Glocalization, which is the Japanese term for "global localization," attempts to express the "multidimensional nature" of globalization.[17] A global corporation like McDonalds serving McBurritos in Mexico is just one example. Yet, the reverse happens through a process called "globalization from below."[18] For example, several YouTube videos of Tibetan monks throat singing went viral on YouTube, making a unique and rare cultural practice something American teenagers attempt in their bedrooms. Global entities are particularized in local cultures while local particularities are exported globally. Yet, it is important to realize "the face of the global is in the local."[19] "The local," Ott and Netland emphasize, "will always have a kind of priority over the global because . . . we are physically embodied creatures, inextricably rooted in particular localities."[20]

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[16] John Paul II, "Papal Address to Academy of Social Sciences: Globalization . . . Will Be What People Make of It," address to the *Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*, April 27, 2001. [cited 25 April, 2013]. Online: http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/papal-address-to-academy-of-social-sciences.

[17] Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 36; Ott and Netland, *Globalizing Theology*, 20.

[18] Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 36.

[19] Ibid., 36.

[20] Ott and Netland, *Globalizing Theology*, 21.

Mark Noll sheds light on this paradox as he describes the indigenizing nature of Christianity. He explains that the missionary aim to translate Scripture into every tongue actually endears each culture to its own local language. "In a word," Noll says, "today's Christian situation is marked by multiplicity because of how deeply the Christian message, fully indigenized in local languages, has become part of local cultures."[21] Christianity, then, is not merely a force for globalization but also perhaps the most significant means for—to borrow Friedman's term—"healthy glocalization."[22]

Globalization's broad characteristics of global consciousness and interconnectedness, along with unique paradoxes such as glocalization and "globalization from below," introduce the definitional challenge. Yet, the fact that these also represent unifying themes of most definitions is encouraging.[23] In *Beyond Christianity: Globalization, African Migrations, and the Transformation of the West*, Jehu Hanciles lines up six definitions that each emphasize various aspects of what has been discussed so far. Nevertheless, Hanciles concludes that "globalization embodies a complex reality that is still evolving" and therefore, "there is strong scholarly consensus that much about the potential and possibilities of globalization remains unknown."[24] This uncertainty about what globalization might mean in the future confirms that, "Globalization is a heuristic label," meaning the definition changes with our *experiences* of the phenomenon.[25] Globalization can be defined only in so far as it is observed right now. Therefore, from what others have observed, I offer a working definition as follows: globalization is the social, technological, economic, and political *processes* that create a smaller world by the compression of time and space, inform a global consciousness of the world as a single place, and produce paradoxical forces such as homogenization and tribalism or glocalization and "globalization from below." Or, to put it as simply as possible, globalization is the dynamic process that integrates the world.

## 2. Evaluation of Globalization's Impact on the American Church

While there are many new realities brought about by globalization, the two we will focus on here are ones that directly confront the American church today. First, there is a growing tension between a new cultural and religious pluralism and the homogenizing tendencies of globalization. This

[21] Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity*, 27.

[22] Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, 236.

[23] The three most helpful definitions I came across in my reading were the following: Ott and Netland, *Globalizing Theology*, 20; Ormerod and Clifton, *Globalization and the Mission of the Church*, 26; Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, 128.

[24] Ott and Netland, *Globalizing Theology*, 20; Ormerod and Clifton, *Globalization and the Mission of the Church*, 26; Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, 128.

[25] Ormerod and Clifton, *Globalization and the Mission of the Church*, 26.

tension challenges the ecclesiology of local American churches, primarily in cities but increasingly even in small town America. Second, the massive influx of immigrant Christians—with their indigenized forms of Christianity—presents a unique challenge to the American church. In particular these two new realities of cultural and religious pluralism and large numbers of Christian immigrants contributes to increasing challenges to Western theology as a whole and in particular to the Homogeneous Unit Principle (HUP) as the dominant ecclesiological paradigm in America. Evaluating the impact these new realities are having on Western theology and the HUP as an ecclesiological paradigm will inform the recommendations for how the American church should respond.

The landscape of American demographics has changed dramatically in the last few decades and the pace of change is only increasing.[26] Harvard scholar Diana Eck proclaims in *A New Religious America* that, "the United States is the most religiously diverse nation in the world… Nowhere, even in today's world of mass migrations, is the sheer range of religious faith as wide as it is in the United States."[27] In *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity*, Ogbu Kalu explains that as Westerners "attempt to create a new unity [after Christendom], concentrating on economic dimensions and neglecting religious ones, new immigrants bring various religious traditions that clash violently."[28] This religious plurality—especially amidst the Western secular worldview—enforces a new kind of tribalism focused on ethnically unified religion. Kalu says further that, "For the immigrants, the exilic or diasporic experience compels people to sharpen their racial identities and legitimate these with religion."[29] Ironically, the homogenizing influence that globalization has brought about on an economic and superficial cultural level has not overwhelmed ethnic or religious identification. Rather, if anything globalization has enabled those to increase.[30] Hanciles explores how this religious pluralism and extreme tribalism is impacting the American church and concludes that, "[religious plurality] presents unprecedented challenges to the American church in terms of its mission

[26] The most recent reports from the 2010 census claim that over 36% of the US population is non-white. It also states that there has been large growth of minority populations in many counties outside of cities. See "Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010," March 2011, n.p. [cited 5 May. 2013] Online: http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf.

[27] Diana L Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" has Now Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (San Francisco: Harper, 2001), 4–5.

[28] Ogbu Kalu and Alaine M Low, *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and Local Identities* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 23.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Hanciles says that "America's economic dominance clearly facilities the global spread of American cultural goods—which, to reiterate an earlier point, does not in itself equate to cultural homogenization. But equally important, if not more so, American's supremacy and democratic ideals also provide the ideal environment for the incubation, renewal, and global spread of minority faiths." Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 249.

and self-understanding."[31] The global Christian church, and in particular the American church, faces the challenge of developing beliefs and practices submitted to Scripture yet contextualized to this new religious pluralism and tribalism.

A surprising aspect of this new religious context is how Christian immigrants contribute to a resurgence of Christianity.[32] Hanciles states that, "It is one of the most striking coincidences of contemporary globalization that the decline of the Christian faith in North America has corresponded with a phenomenal influx of Christian migrants."[33] Christianity's glocalization into particular cultures has introduced a new dimension to global Christianity, namely, the arrival of immigrants from countries like Kenya in America that are not merely Christian, but a unique brand of Christianity. "Globalization from below" is not only bringing different cultures to American cities it is also bringing different expressions of Christianity now rooted in these cultures. In other words, there are both Muslim *and* Christian Kenyans arriving in America. Churches, therefore, must not merely seeking to evangelize within the new pluralistic landscape but also seek to welcome, understand, and affirm brothers and sisters in Christ who express their Christian faith quite differently than their American counterparts. As American evangelicals have attempted to do this they have realized that their theologies do not always line up.

Therefore, both the religious plurality and the strong Christian contingent among immigrants challenge the approach to biblical interpretation and practical application of Western theology. These two globalizing forces have awakened some to what Soong-Chan Rah calls the "Western, white cultural captivity" of American evangelicalism.[34] "The American church," Rah repeats emphatically, "needs to face the inevitable and prepare for the next stage of history—we are looking at a nonwhite majority, multiethnic American Christianity in the immediate future."[35] The 2010 Census report confirms that "the U.S. population has become more racially and ethnically diverse" with a total of 36% of the population being non-white minority. The minority populations are growly more quickly than the white population, and this will result in the U.S. becoming a "majority-minority" country.

These demographic forces confront the Western philosophies of individualism and consumerism, which Rah declares are the "heartbeat" and "soul" of the Western, white captivity of the church.[36]

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[31] Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 299.

[32] Ibid., 285. Hanciles quotes a study released in 2001 that puts the amount of Christian immigrants at 65%.

[33] Ibid., 85.

[34] Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Releasing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009).

[35] Ibid., 12. While Rah offers many helpful insights, I do not always agree with his conclusions.

[36] Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism*. See chapters 1 and 2.

He bewails how, "The priority of the individual shapes how American evangelicals live out our local church experience, how we study and learn Scripture, how we shape our corporate worship and even how we live and interact in community."[37] He cites evangelicals common misapplication of Jeremiah 29:11—"for I know the plans I have made for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future"—to the individual rather than the corporate body.[38] American Christians assume the "you" in the passage is singular whereas in actually it is plural, and therefore we cannot presume the passage merely promises comfort and hope to the individual. How the religious pluralism these minority populations bring and especially the large Christian immigrant populations are effecting Western theology will be explored in the next section, but for now we will examine the impact they are having on the HUP.

Ever since Donald McGavran popularized the church growth movement in the 1970s, the homogenous unit principle has dominated the ecclesiological paradigm of American evangelical churches. McGavran argued that, "men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers." Thus personal evangelism and churches were built on the principle that *like reaches like*. Bill Hybels, 30-year pastor of Willow Creek church, explains in an interview with *Christianity Today* how this paradigm influenced his ministry: "Willow Creek started in the era when… the church-growth people were saying, 'Don't dissipate any of your energies fighting race issues. Focus everything on evangelism.' It was the homogeneous unit principle of church growth."[39] After reading *Divided by Faith*, he lamented the damaging effect this paradigm had on his church, stating openly, "I felt so badly about being a pastor for 25 years and having been as oblivious as I was to these kinds of issues. It was embarrassing. But these days I'm trying to make up for lost time."[40]

Rah unpacks how this principle has influenced American evangelicalism writ large. He says that "Blindly adhering to the homogenous unit principle, therefore, has resulted in an American evangelicalism incapable of dealing with the reality of growing cultural pluralism and ethnic heterogeneity."[41] Martin Luther King's statement in 1963 that, "the most segregated hour of Christian America is eleven o'clock on Sunday morning" continues to be true today. Offering a range of statistics, the authors of the book *United by Faith* conclude that "for Christian congregations…the percentage that

[37] Ibid., 33.

[38] Ibid., 35.

[39] Edward Gilbreath and Mark Galli, "Harder than Anyone Can Imagine: Four working pastors—Latino, Asian, black, and white—respond to the bracing thesis of *United by Faith*. A CT forum with Noel Castellanos, Bill Hybels, Soong-Chan Rah, Frank Reid," cover story in *Christianity Today*, 4/1/2005, n.p. [cited 25 April. 2013]. Online: http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/april/23.36.html?paging=off.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism*, 98.

are racially mixed drops to five and a half" and many of these are only mixed temporarily during a time of transition.[42] "The key error," that created this situation Rah believes, "is that secondary measurements, such as numerical growth, were used as a central value" rather than a biblical value system.[43]

One southern Baptist congregation in Clarkston, Georgia discovered that the forces of globalization threatened the homogeneity they had enjoyed for decades. Jamie Dean recounts in World Magazine how a "massive influx of refugees" into the small town of 7,500 transformed the all white congregation into a place where "black and white Americans squeeze into pews with Africans and Asians from places like Sudan and Burma."[44] That change did not happen overnight, however. Many white parishioners left the church or moved away, forcing the church leaders to reduce to one worship service and lease space to ethnic groups for their own worship services. Slowly things changed as church members learned how to love these ethnic congregations through youth basketball, ESL classes, and even a computer lab. Eventually the church changed its name from Clarkston Baptist Church to Clarkston International Bible Church and started a multiethnic congregation. Dean concludes the story by describing how "Pastor Kitchin of CIBC relishes the bigger story of many backgrounds in Clarkston, and despite the substantial challenges, he tells other Christians: 'If you don't like it here, you won't like heaven.'"[45]

Though less dramatically, these sorts of changes are happening in other churches as well. At Willow Creek, Hybels says, "It would be very rare for you to come to Willow now and not see cultural diversity intentionally represented on our stage. You didn't see much for 25 years, but now we're very intentional about it."[46] He goes on to say that, "30 years later, as I read this book, I recognize that a true biblically functioning community must include being multiethnic. My heart beats so fast for that vision today. I marvel at how naïve and pragmatic I was 30 years ago."[47] This vision for multiethnic churches is a major part of the response Americans can have to the changes ushered in by globalization.

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[42] Curtiss Paul DeYoung, *United by Faith the Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 2, n.p. [cited 6 May 2013]. Online: http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=120911.

[43] Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism*, 102.

[44] Jamie Dean, "Cities of Refuge," *World Magazine*, April 6th, 2013 Issue, n.p. [cited 30 April. 2013]. Online: http://www.worldmag.com/2013/03/cities_of_refuge/page1.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Gilbreath and Galli, *Christianity Today.*

[47] Ibid.

## 3. How Local American Churches Should Respond

The aim of this section is to suggestion ways American churches should respond in a biblical and practical way to the globalizing forces discussed in this paper. While a complete analysis of the biblical foundations and practical applications of an ecclesiology that accounts for the issues of globalization are beyond the scope of this paper, there are nevertheless two important suggestions to be made. First, the Western church in general, and in particular the American evangelical leadership must recognize the value of pursuing a globalization of theology. Second, local American churches must build the biblical foundation and intentionally pursue a multiethnic ecclesiology. Indeed, leaders in the American church would do well to listen to and learn from a globalization of theology and attempt to plan, practice, and build for multiethnic churches.

### *3.1. Listen to and Learn from a Globalization of Theology*

The globalization of theology directly challenges "Christianity's overaccomodation to Western culture."[48] This may sound ominous to many American evangelical pastors and theologians because it can seem that advocates are proposing that centuries of biblical interpretation rooted in church history be excised in favor of whatever is new. On the contrary, a proper globalization of theology attempts to do what every generation of Christian theologians has done, namely articulate the timeless truth of Scripture in a way that is contextualized for the current day. Charles E. Van Engen presents a helpful and balanced depiction of what a globalization of theology means and why it is important:

> To view doing theology as the construction of one monolith theology superimposed on all Christians everywhere violates the truth that God's revelation took place "at many times in various ways" (Heb. 1:1) and has always been received within the categories of specific cultural contexts. On the other hand, the atomization of plurality of local theologies violates the oneness of the church, the unity of the Holy Spirit, the singularity of the gospel and the unity of all Christians who read the same Bible. Thus, neither monolithic uniformity nor atomized pluriformity are satisfactory approaches to doing theology in a globalizing world. Therefore, the challenge before us is to find a way to know God in context, that is, to do critical theologizing in a glocal fashion through reading the same Bible in the midst of multiple cultures.[49]

Craig Blomberg from Denver Seminary calls this challenge a "globalization of hermeneutics."[50] He demonstrates what this process might look like in "The Globalization of Biblical Interpretation: A Test Case John 3–4," explaining the approach "as the process of asking new questions of the text,

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ott and Netland, *Globalizing Theology*, 174.

[50] Craig Bloomberg, "The Globalization of Biblical Interpretation: A Test Case John 3–4," *Bulletin for Biblical Research 5* (1995). [cited 25 April 2013]. Online: http://www.ibr-bbr.org/files/bbr/BBR_1995_01_Blomberg_John3-4.pdf.

particularly in light of the experiences of marginalization of a large percentage of the world's population."[51] While his analysis of how Jesus' dialogues with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman present "striking inversions of contemporary expectations about their roles," he nonetheless cautions against an *"avant-guard"* hermeneutic that ignores the "dominant readings of texts throughout church history."[52] Craig Ott also clarifies what a proper balance might look like. He says,

> Though the theological dominance of the West may continue due to its long theological heritage and its advantage in resources, if it is to serve the global church well, its theology must be globalized in the sense that it surrenders its position of privilege and enters genuine dialogue with theologians from non-Western traditions.[53]

Ultimately, in order for a globalization of theology to happen successfully, and for it to practically impact local churches in America and across the globe, it must move beyond the academic theologian and into the local practice of the church. This process is already happening both organically and intentionally as churches listen and learn from other parts of the global church.

Hanciles explains how non-Western missionaries in the West catalyze the move away from the "territorial and tribal faith" of Western Christianity. This occurs organically through new Christian immigrant congregations in America. Rah recounts his discovery that while Boston's white evangelical congregations were declining in the city, vibrant ethnic immigrant congregations demonstrated great vitality and partnership.[54] Part of their success, Hanciles notes, comes because these immigrant congregations "embody a brand of Christianity that is strongly evangelistic or conversionist."[55] And while religious pluralism is a new experience for the vast majority of American Christians—which is part of the challenge for the white evangelical church—these new Christian immigrants "hail from countries where the life of faith is forged in settings marked by daily interaction with other major faiths."[56] The American church has much to learn from these congregations. Indeed, they already are taking intentional steps to do so by inviting missionaries from elsewhere to come and teach them. Gelder explains that, "Some European and U.S. churches are purposely calling missionaries from Africa and elsewhere to help revitalize their own community

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ott and Netland, *Globalizing Theology*, 311.

[54] Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism*. See Introduction, 11–23.

[55] Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 298.

[56] Ibid., 299.

and catalyze fresh encounters with the gospel and culture."[57] This has led to "a dramatic experience for Westerners [as they] encounter the power of the gospel freed from that Western cultural baggage."[58] This process of globalizing theology—or as Rah calls it, "Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity"—must be accompanied with a vision for the future of the American church. Rah proposes such a vision, stating that, "With the significant demographic changes in the United States and in the American church, freedom from cultural captivity is needed to enter into a new multiethnic phase for the American church."[59] This is where the great promise of globalization and its perils will be decided. The church could allow the cultural trends of increasing extreme tribalism to dictate its future or it could embrace the opportunity to foreshadow the beauty of Revelation 7 through multiethnic churches.

### *3.2. Plan, Practice, and Build for Multiethnic Churches*

Recently, pastors and theologians have flooded the market with books and blog posts discussing how to think about and build multiethnic churches. This section, therefore, seeks to merely suggest some 'first steps' toward understanding and moving toward multiethnic church ministry. Those with experience have warned that this is not easy. Indeed, Jemar Tisby cautions that, "Forming multi-ethnic churches seems to be appealing at first, but unless believers grasp the profound joy of pursuing diversity, the challenges of this type of ministry will quickly deflate them."[60] Nevertheless, given the globalizing forces changing American society, every pastor—if not every church member—should consider how to plan, practice, and build for multiethnic churches.

To start planning for multiethnic church ministry it is best to ask a few questions. First, what is a multiethnic church? This question quickly becomes confusing because other terms such as multiracial, multinational, and multicultural seem to be used synonymously. Gary McIntosh, who recently published *Being the Church in a Multiethnic Community*, argues that multiethnic "reflects most accurately the biblical concept of 'the peoples' and it is the most helpful term when speaking about churches that are comprised of different families, clans, or cultural groups."[61] McIntosh de-

[57] Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 131.

[58] Ibid.; Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity*, 33–34. Noll asks three important questions for Western Christians to ask to better understand this globalization of theology: "How close is the world of spirits to the everyday world? What is the unit of salvation (individual, family, culture)? How should believers read the Bible or, to rephrase it, what is the biblical norm by which the rest of the Bible is read?"

[59] Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism*, 194.

[60] Jemar Tisby, "The Joyful Pursuit of Multiethnic Churches," *The Gospel Coalition Blog*, n.p. [cited 25 April 2013]. Online: http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2012/11/13/the-joyful-pursuit-of-multi-ethnic-churches/.

[61] Gary McIntosh, "Defining a Multiethnic Church," *The Good Book blog*, n.p. [Cited 5 May 2013]. Online: http://thegoodbookblog.com/2012/apr/24/defining-a-multi-ethnic-churchwhat-sounds-like-a-s/.

fends Paul Hiebert's definition, which says that a multiethnic church is "a church in which there is 1) an attitude and practice of accepting people of all ethnic, class and national origins as equal and fully participating members and ministers in the fellowship of the church; and 2) the manifestation of this attitude and practice by the involvement of people from different ethnic, social and national communities as members in the church."[62]

Second, what are the biblical foundations for multiethnic churches? In *Building A Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church*, Mark DeYmaz argues from three places that Scripture supports multiethnic churches: Christ's prayer in John 17, Luke's portrayal of the pattern of ministry at Antioch, and the Pauline mystery in his letter to the Ephesians.[63] Evaluating these passages as well as considering the Jerusalem Counsel's actions in Acts 15 are important starting points for developing a biblical foundation for multiethnic church ministry. Finally, one should ask, are the neighborhoods around my church (or where I am planting a church) ethnically diverse? Not every church is called to become multiethnic because not every locale has a multiethnic demographic. Yet, we must do the work to determine whether this is true or not. Rah tells how New Life Covenant Church, previously a Puerto Rican church, "conducted demographic studies of Humbolt Park and discovered (contrary to their initial impression)…[that it] was a very ethnically diverse community that included a wide range of Latino communities, African and African Americans, as well as Anglo and Asian neighbors."[64] Given the rapid demographic changes happening in America, an important place to start is a simple evaluation of the population in your church's neighborhood.

Yet, even as one begins to plan for multiethnic church ministry, there are several practices that every church can implement before becoming a multiethnic church. First, practice the discipline of personal ministry rather than individual consumption. According to 1 Peter 2:9-10, every church member is a minister. This mentality is essential for multiethnic churches because consumerism—treating church as a product tailored to one's wants—will blunt attempts to build relationships cross-culturally. Second, practice the discipline of appreciating not merely tolerating other cultures. Toleration allows co-existence, but appreciation requires knowledge and experience. DeYmaz encourages his congregation to "develop cross-cultural relationships" and Rah even recommends

[62] Ibid.

[63] Mark DeYmaz and Tex. Leadership Network (Dallas, *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments, and Practices of a Diverse Congregation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/John Wiley, 2007). While I affirm most of DeYmaz's exegetical arguments in his first three chapters, I must disagree with his stance on whether or not multiethnic churches are biblically mandated. He argues that, "pursuit of the multiethnic local church is, in my view, not optional. It is biblically mandated for all who would aspire to lead local congregations of faith," xxix. For now, I must ask DeYmaz, first, how would he deal with the historical problem of barriers to multiethnic churches and, second, how would he require churches that are currently in ethnically homogeneous locales to fulfill this mandate.

[64] Winter et al., *Perspectives on the world Christian movement*, 198.

finding a spiritual mentor from another ethnicity.[65] Finally, practice the discipline of discerning what is primary and what is preference. Evaluating the style, practices, and values of other culture's worship is an important first step to understanding what is essential and what is opinion. Tisby says that, "Churches that do this well begin to hone in on the essential truths of the gospel and communicate them more clearly while at the same time demonstrating flexibility and wisdom regarding culturally conditioned opinions about worship."[66] These practices have value at any kind of church but are important first steps in preparing to build a multiethnic church.

To build a multiethnic church requires a diversity of leadership that reflects the diversity of the congregation. While there are many other important commitments for building a multiethnic church, without a commitment to an ethnically diverse leadership the church will not succeed. DeYmaz argues that Luke mentions the diverse leadership at Antioch to "serve as a model for enlisting diverse leadership within a local church setting" (Acts 11:19–25 and 13:1).[67] One of the major conclusions of Rah's book is that "The next evangelicalism will require that white Christians be willing to submit to the authority and leadership of a nonwhite Christian."[68] Building a multiethnic leadership team can be difficult, whether you are adding staff or church planting, because finding an ethnically diverse group of individuals with godly character, theological agreement, and a shared vision for ministry is rare. DeYmaz recognizes that navigating to a "middle ground between quota and wishful thinking" requires vision and intense intentionality.[69] In their book *Churches, Cultures & Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities*, Mark Lau Branson and Juan F. Martinez provide a helpful handbook for navigating the difficult challenge of multiethnic church leadership.[70] An effective leadership team that reflects the ethnicity of the congregation will do more than anything to successfully build a multiethnic church.

## 4. Conclusion

Soong-Chan Rah relates the story of pastor David Anderson and his small, all white congregation in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Pastor Anderson desired to be more multicultural but in the all white community, this did not seem possible. Yet, only a few years later Hurricane Katrina swept through

[65] DeYmaz and Leadership Network (Dallas, *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church*, 81–93; Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism*, 15.

[66] Tisby, "Joyful Pursuit."

[67] DeYmaz and Leadership Network (Dallas, *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church*, 71.

[68] Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism*, 195.

[69] DeYmaz and Leadership Network (Dallas, *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church*, 72.

[70] Mark Lau Branson and Juan F. Martinez, *Churches, Cultures and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities* (IVP Academic, 2011).

the countryside and the small town saw many African American strangers resettle in the town. Before long the church saw "approximately one hundred new black strangers attending every week." Rah asks: "Would your church be ready for this kind of change?"[71] In other words, even if you are in a small town in America the story of Clarkson, GA or Baton Rouge, LA may come true and your church needs to be prepared theologically for such an event. Other small to mid-town churches are already seeing incremental changes as immigrants spread through the country looking for manual labor, factory, or service type jobs. Jemar Tisby's article on *The Gospel Coalition* blog I think rightly concludes that "Multi-ethnic churches excite God's people because they truly reflect God's people."[72]

[71] Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism*, 201–202.

[72] Tisby, "Joyful Pursuit."

# REPORT FROM THE FIELD
# Educational Missions in Eastern Europe

Dwayne Baldwin

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> "An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip: "Get up and go south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is the desert road.) So he got up and went. There was an Ethiopian man, a eunuch and high official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to worship in Jerusalem and was sitting in his chariot on his way home, reading the prophet Isaiah aloud. The Spirit told Philip, "Go and join that chariot." When Philip ran up to it, he heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you're reading?" "How can I," he said, "unless someone guides me?" (Acts 8:26–31)

Our invitation to move to Eastern Europe came from one of the main Baptist Unions in the area. Their desire is to redesign and restart a bible school that will teach sound biblical principles in an uncompromising way. However, since arriving here over a year ago we have been surprised by some unexpected comments, both from nationals and foreigners. Here are some examples:

- "Theological Education is not needed here."
- "Theological Education is above their heads."
- "There are no pastoral positions open in the existing churches, and the churches are not growing, so why train people for a job that doesn't exist?"
- "All we need here is mentoring and discipleship, not something formal and drawn out."

Comments like these are probably also heard in many other places where serious theological education is needed. Though such an environment can be difficult to work in, we have never wavered in the knowledge that the Lord has sent us here for a reason. We know that He desires people to know Him and His word, and to be thoroughly equipped for ministry. We have never considered that the ministry of solid theological education is a waste of time or resources. But how is this mission best fulfilled in the context of challenges like these? By recognizing some of the objections to and attitudes about missional theological education, we can move more strategically to develop a direction to accomplish this valuable, God-honoring and remarkable ministry.

## 1. The Challenge of Local Apathy

Where we are, difficulties are often prompted by misconceptions about the necessity of theological education. As examples, in Eastern Europe there is often no perceived payoff in going to seminary since a pastor often cannot earn a living once he graduates except through western sponsors. Additionally, in our location a majority ethnic group does not believe in the office of pastors—only lay leaders. This causes local churches to be hesitant about sending students for theological education as they don't believe there will be a "payoff".

## 2. The Challenge of Existing Teaching

I'm frequently asked, "Are there no other places in your area teaching theology?" As in most parts of the world, that answer is "Yes, there are." Theological education is ubiquitous. There are multitudes of places that self-identify as schools of theology. Like the Ethiopian, many people around the world have a palpable desire for theological knowledge. The question is—what kind of theological education is being offered? Is it biblically faithful or does it accommodate other groups who may teach a different gospel? Does it thoroughly and comprehensively prepare people for ministry? Is it taught by qualified teachers who are proven? Is it based on the gospel of Christ (we are sinners, condemned before God, need to trust in Him alone and not our works, needful of propitiation and reconciliation, etc).

Some schools teach from the bible and may be good for a select group of new believers, but they are not comprehensive "so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:17). Other schools are really just secular schools teaching comparative religions and taking no stand on biblical truth. Still others are hyper-focused on a certain denominational favorite perspective and are not theologically comprehensive. There is a school here that only teaches how to conduct "healing services", yet it still calls itself a School of Theology. To the undiscerning this can be very confusing.

## 3. The Challenge of Pragmatism

Another response to a ministry that centers on good theological education that we've often heard is that we are to simply disciple people—one-on-one theological education as it were. The thought behind this response is along the lines of, "Why teach people to build a restaurant when we can just give them fast food? The hunger is pressing and urgent, the need is now, and we don't have the time it takes for formal theological education."

For some reason, people who say this tend to think of theological education as over and against discipleship and evangelism, making them seemingly mutually exclusive. Because of the great needs of many countries, expediency has caused many to try and make quick fixes and address

spiritual problems often in the fastest way possible. We can partially agree with this argument. We rarely hear the true gospel being preached within evangelicalism here. We *do* hear a lot about personal kingdom-building, faith healings and the prosperity gospel. We rarely hear about a sinner who needs Christ. People are starving for the simple gospel. Many people here can be described as self-centered, angry, lonely or depressed. It does seem urgent to fill these needs in the quickest way possible, and formal training seems like the long route to the dinner line. So, is the disparity between what people here (or any other place) need, and what we're hoping to build just too great to be justified? It's one thing to argue about the need for formal theological education in the west, but especially in countries where churches are stagnant and the people are unreached for the gospel, should we even be considering formal theological education?

However, if people are starving and all we do is provide them quick snacks, how will that ever permanently help them? The reality is we've personally seen the shape of the churches here after decades of various western visitors and random discipling. It's not enough. That's because they have often only been given a few crumbs—barely enough to survive. Many times, the crumbs are dropped off by well-meaning Christians who soon leave, and the people face spiritual starvation again.

The point is not the mode of delivery of training. Many modes are needed. The point is, feed them in every way possible so that they are equipped to do every good work. After all, wouldn't it be better to give them what they are asking for—solid education, instruction in discernment and sound doctrinal understanding? Couldn't we feed them *and* raise up those who can produce good food themselves? If we can take a small handful of people and teach them solid theology, then the future brightens. Those "chefs" prepare hearty, nourishing food that will satisfy and fill up hungry hearts. Then those who have tasted the truth can learn to prepare the same dishes for others. In that way, 2 Timothy 2:2 is practiced. People in our region need to be spiritually fed, but they also need their own "theological restaurants" (i.e., formal theological education). We cannot settle for giving them just enough to survive.

## 4. The Challenge of YouTube Theology

Hungry for theological education, people will turn to wherever food source they can find. The most predominant place of theological education in our context is not Bible School Z, but the School of YouTube. Those who speak English have at their disposal a host of Christian offerings on the internet, covering a vast array of theological flavors. They can pick and choose whatever seems to look attractive and sweet. The problem is that here this has resulted in pet theologies, error due to lack of guides and much theological confusion. What we have seen is that these searchers often end up with a diet consisting of rotten doctrine and spoiled ideologies, which they in turn preach to people here as truth.

I meet with men who are smart and theologically adept, but because their education has been limited to what they can glean from Internet searches, they have serious gaps in their understanding of Scripture and theology. They have a multitude of questions and conflicting information. They struggle with answers to theological questions that are presented to most pastors like, "How can I be sure of my salvation?", "What is the gift of the Holy Spirit?", "How do I interpret biblical prophecy?" They cannot answer someone with practical issues like, "What are the principles of church membership?", "How do I get better at praying publically?" or even "How do I tell someone the gospel?" They don't know where to start with questions like, "Should I adopt if I can't have a child?" or "My husband has cancer—what do I do?" or "How do I tell my wife I've committed adultery?"

## 5. The Challenge of the Missionary Template

The challenges here also have a more practical bent, and come not from the local context but from a sending country, church or even local western missionary. When people hear about the type of mission work you do, it is often hard for some to embrace that "educational missions" (theological training) is just as vital a mission work as planting churches or street evangelism. In truth, without proper training of national Christian workers the state of the gospel disintegrates very quickly in the country. Although educational missions does not usually involve physical labor and is not necessarily conducive to short-term teams, it is nonetheless foundational mission work.

## 6. Moving Forward—Getting "The Right Guide"

So how does one transcend the hurdles of setting up theological education? How does he do this in a way that truly impacts the local state of Christianity to the glory of God?

**Trust** Our mission agency, Training Leaders International, exists because good theological education doesn't. My attitude to press on must be at the forefront of my mind. Do I believe that God wants the truth to be known about Him? Yes. Do I believe He is desirous of this to happen everywhere in the world? Yes. I never have to doubt if what I'm doing is relevant or needed. Without educational missions, how will we fulfill the command of Colossians 1:28, "We proclaim Him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ." We must trust that God has His remnant of people whom He wants to lead His people.

**Pray** "We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Colossians 1:9). I must pray that the Lord would fill me and the people here with all wisdom and spiritual understanding. I must pray that the shepherds He has put in place to lead His sheep would be equipped to do so. I must pray that my heart would be centered on His glory, and not a building or program. It's *never* about the degree, it's *always* about the truth of God.

**Listen** When I arrived, I traveled throughout the area speaking to other schools to determine what worked and what didn't. I have also met with countless people, within our Union and outside of it. Whether the information is good or bad, I always learn something that helps me in the long run. The more I listen, the more I learn, the better the school will be.

**Develop** We must develop students by developing relationships. It is paramount that we also develop strategic plans of how the school should look, taking into account the needs of the area as well as the abilities and resources of our mission agency. This includes catalogue and brochure development, teacher recruitment, branding the school, staff development, physical building improvement and critical pathways necessary to accomplish the myriad of things necessary. Finally, it's necessary to develop a thick skin, as detractions frequently come both from within and without. The stress of living on the mission field combined with all the problems involved with ministry can make one feel defeated. Skin thickening, like school development, is slow work which only time and trial can accomplish.

**Change** To be effective, there must be changes in attitudes. We must uproot the mindset that theological education is just for pastors. People must change their bias that theological education is not worth it because there's no "guaranteed" paying job at the end. Most importantly, there must be change in how the local churches interact with the school. Having an interdenominational recruitment policy will help in this respect.

**Intercede** Consider the call to educational missions and see how the world may be changed. Realize that "teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you" is an essential part of Matthew 28. Understand that teaching and training others in the truth of who God is will always be honoring to the Lord.

There is sometimes a tendency to default to a misleading attitude that whatever theological education an area already has is good enough for them. In missions this is rarely the case. There are at least two possible sources of this thought. Firstly, it may originate from the reality of many other pressing needs on the mission field. This perspective, however, belies a lower view of theological education as compared to other ministries. Secondly, this "good enough" default may also come from looking at the poverty of theological education an area may have and mentally setting the bar lower for their theological needs. This becomes a desire to just give people enough theological education for them to exist. Ironically, this perspective sometimes comes from those who have advanced theological training themselves.

We must give people the tools necessary to accomplish the work of missions, and by doing so fully equip men and women for the work of ministry. The path forward in educational mission work involves teaching, planting, discipling, evangelism, *and* theological training.

# CLOSING EDITORIAL
# Shepherding People with Disabilities

David Deuel

Most pastors want to serve and lead people with disabilities in their congregation. If you don't believe it, watch them when a new person with a disability comes into their church. What is more, pastors must set the tone for the congregation to follow when it comes to ministering to and with people with disabilities.

Not all pastors know how to serve people with disabilities or lead their congregation in disability ministry. This study aims to help pastors understand disability, correct misunderstandings, and shepherd people with disabilities biblically.

## Understand Disability

Getting a grasp of disability prepares pastors and their churches to be more effective in ministering to people with disabilities. Several points stand out:

***God ables and disables people with great variety.*** Disability is a matter of Degree. We would do well to remember that it is an oversimplification to say that some people are disabled and others are not. It is more accurate for us to view disability in a range of less and more.

Every person has disabling qualities that tend to increase as we age. We will all be disabled some day. So, we are better off viewing people with more severe disabilities as more challenged and remind ourselves that disability awaits all of us. There are over one billion people with disabilities on our planet. Roughly speaking, that is one in seven.

***God invites us to see the disability glass as half-full.*** When it comes to disabilities, you can look at the challenges or you can look at the blessings. If the Church is willing, it can benefit greatly from the presence and perspectives of people with disabilities. Several blessings that people with disabilities bring to their local church are worth considering:

First, people with disabilities have unique and valuable insights into human suffering. Because they constantly deal with limitations, discomfort, and pain, they do so better than the rest of us. They learn to live with suffering. Some of us cringe when we get a flu shot! Most people with disabilities have endured years of treatments, medications, and medical procedures in addition to emotional suffering such as social rejection. Acclaimed miracle cures have lifted their hopes only to dash them when they fail.

Second, people with disabilities have built-in sensitivity meters. They can spot hurt feelings a mile away. This is significant for churches that desire to love unconditionally better than the unbelieving population. Because people with disabilities understand what it means to be mistreated,

brushed off, or simply ignored, they also have a heightened awareness of others in need and their feelings. Consequently, they set the bar on matters of sensitivity.

Third, many Christians with disabilities walk closely with God because they need to rely on the Lord to endure their challenges in life far more than others of us. In their moments of physical pain, frustration, and isolation, they learn how to look to God and find Him ready to receive them in their disability.

Fourth, people with disabilities are uniquely gifted and can minister to others in amazing ways. In fact, they can minister as effectively, if not more so than their sisters and brothers in Christ who do not have disabilities. Their physical or mental disability, in God's hands, becomes a ministry blessing. This brings new insight to Paul's challenge that all believers in the body of Christ have gifts that the Church needs (1 Pet. 4:10). He was not excluding people with disabilities.

Fifth, from an outreach perspective, people with disabilities have incomparable ability to reach disability communities with the Gospel and disciple them. The rest of us may not know how to enter a specific disability culture. What is more, we may not feel welcome. At first blush, this may sound exclusive or prejudiced. But years of being excluded from activities, organizations, even families, have left people with disabilities feeling pushed out. This is one reason why people with disabilities form their own communities.

Disability communities welcome disabled people with open arms whereas the non-disabled often do not. This may not be intentional; but intention matters little to those who are socially isolated. Regardless, people with disabilities will often evangelize and help other people with disabilities to grow spiritually with greater lasting impact than the non-disabled population. More often than not, the non-disabled population doesn't even seem to care. But there are wonderful exceptions.

Disability entered the world with sin and suffering in the Garden of Eden. But God in His good pleasure holds disability like a tool in His mighty hands to shape men and women into the image of Christ. If we are bold enough to ask why God gave us, all of us, disability to deal with, we will have to acknowledge that He uses it in our lives in many ways. Through it, we grow as individuals and churches. We will also recognize that it is one more way that God brings glory to Himself.

## Correct Errors About Disability

God's people often hold and spread wrong ideas about disability that we should address directly. In His Word, God dispels three common myths regarding people with disabilities:

***Myth #1: God does not love people with disabilities.*** This notion is a carryover from pagan beliefs. But the Bible makes it clear that a disability is not God's disapproval or punishment upon individuals who are disabled. He allows disabilities for His intended purposes: to bring glory to Himself, spiritual growth in people with disabilities, and ministry opportunities and blessings for believers who serve people with disabilities.

***Myth #2: People with disabilities or their parents sinned against God.*** A second wrong idea about the cause of disabilities is seen when someone asked Jesus whether it was the man born blind or his parents who had sinned. Jesus responded "neither" and explained that this man's blindness existed "in order that the works of God might be displayed in him" (John 9:1–3).

Jesus' point is clear: the disability existed so that he might heal this man. While this is a specific instance, a general principle lies behind it. God allows some people and not others to be disabled in order to accomplish His purposes.

***Myth #3: People with disabilities lack the faith to be healed.*** Some people believe that if a person has enough faith, they will be healed. This is nowhere taught in the Bible, but is based on a misunderstanding of Matthew 17:20 where nothing is impossible with faith.

The clear teaching of the Bible is that we must pray as those who submit our wills to God—if it is God's will, he certainly can heal a person's disability. That happened during Jesus' earthly ministry and on a few other occasions in the Old Testament and the early church. Most would agree it could happen today. But it has always been done for the glory of God, and often for the growth of the individual.

Many people with disabilities have great faith and live victorious Christian lives. In fact, their faith may be stronger than the average able-bodied or able-minded believer *because of the disability*." (David C. Deuel, "God's Story of Disability: The Unfolding Plan from Genesis to Revelation," *Journal of the Christian Institute for Disability* 3:1 [2013, forthcoming]).

## Shepherd People With Disabilities Biblically

How can we serve people with disabilities? God's story in Scripture is about His mission on earth. Our mission, which must be consistent with His, should begin with evangelizing and discipling people with disabilities (Matt. 28:18–20). This two-stage process should always be our first priority.

***First, evangelize people with disabilities (Matt. 28:18–20).*** We must consider how to lead people with disabilities to Christ. We must not place conditions on our love for persons with disabilities. This is all too easy to do. For example, we must not lead an unbelieving person with a disability to think that we will not care about them unless they become a Christian. This is manipulation and it is wrong. What is more, reaching some disability groups with the Gospel will require additional commitment and care.

***Second, disciple and train people with disabilities (Eph. 4:11–13).*** People with disabilities need to be in Jesus' church learning and growing. Compassionate treatment and mercy ministry should be woven into the fabric of every thought and deed pertaining to disability, not treated as an additional component of disability ministry, or (even worse), pitted against evangelism and discipleship.

For example, well-intentioned Christians can become so consumed with a person's disabling condition that they neglect the person's spiritual condition. One's spiritual condition must always

be our greatest concern—although not necessarily our first in treatment—because it is anyone's greatest need. We evangelize and disciple people with disabilities because that is how we best love them or anyone for that matter.

It is critical that we help the person with a disability grow spiritually in the best way possible. We must not cause the person with a disability who claims to be a Christian to think that unless they grow spiritually in conduct, we will treat them like a child by punishing them or ignoring them.

***Third, ensure that people with disabilities worship, fellowship, and serve in the local church (Phil. 2:1–3).*** We must provide opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in all aspects of church life. We will fellowship with them, participate in practicing the "one anothers" with them. They must also be enabled to engage fully in worship. What is more, they must exercise the spiritual gifts each one has (1 Pet. 4:10) to serve in our churches.

Once we have prioritized spiritual matters, we also must address what might prevent someone with a disability from participating in the Christian life. How possibly can we help the person with a disability respond to God's Word when the disability prevents that person from responding?

By prioritizing spiritual needs but not neglecting physical and cognitive needs, Jesus exemplifies our role with persons with disabilities. What is more, the deacons in the early church serve as models for the role of all believers in assisting others. With great confidence that God can use us, and these godly examples, we should consider our mission.

In short, we must see to it that every aspect of the local church experience is realized in the lives of people with disabilities. In Jesus' words, we must invite them to our banquet, after which we can expect Jesus' promised outcome: we (all) will be blessed (Luke 14:14). Indeed, we are blessed to have people with disabilities in our individual and collective Christian experience.

The Bible, by treating people with disabilities as part of the assembly in the OT and the Church in the NT, shows us clearly that people with disabilities are just that. They are *people* who happen, by God's sovereign plan, to have disabilities. They are not another category of person, but have varying capacities, gifts, and talents, just like those who do not have disabilities.

Most people with disabilities hope that their local church will provide two things: access to the church facility and acceptance from the church's people, their brothers and sisters in Christ. Isn't this what all people want from church? If we are obedient to biblical teaching on disabilities, we will treat all people as one of us, and give a little assistance to others where it is needed.

As a shepherd, lead your sheep as a flock. Don't allow the lambs with disabilities to linger far behind for the wolves or starvation. Some may require a little more attention. But they will also contribute significantly to the health, general well-being, and especially, the spiritual growth of the flock.

Throughout Jesus' brief three-year earthly mission, He encountered many people with disabilities. His response? Jesus ministered to people with disabilities as if they were at the top of his priority list. Should not we as his under-shepherds do the likewise?

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Portions of this study are excerpted from, Dave Deuel, "God's Story of Disability: The Unfolding Plan from Genesis to Revelation," *The Journal of the Christian Institute on Disability* (JCID) Vol.2, No.2, Fall/Winter 2013.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## Borthwick, Paul, *Western Christians in Global Mission*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2012. 224 pp. $16.00.

In *Western Christians in Global Missions*, Paul Borthwick walks the reader through the triumphs and concerns about the rise of the church in the Majority World and the role the Western church has and could play in its future. The book is organized into two parts. Part one, "Where are we now?" describes the changes that have taken place in the world and provides an overview of the identity of the Global church.

Part two covers how the North American church should help, support and work with the Majority World church. Borthwick's recommendation in his conclusion is that the Western church should no longer lead, but support and work with their brothers and sisters around the world. He spells this out practically in discussions on humility, purposeful reciprocity, sacrifice rather than generosity, and partnership equality. The terms "Western church" and "North American church" are used interchangeably and for the majority of the discussion he is speaking about the American church. The Western church in this book rarely includes Western Europe.

Because this book covers such a large swath of information in a condensed format, I want to only focus on his appraisal of both the North American church (really the United States) and Majority World church (primarily African). It is on his appraisal where he spends the majority of his focus, which then determines his recommendations in the rest of the book.

### The North American Church

How does one speak in generalities about things that are so complex? Borthwick admits the problem up front, but believes he can still observe some things that are generally true. He lists the strengths of the US church as: Generosity, Optimism, Experience, Multiculturalism and History.

Borthwick takes his cues on many of the perceived strengths of the North American church from Bishop Hwa Yung of Malaysia. It is interesting to note that while Borthwick records these as strengths, he is critical of each of the points as well. When discussing the Global church's strengths he does not follow the same pattern. The author actually spends four pages on strengths (which he critiques) and 16 pages on a critique. This is much different from how this breaks down on the Global church discussion (8 pages of critique and 8 pages of praise). One wonders exactly what generosity means. Most Christian leaders in the US lament at the lack of giving (roughly 4% of income for professing evangelicals). Bishop Yung points out that most of the money funding Christian

mission comes from the US. That may be true, but that does not say anything about the generosity of the west. It could say more about a few very wealthy people.

In explaining optimism, again Borthwick starts with a critique, calling it "naïve optimism" (pg. 66). The only one of the strengths not critiqued is experience, particularly as it pertains to theological training. He is right in this regard—the theological education opportunities afforded to the American church on the strength of economic stability allow for a lot of formal education.

Borthwick continues to rely on Yung, but as he gets into history, it again becomes a critique of what is wrong rather than a focus on strength. While the west should celebrate its mission history, we are told of the many mistakes these missionaries made in their attempt to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Borthwick's concerns are related primarily to how the North American church can hurt everyone else in their involvement in missions. His focus is twofold—on global concerns (like globalization and pluralism) and local concerns (like a lack of ecclesiology and the nationization of God). These are helpful to point out, which makes this book a helpful introduction for those who want to get involved in global missions.

At the end of his appraisal he asks the North American church to listen to the global church. He believes we have a lot to learn from the majority world. But here is the rub—who is the majority church and who should we be listening to? Should we listen to TV Joshua in Nigeria or Conrad Mbewe in Zambia? Should we listen to leaders of the Vineyard movement in Australia or the rural Indian pastor that looks over 20 churches and 10 orphanages? The point is not that the North American church should not be listening, but that the author does not point us to whom we should be listening to.

## The Global Church

His appraisal of the global church faces the similar challenge—how do you even summarize something so complex? The problem at the outset is that he doesn't tell you whom he is talking about. Is it the United States versus everyone else or is it more focused than that? One doesn't know, which makes an appraisal challenging. How can you say the same things about the Romanian church that you do about the churches in Kenya? Most of his comments focus on China, India and Sub-Saharan Africa.

### *Pushback 1: Is truth truth?*

Borthwick mentions at the outset that the global church is not concerned whether its theology fits into neat and tidy categories of Western thinking. He never really unpacks this, but it does raise a question—are the categories of theological thinking Western or transcendent of culture? Reading generously, Borthwick is probably trying to convey that many Christians in Africa and South

America are Pentecostal and have sensitivity to the supernatural and practice of prophecy, speaking in tongues and healing. How he phrases his point raises a much more significant issue. Certainly we all bring our own cultural baggage when we read a text, but one wonders whether this would be applied to all other disciplines. Is there such a thing as African math or science? Of course not! Does the Bible invite us to read it on its own terms or does it allow for reading through cultural lenses?

Here is one positive example to show how it might work. In a culture dominated by honor and shame, the story of the prodigal son might be better understood because the 1st century had an understanding of honor and shame in a way that the western church does not. So—the culture of honor/shame helps the reader see the text in a way that it was meant to be understood. The key however is that it is read the way it is meant to be understood and not the way a 20th century culture reads meaning into a passage. This of course is a significant issue that raises questions of postmodern/modern arguments of knowledge and understanding.

### *Pushback 2: Blaming global problems on American church?*

It is striking that every concern the author poses about the global church is placed in the lap of the western church. The abuse of power is the "result of exportation of Western individualism through colonialist mission endeavors." Making converts, not disciples, is something that is a problem "every bit as much…in the West." The prosperity gospel "came as the result of preachers from North America and Europe." They ignore societal transformation because "they have followed in the footsteps of the dualistic world of their missionary forebears."

Certainly the missionaries from Europe and the United States brought with them cultural assumptions, but we often find that the people who blame the west are either western missiologists or western-trained missiologists. It has become ingrained in our thinking to continually apologize or be constantly self-critical. We only seem to be able to blame ourselves. I only make a note here that it is easy to see the church abroad with a less critical eye because of how differently it expresses itself.

### *Pushback 3: What is zeal?*

Paul once wrote of the Jewish people in Romans 10:

> My heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. 2 For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. 3 Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. 4 Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

What is one to think about zeal and how it is defined? While I appreciated some of Borthwick's points in this section, his argument is weak. He begins by describing zeal as loud worship services with expressive worship and prayer. Who determines whether this is zeal? It is quite different from a more controlled format in some western churches, but that does not make it more zealous. Should

we call the Romanian Baptists, many of whom are quite reserved and were imprisoned for their faith, less zealous because they are not as emotionally expressive as Africans? Might our interpretation of what zeal is really just be a cultural difference in expression?

Second, Borthwick mentions "In much of the global church, we find no debate about whether Mark 16:9-20 appeared in the earliest manuscripts or if the miracles of the 1st century were for today." The point would have been better made if he would have left out the first part of the sentence. Mark 16 is not in the earliest manuscripts. We don't dismiss it because it is such a bizarre story. He then recounts his own experience of having Africans pray for his miraculous healing. He recounts that the Africans expected healing, even picking him up off the ground and shaking him. His point about their faith is good, but I believe he misinterprets their expectancy of healing when it is more likely they believe that healing is promised.

His mention of the prosperity gospel is right on, but he limits it to Sub-Saharan Africa and an export of American TV preachers. I would contend it is even a bigger problem in Asia—particularly Korea, Singapore and the Philippines. The prosperity gospel could easily have been in Africa before any American missionaries landed on African soil.

I was a bit surprised that in his discussion he also made no mention of tribalism, which seems to not just be a mark of the Sub-Saharan African church, but the leading cause of much disunity. Nor is there a mention of nationalism, which certainly affects the Korean and Chinese church.

The book is very helpful as an introduction to missions. I would recommend it. I however believe we all have talking points that we use to discuss strengths and weaknesses in the church. The strengths and weaknesses of the western and global church could have been flipped and most people would still have agreed with most of what was written. Because of this we must be careful in how we draw conclusions from what we observe.

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**McPhail, Forrest, Carlyle, Michael, and Benson, Alan. *Pioneer Missions: Meet the Challenges, Share the Blessings*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2015. 152 pp. $9.99.**

I don't read a whole lot of missions and church planting books, partly because I have read a lot in the past, and partly because many do a poor job combining a high view of Scripture and church with a practical understanding of the realities of church planting on the mission field. Forrest McPhail's book, "Pioneer Missions: Meet the Challenges, Share the Blessings" is different.

In this short book (150 pages), McPhail is thinking biblically and theologically, but also very practically. Some church planting books are theologically sound, but don't do anything to address non-Western contexts or pioneer mission fields. Other church planting books focus on majority world contexts, but seem to have forgotten that there is more to theology than telling people to mine the book of Acts for methodical insights. McPhail is able to straddle the great divide and apply Scriptural truths to a distinctively non-Western church planting context, in his case rural Cambodia.

In this book review, I want to briefly summarize the basic contents of the book, together with some of my own commentary, so that potential readers can decide whether they want to read it. And I hope that people do read it because this was a great little book about missionary church planting.

In "Pioneer Missions", there are two groups of people that the author is aiming at: potential or new missionaries, and churches on the home side who may be confused about missions. For these readers, McPhail answers the following questions: *"What is "missions," and what is it not? Who are "missionaries," and what do they do? What is the "Church," and what is her responsibility? What is the "gospel," and what does the stewardship of it look like? What is a "disciple," and how are they made? What is "patronage," and how can it impair the work of evangelism?"* (Kindle loc. 70-73)

McPhail organizes his answers to these questions into eight chapters which address *"eight factors that contribute to the privileges, priorities, and problems faced by pioneer missionaries."* (Kindle loc. 219-220). The eight factors are as follows:

***Factor 1:*** Preparatory work is foundational for evangelism.

***Factor 2:*** Guarding the Gospel is crucial.

***Factor 3:*** Intense discipleship requires dealing with sin.

***Factor 4:*** Believers face profound isolation and persecution.

***Factor 5:*** Maintaining New Testament simplicity is crucial for church life.

***Factor 6:*** Misapplications of Bible truth regarding poverty abound.

***Factor 7:*** A consistently spiritual focus of ministry can be difficult to maintain.

***Factor 8:*** Changing times can obscure unchanging needs.

In "Factor 1" McPhail addresses the missionary's need to have the right mindset when starting upon missionary work. Language and culture learning are absolutely essential, and it is necessary to take the time to learn what people are really thinking, not just assuming you know what they are thinking because of something you read in a book. Learning how to present the Gospel clearly involves learning what people already know and believe. McPhail properly emphasizes that all of this will take time. The missionary is like the farmer who sows diligently and waits for God to do his work.

In "Factor 2" McPhail tackles the danger of syncretism. This is a really important (and often overlooked) issue in modern missions so I am glad he dedicates a whole chapter to it early in the book. No one wants syncretism, of course, but sometimes missionaries unintentionally encourage it

through their own impatience for conversions, and the downplaying of the necessity of repentance. I've heard other missionaries be dismissive of those concerned about syncretism and true repentance as being overly critical, judgmental, legalistic, and not gracious enough towards new believers who don't have their lives straightened up yet. But McPhail gets it right here. These are serious concerns, and they are biblical concerns. In Scripture, God takes syncretism and hypocrisy very seriously, and missionaries need to do so as well. McPhail provides a more biblical view of the issues, compared to those who downplay these topics for the sake of starting a movement of some kind.

"Factor 3" deals with discipleship and church discipline. This chapter makes it clear that McPhail has a pastoral heart and tries to walk alongside new and struggling believers to help them have joy and freedom in Christ. But he also doesn't paternalistically wink at sin as if we can't hope for much more from these new believers from a totally non-Christian background. Sin is serious and church discipline is needed. And McPhail does church discipline, a practice that doesn't get much air time in church planting literature, especially in those resources written for missionaries. Discipline is a necessary part of discipleship for the sake of the holiness of the church. I've heard missionaries excuse themselves from exercising discipline with church members, claiming that they might lose the relationship and not have any opportunity to speak into that person's life. But the author of this book never ventures into those slippery, slimy, pseudo-biblical waters. Thank you, Forrest, for not side-stepping this difficult and unpopular issue.

"Factor 4" continues the theme of discipleship from the previous chapter, but now addresses the external pressures of social isolation and persecution that new believers can face. The cost of discipleship can be hard and this chapter helps readers know what the local believers may be up against, and will need help to get through.

In "Factor 5" McPhail offers his understanding of the basics of church in pioneer situations, namely keep it simple and stick to New Testament basics. Often times when I hear this kind of philosophy, a disregard or disdain for theology and doctrine goes along with it. I don't hear that in this chapter, though. Rather, it is a call to return to the primary tasks of being the church, and resisting the urge for the missionary to encourage secondary activities that are often present in larger, older churches in the West such as age-graded Sunday schools, facilities for youth events, or church vehicles. McPhail cautions against missionaries being overly directive in shaping the growth and development of the church. He writes, "[*t*]*he missionary must teach God's Word and emphasize its principles, but leave the major task of application primarily to the local believers.*" (Kindle loc. 764-765)

"Factor 6" and "Factor 7" both relate to the ways that the use of money can negatively impact the mission of the church. McPhail's context is Cambodia, which has seen a massive amount of international aid and a corresponding number of "rice Christians" who profess faith in Christianity in order to get financial benefits. He reports that all sorts of aid agencies and well-meaning individuals

and ministries give lots of money, but this sets bad precedents, creates dependency, and unwisely puts the missionary (or local pastor) into the position of financial patron for the local believers.

McPhail asserts that the task of ministry is all about spiritual disciple-making, not economic uplift (as beneficial as that may be). The poor whom the Bible obligates Christians to care for are the destitute without food, clothing, and / or shelter. However, there is no biblical obligation to help people who have basic needs met to improve their lot in life. McPhail and those who work with him have helped many individuals with physical and financial needs, so he is not opposed to helping the poor. What he does oppose is putting caring for physical needs on the same level with evangelism and discipleship, claiming that both are equal important in fulfilling the Great Commission. He sees the imbalance in this area harming the church in Cambodia today.

The only major point in the book that I would disagree with is McPhail's claim that covenant theology (which he consistently calls replacement theology) is responsible for the overemphasis on mercy ministry today, and that dispensational theology is the necessary corrective to this distortion of the spiritual task of the church. While I agree with McPhail's conclusion (the mission of the church is spiritual, and the church and its ministers are not obligated to do social needs / mercy ministry), it seems misplaced to lay the blame at the feet of covenant theology. The major source of the imbalance in missions today is probably due more to evangelicals drifting from Scripture and seeking to do "missions" that are more acceptable to the world than it is due to a carefully thought-out covenant theology. McPhail does admit though that there are some amillennialists (I would be one) who agree that mercy ministry is an individual mandate rather than an obligation of the church as a body. So I found myself heartily agreeing with McPhail's conclusions about the mission of the church, although I couldn't recommend the way that he got there.

"Factor 8" is the concluding chapter and consists of a call to committed ministry that keeps the main thing, the main thing. Sacrifice is necessary, and missionaries need to be willing to lay down their lives if they want to see the church grow.

Overall I really appreciated "Pioneer Missions" and have found myself starting to recommend it to fellow missionaries. McPhail covers a lot of ground in just 150 pages, thus making it a good read for both potential and new missionaries. Although the author is writing with the Cambodian context in mind, I can easily see missionaries in a variety of settings getting a lot of good insights and practical helps from the book.

I appreciated his no-nonsense call for missionaries to set proper expectations for the mission field, to be serious about studying language and culture, and to be serious about the Gospel and avoiding syncretism. This book presents a realistic picture of pioneer missions with the challenges and difficulties that it entails, but also presents a positive hopeful picture of what God is doing and can do.

McPhail has been engaged in church planting in rural Cambodia for 15 years and you can tell that this book is written on the back of on-the-field experience. If you want a thoughtful, biblical

reflection on practical missionary church planting, "Pioneer Missions" is a great book to dig into and share with your friends and co-workers.

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**Furman, Gloria and Nielson, Kathleen B. *Word-Filled Women's Ministry: Loving and Serving the Church*. Wheaton, Crossway Books, 2015. 256 pp. $11.83.**

In a day and age when moral relativism seems to wear the crown and gender distinctions are ignored and even customised, it is refreshing to review a book that drives a stake deep into the Bible. Even in the Christian world, confusion runs amok about the biblical roles of men and women, their relevance in the local church and the nature of women's ministry. How does one define and understand this gender specific ministry and its relation to the church? Should the ministry be defined by context or the needs of women or are there other basic underlying principles that form its skeletal structure?

A group of women under the editorial eye of Gloria Furman and Kathleen Nielson have beautifully explained what women's ministry entails according to the Bible. These women, who believe the Bible to be the inspired, inerrant and sufficient Word of God for all matters of faith and life, attempt to search the scriptures for principles and guidelines concerning women's ministry in the context of the local church. They have done a stellar job of exploring word-based ministry and its global impact while addressing various issues related to women's ministry and the goal of it all. Particularly exhilarating and powerful is the resounding theme that God's Word is enough across all contexts and cultures. In a nutshell, they say, the premise of the book is,

> Profitable ministry among women is grounded in God's Word, grows in the context of God's people, and aims for the glory of Christ" (13).

As Christians, all of us are familiar with Jesus' words from Matthew 22:37-40,

> 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets'.

However, when it comes to women's ministry specifically, we tend to rush to do the second forgetting the first. Love for neighbour that does not spring out of the well of glad theology ultimately fails to deliver and last. And sound theology must be rooted in the scriptures for this is where God

has graciously revealed Himself. So I wholeheartedly agree with Nielson that the central focus of women's ministry, as in the case of any church ministry, should be on the Word of God (20).

Nielson in the opening chapter expounds from Isaiah 55 the weighty truths about God's Word that must shape all our lives and ministries as followers of Jesus Christ (20). She explains that God is a speaking God. It is in His speaking that creation came into being and through the taking in of His Word we were made to live in relationship with Him (23). Post-fall, it is through this very Word, the gospel, that we are given new life and restored into a relationship with Him. If by God's Word our very being exists, how much more for life and godliness and ministry? She further explains that God's word is powerful to accomplish what He purposes and powerful to save not just a few but everyone who thirsts. It also comprehensively equips every Christian. So we can with full confidence unsheathe this two-edged sword to build our ministries in the church (24-29). I was particularly encouraged by these magnificent truths about God's word to trust in its power as I minister to others. Nielson then explains that this two-edged sword is not just a selection of texts but the whole Bible; the whole story of the scriptures with Jesus at the centre (29-32). If our ministry to women is not founded on and built by such a glorious Word of God then it is no ministry at all.

When the Word of God is at the heart of our ministry, it also shapes the Why's and How's of 'Ministry by Women'. To this end Claire Smith, in the second chapter, begins by addressing the foundational subject of gender and their equalities and differences from the creation account of Genesis 1-3. This then informs us about the role of women in ministry within the body of Christ, the church. Claire holds to the biblical position of complementarianism and does an outstanding job of describing the beauty of being male and female and its connection to being made in the image of God. She explains that this image which was tarnished by the rejection and distortion of the assigned roles is now being restored in Christ Jesus, not just in our marriages but in the Church. Claire's approach is both refreshing, liberating and encouraging as she walks through the various ways women can serve the church under the authority of male leadership which includes teaching women and children, formally or informally.

When the Word of God is the centre of women's ministry and if ministry by women is vital to the growth of the church then this Sword must be unsheathed to equip the women who minister. These women in turn must be able to train and pass on the Word to future generations. Carrie Sandom, in the third chapter, addresses the crucial and serious task of training and its importance for women's ministry. She gives some really helpful insights into how we are to train new leaders.

Chapters four through six deal with the various contexts for women's ministry. Cindy Cochrum in chapter four tells us that the primary context for women's ministry is the local church with the goal of strengthening it because God makes himself known to the world through the church (96). She addresses briefly the benefits of ministry in a local church as opposed to virtual Christian fellowship. Cochrum also explains in detail the various fruits that grow from a shared commitment

to God's Word in a local church. However this chapter might have been strengthened if the term 'local church' was defined biblically.

If you have been hesitant to invite non- Christians to your Bible study group, I highly recommend chapter five by Gloria Furman. She tactfully spells out five ways a Bible study can be used to reach women for Christ as they behold our God and the Gospel. Keri Folmar in chapter six explores the impact of word-filled, gospel-centred, church-oriented women's ministry across many nations with encouraging testimonies that spur us on to the good work of serving the body of Christ and furthering the kingdom of God through evangelism.

Chapters seven through nine illustrate various ways women minister to women and others in the church. These include the Titus 2 discipleship model (chapter seven) , one on one discipling relationships that target specific struggles with sin (chapter eight), childcare, caring for the elderly or disabled, praying with one another, visiting the sick, music ministry or helping with meals (chapter nine), to name a few. They also address the importance of the church's affirmation and encouragement of fruitful ministry among women by not only equipping and training the leaders but also by praying for them and (in some cultural contexts) striving to remove/overcome practical hindrances like transport and child care.

Aside from the above mentioned the content of chapter seven seemed very long drawn and may cause the reader to lose their train of thought and miss the point of the chapter. Chapter nine, for the most part, was a repetition of previous chapters although demonstrated well through various ministries happening around the world.

The final chapter of the book deals with the ultimate goal of ministry. Nancy Guthrie, very refreshingly and soberly addresses the highest aim of ministry among women: to prepare women for the day of the Lord. The greatest tragedy of life would be to face that day unprepared (221). To that end she works her way through the illustrations and parables Jesus told his disciples from Matthew 24 and 25.They explain to us our desperate need to know what is urgent and what simply doesn't matter in light of eternity (223). They remind us of our call to faithfulness with what God has entrusted us with (224) and the necessity of not presuming upon the kindness of the Lord. Christians ought to be prepared to face the inescapable judgment that awaits us though it will be one not of condemnation (228–29).

With such solemn, unequivocal and urgent appeals from scripture, Nancy, drives home the sheer importance and the necessity of the work of ministry among women. This will matter forever because "in the Lord (our) labour is not in vain" (234–35).

I highly recommend this book to every Christian woman, new in the faith or mature, to know how to love and serve the church and be cared for, spiritually and physically, by the body of Christ.

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**Hoffmeier, James, *The Immigration Crisis: Immigrants, Aliens and the Bible*. Wheaton, Crossway, 2012. 176 pp. $16.99.**

What does the Bible say about immigration? James Hoffmeier lays out a compelling case in his book *The Immigration Crisis: Immigrants, Aliens and the Bible.* He begins by stating the problem plainly—Western countries, particularly the United States, have a problem on their hands. There are roughly 500,000 illegal immigrants in Britain, 1M in Germany and 12–15M in the United States. In Arizona, which borders Mexico, 10% of the population is made up of illegal immigrants.

Hoffmeier's concern is to address how the Bible speaks about immigration and to address arguments various Christian organizations make in their support for various legal reforms. The first big question he tackles is how to apply the Bible to present-day laws and issues. This of course goes beyond just immigration. Christians have wrestled through how the OT Law applies in their personal lives, not to mention how they should desire to influence public laws in a secular state. Hoffmeier argues for a robust approach, moving away from simplistic formulas. He actually confuses the language a little bit here (p. 26) as he first states positions as ways forward. He really makes a statement (first view) and then critiques three ways of approaching the Bible (2–4 ways).

First, he argues that we must recognize the differences that exist between our culture and Israel's culture. The differences in culture, economic structure and social milieu must be taken into account. By example—how one thinks of poverty today versus someone who was poor then is very different. Hoffmeier believes a proof-texting approach is simple and naïve, and that we must take differences of time and culture into account. This is a helpful point, but one most people would recognize.

In the second approach (which is really the first) desires to take seriously the demand for justice found in Israel's prophets. Martin Luther King, in this way of reading the prophetic material, called for fairly applied American Law, as he quoted Amos in his famous "I have a Dream" speech and referred to biblical texts often in his writings. In Hoffmeier's view this approach is commendable, but limiting justice to the failed application of existing laws makes the Bible only serve as a reaction to what is present instead of a way forward to something new.

Thirdly, he states a view motivated by a desire to understand the theological or ethnical principles behind the Law and then use that doctrine to shape or critique federal, state and local laws. Hoffmeier appreciates this but offers that a fourth way to approach the OT Law is to "take a more

comprehensive view of the teaching of the Bible in theological, social and economic areas.' Here he highlights Christopher Wright.

The strength of the book is Hoffmeier's scholarship. He breaks the discussion of immigration law into different time periods of the Bible: Abraham, Exodus and then the application of the law in Israel, then during exile and then during the time of Jesus. The discussion is not just limited to what the Bible records, but also what neighboring countries enforced during the time of the Patriarchs and conquest. In each chapter he is very narrow in his approach. With the exception of one time, he saves the application to the end. The data is stated rather matter-of-factly with little commentary on how the arguments might apply to current discussions. So when Hoffmeier asks what the Bible says about immigration, most of the time he is discussing right application of the law in the period when the Bible was recorded.

His presentation boils down to four concepts: (1) every nation has the right to decide who can and who cannot enter its territory. (2) Legal entry requires obtaining permission from the host people (3) OT laws regarding the alien are for those who come into the land legally (4) The NT adds no new teaching, but reinforces what the OT teachers said and emphasizes respect toward laws and authority.

Starting with Abraham he relies not just on biblical data, but practices that can be found in places where Hoffmeier has spent his time on archeological digs. He then brings that information to the discussion to inform Bible texts. For example: The OT speaks of borders in the land of Canaan (Ex 16:35), Egypt (1 Kings 4:21) and the borders of Israel (1 Sam 27:1). The question is whether these borders were seriously and sovereignly recognized (p32). Hoffmeier gives multiple examples from the Biblical text to make his point (Num 20:16-21; Jud 11:16-20). Nations clearly controlled their borders and determined who could pass through. In a celebrated tomb scene from a governor in 19$^{th}$ century BC, there is depicted a band of Semites entering the land. The picture shows the chief presenting his credentials, which Hoffmeier says acted like a visa. To protect territorial integrity, Egyptians built border forts to protect against invocation and mass migration. As Abraham entered Egypt (Gen 12:11) maybe fearing for his life or that his wife might be taken, he proposes a diplomatic relationship with Pharaoh by offering his "sister" Sarah to be his wife. Near the end of his life when his wife died, he needed to purchase property for her burial (Gen 23:3–4). Here he recognizes his immigrant status and need to conform to the laws of the Land.

Hoffmeier's best section turns now when he discusses the Hebrew verb *ger*, from which the noun *ger* is derived as usually translated "stranger," "alien" or "sojourner." For him, the Bible's definition of these words is critical to the current debate. This is probably only true in the US where many quote passages from the Old Testament to support their position. Here Hoffmeier provides his real only direct critique of another view. He mentions Sojourners, an influential evangelical advocacy group in the United States, which quotes Lev. 19:33 as their primary text: When a stranger resides

with you in your land, you shall not oppress the stranger. Sojourners foundation is based on "principles that compel us to love and care for the stranger among us."

The question remains: what does *ger* mean? He contends that the *ger* (alien/sojourner), is one who settles in a new land for an extended period of time and integrates into that society, However he adds to this a controversial point when he adds "In the Hebrew Bible the alien (*ger*) was a person who entered Israel and followed legal procedures to obtain recognized standing as a resident alien" (p. 52). This is the argument that underpins the entire book.

This list he gives of texts to support are impressive and I generally agree with his conclusion on his lexical study of alien/sojourner and his explanation of the true meaning of a sanctuary city in the OT. But does the OT text actually address the following of legal proceedings in every instance? When Ruth arrives in Bethlehem, there are no legal proceedings mentioned. When Jacob in Genesis 33 buys land from the city of Shechem. Hoffmeier says that he had first received permission to dwell in that region (p. 53-54). The text, though, says only that he bought property after moving into the region (33:18-20); obtaining permission is an assumption. Seeking property is what people do to establish roots in their adopted land and make a life for themselves.

The greatest weakness of the book is that it really doesn't address the immigration crisis at all. While it does make some general points about immigration in the Bible, which most would agree on, the question of application is left aside. His basic application is to submit to laws in place. This might work as an ancient Israelite living under the law of God for that time. But what of Christians, who live across all borders? While there should be a willingness to help legal aliens, nothing is said about those that are undocumented. That seems to miss the general thrust of NT teaching on showing compassion for those who are marginalized.

To say that undocumented Christians "need to be sensitive to their obligation to this teaching of Scripture [i.e., to submit to the law] and work through what may be deemed to be imperfect government procedures to obtain legal status" is to not appreciate what is occurring. The book concentrates on the nature of entry across national borders. But again, the issue of immigration is quite complex, which is why one is shocked to read, "in the data amassed in these chapters, I see nothing in Scripture that would abrogate current immigration laws" (p. 146). What of the millions of undocumented workers in the US who are needed to uphold local economies, which explains why certain sectors (like agriculture workers in CA) are rarely raided by the authorities. Who is taking advantage of whom in this scenario? What of the makeshift enforcement at the border of the US and Mexico?

Or take the significant challenge of immigrants in Greece, where people enter illegally, claim asylum, but are never given the proper paperwork because the local authorities want the immigrants to leave. If the laws of the country of destination are unjust, should Christians tell the sojourner to stay out?

Human need is what drives immigration. Abraham went to Egypt because he had no food. What if he had been denied entrance? Would he have just starved to death? If illegal entry means survival, should the Christian then support the person fleeing for their life or send them back to die and uphold the law.

With that said, there has been much ink spilled on how Christians should appropriately engage in this issue, whether at a federal, state or personal level. One recognizes that laws are in place for a reason and that to ignore laws would be catastrophic to any country. That debate is left for another time. It is not a book about the current immigration crisis in various places around the world. It is a book about the relevant Biblical data and for that it is commendable.

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## Trousdale, Jerry. *Miraculous Movements: How Hundreds of Thousands of Muslims Are Falling in Love with Jesus*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012. 208 pp. $9.99.

Jerry Trousdale has a story to tell. As a missionary among African Muslims and Director of an evangelical mission organization, he believes he has discovered the secret to Muslim evangelism.

As a Christian, this is not a book you want to dislike. Stories of true revival, conversion, and the transformation of communities are what one hopes for. Why would I not want these to be true? This is also the kind of book the academic community tends not to read. In my limited experience it is because either they feel they are above a book like this (tragically) or do not understand the type of influence they can have in churches and among missions practitioners (more likely).

The author starts by stating that there is a way of doing evangelism that everyone has missed. Trousdale believes to have the discovered biblical principles and values that have been hidden in plain sight in the pages of the Bible. He commits the first few chapters of his book to explaining the principles and giving illustrative narratives of Christians living out these principles with great success.

Trousdale offers what he calls Jesus' counterintuitive disciple-making strategies (chapter 2). Some include:

- Go slow at first in order to go fast later.
- Focus on a few to win many.
- Engage an entire family or group, not just an individual.

- Share only when and where people are ready to hear.
- Start with creation, not with Christ.
- It's about discovering and obeying, not teaching and knowledge.
- Disciple people to conversion, not vice versa.

The new way of doing ministry should be (Chapter 12):

- Make intercessory prayer the highest priority
- Make disciples who make disciples
- Invest time in the right person
- Don't tell people what to believe or do
- Never settle for revealing just one dimension of Jesus' life
- Never substitute knowledge about God for an obedience-based relationship with God
- Understand that Jesus does impossible things through the most ordinary people

All of these are wonderful suggestions. But are they new? What book on prayer does not make prayer the highest priority? Who does not mentor someone so they can be a mentor? Who does not think through whom to disciple?

None of what are listed above are bad and they seem wise. Starting with creation makes sense for someone with no background in Christian faith. Focusing on a few disciples sounds good. But – are these Jesus' strategies? Are these the only ones?

There are many problems with this kind of "Jesus only" or Jesus model hermeneutic. It elevates Jesus' words above the rest of the Bible. As an evangelical that is a problem, since all Scripture is inspired by God. The real question is: Should we take a "Gospels-centered" approach to ministry and our reading of the Bible?

## The Crux of the Issue – Hermeneutics

If we take away all the stories Trousdale tells we can boil down a significant critique to one question – how should we read the Bible? This of course is a complex question but from my theological vantage point, Trousdale's entire system could be misleading.

A "Gospels-centered" approach to reading the Bible takes its cue from classic liberalism and can turn Jesus into merely a moral teacher. The cross becomes part of the message to obey instead of the message that redeems dead sinners. It's not that Trousdale is liberal, but that he mimics the methodology. Let me just raise one issue: Should we take all of Jesus' commands as commands for his disciples today? I have no desire to diminish the words of our Lord, but also want to understand them in the context of the story line of Scripture and read them knowing that the Holy Spirit was at work in different authors after the last chapters of the gospels were written. While Trousdale spends

a significant amount of time talking about Mathew 10 and Luke 10, he does not include commands found in Matthew 10 such as:

- Don't accept any valuable metals (10:9)
- Don't even take along a bag, two coats, sandals or a staff (10:10)
- Inquire who is worthy in a town and stay there (10:11)
- Greet the house (10:12)
- Bless a worthy house, but take back the blessing from an unworthy one (10:13)
- Shake off the dust of your feet if you are not received (10:14)

Surely this alone shows the flaw in this hermeneutic.

This leads to a second issue – the role of the Holy Spirit and the role of teachers in the disciple making process. Trousdale is rightly concerned that missionaries not lord it over new believers. He wants new believers and church leaders to be able to handle the Word of God well. However, his way of addressing the issue is unhelpful. His desire is for everyone to understand the Bible through personal study and discovery. There is very little role, if any, for a teacher to help the infant believer understand what they are reading. To just say that the Holy Spirit will just guide each person has been proven over and over again in church history to lead to the Bible meaning whatever an individual wants.

## Theological Concerns

### *Obedience based discipleship*

As stated above, Trousdale gets all of his insight from the Gospels and with that comes some interesting conclusions. One is that Trousdale encourages the reader to teach people God's commands so that they can follow them and have their life changed and then be open to the message of Christianity (p. 44). This would seem to be the exact opposite of how the Christian life and evangelistic strategy is thought of in Scripture. Even within the Gospels, can you imagine Jesus going to the Pharisees, who were obedient to the law, taking this route? Peter and others in Acts never preached obedience first. Paul preached to bring about the obedience of faith (Rom 1:5). Should we teach obedience to Christ in order to have people place their faith in Christ? Paul in Athens (Acts 17) and Peter to Cornelius (Acts 10) do not seem to fit Trousdale's model. Truthfully, the approach of the early church does not appear to have a place in Trousdale's thinking at all.

Obedience based discipleship is the exact opposite of what I would call affection based discipleship. Commands are not enough. The declarations and promises of God in Scripture are used by the Spirit to reorient the heart and mind to real faith, which then fuels obedience. It is gospel-centered,

not Gospels-centered ministry that yields sanctification and biblical discipleship (see 2 Cor. 3:18.) Obedience-first discipleship is not biblical.

### *What is a Church?*

This type of book also calls to mind many research questions, but even more so the question of how one defines a church. I will only address one statement: Hundreds of Thousands of Muslims are Falling in Love with Jesus.

What could this possibly even mean? Is Trousdale saying that through the principles in this book, there have been over 100,000 confirmed converts to Christianity from Islam? One leader from Frontiers wrote in a private correspondence that at the time of publication, none of the reported movements happened within places where Frontiers is working. So where is this happening? The numbers given by Trousdale are astounding (pg. 15):

- More than 6,000 new churches have been planted among Muslims in 18 different countries.
- Hundreds of former sheikhs and imams, now Jesus followers, are boldly leading great movements of Muslims out of Islam.
- Forty-five different "unreached" Muslim people groups, who a few years ago had no access to God's Word, now have over 3.000 new churches among them.

There are problems with statistics like these. Primarily, the author never tells us what he believes a church is beyond a group of people getting together to read the Bible. That is a flaw. I have seen ministries in India state that they have planted thousands of churches, but when I visited those churches I found 3-4 Hindu women who also "follow" Jesus as one of their gods who meet together twice a year to worship him. I understand the fluid reality of having only newly converted believers in an area, but at some point there should be a critical mass that starts paying attention to the Pastoral Epistles and the rest of the Bible.

### *Where is the Bible?*

While Trousdale spends some time in Jesus' ministry, his primary hermeneutical foundation is stories of supposed Muslim encounters with Jesus. It is not that stories are bad, but as someone who wants to show that what he is doing is found in Scripture, he would have served himself and the reader much better by leading with Scripture.

### *Where is the Gospel?*

Trousdale does describe people becoming believers, but it is never stated that they heard a message and believed. Rather – they heard a story. Trousdale does speak of "the message of Christ" in multiple places. What was the message that led to faith? It is not that Trousdale denies the gospel as a

generous reader could find parts of it scattered throughout the book. One just wonders why this is not central.

#### *Words are Important*

Trousdale makes a conscious decision that the reader may not catch as he writes. Non-Muslim background believers are called Christians. Islamic background believers are called Christ-followers. There are two times (which might be a slip by the author) where he labels Muslim Background Believers as Christians (pg. 25). By doing this, Trousdale is revealing what he believes about the nature of conversion what people have called the Insider Movement, which is popular is some evangelical circles. There are many in the Muslim world that would drop the word Christian because of the offense some might take. The motives are good, but we must be careful as to how far one wants to go with this type of thinking.

## Conclusion

I can walk away from this book thankful for the call to pray and read the Bible. I can be appreciative that there is a good chance that some of these stories are true. But, I cannot commend this book. If you read it, think about how one should read the Bible and whether stories of supposed conversions should drive how you read it and methods of evangelism and discipleship. Surely the 62 other books in the Bible should play a role in how we do discipleship and evangelism.

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**Richards, E. Randolph, and O'Brien, Brandon J., *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible*. Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2012. 237 pp. $16.00.**

The thesis of Misreading Scripture is that cultural values, especially those that go without being said, effect the way we read, and even misread, Scripture. Thus, the authors' goal is to raise the question: what do our cultural context and assumptions cause us to overlook when interpreting the Bible? (15) "The core conviction that drives this book is that some of the habits we readers from the West (the United States, Canada, and Western Europe) bring to the Bible can blind us to interpretations that the original audience and readers in other cultures see quite naturally" (15). They hope to offer

a positive corrective "by suggesting that there is a discernable pattern by which Western readers read—and even misread—Scripture" (16).

Accordingly, the authors touch on nine differences between Western and non-Western cultures that impact our reading and application of the Bible. Though the book is about biblical interpretation, their main goal is not to argue for particular interpretations of particular texts but to help Western readers read themselves well so that they might read and apply the Bible well. "We want to unsettle you just enough that you remember biblical interpretation is a crosscultural experience and to help you be more aware of what you take for granted when you read" (22).

The controlling metaphor of the book is that of an iceberg divided into three parts. Part one deals with three issues that are above the surface and relatively easy to see. Part two deals with three issues that are just below the surface and somewhat more difficult to see. Part three deals with three issues that are deep below the surface and rather difficult to see.

Part one, "Above the Surface," presses into the issues of mores, race and ethnicity, and language. With regard to mores, the authors, drawing on *Webster's Dictionary*, define them as "folkways of central importance accepted without question and embodying the fundamental moral views of a group" (29). For the authors, the fact that mores are "accepted without question" is of utmost importance for biblical interpretation because biblical interpreters may not even be aware that they are reading their cultural assumptions into a text. "What we want you to see is that what goes without being said for us concerning certain mores can cause us to misread the Bible" (48). Conversely, the more biblical interpreters unmask their mores, the better they can read the Bible. As for race and ethnicity, the author's primary aim is to raise the issue of racism and suggest that it still effects the way we read the Bible. For example, generations of American pastors and scholars have tended to assume that Moses' Cushite wife was a slave-woman simply because she was a dark-skinned African, when in fact she was likely a cultural elite. Moses probably married up rather than down, but Western readers are often blind to this probability because of our racial assumptions. Finally, with respect to language, the authors assert that language is at once the most obvious and most insidious issue in crosscultural biblical interpretation (88). Thus, they attempt chapter to uncover "a few instinctive Western language habits" (72) and, more or less, they succeed in doing so.

Part two, "Just Below the Surface," considers issues that are less obvious and therefore more dangerous, specifically, individualism and collectivism, honor/shame and right/wrong, and time. With regard to individualism and collectivism, the authors provide an introduction to the basic differences between Western and non-Western cultures, and thus help their readers understand how this governs the way we interpret the Bible. For example, Western readers tend to read the English word "you" as singular when, more often than not, it is plural in the New Testament. This difference, though seemingly minor, yields very different interpretations of various texts. As for honor/shame and right/wrong cultures, the authors strain to help their readers understand that, by and large,

the majority world falls into the former category. Though this issue is difficult for Westerners to comprehend, it nevertheless impacts the way we read the Scripture and must therefore receive our attention if we are to remove our cultural blinders. Finally, with respect to time, the authors help Westerners to see that many cultures conceive the nature and use of time in different, and valid, ways. In addition to helping their readers appreciate these differences, they also try to help them see how alternate views of time can alter the way we understand various passages of Scripture.

Part three, "Deep Below the Surface," seeks to unmask issues that are least obvious therefore most dangerous, specifically, rules and relationships, virtues and vices, and the supremacy of the self in Western culture. With regard to rules and relationships, the authors' claim is that, in the Bible as well as most world-cultures, relationships trump rules. That is, rules exist for the sake of relationships and when the two come into conflict, relationships win. Western cultures, they suggest, tend to value rules above relationships but at times they push this suggestion too far. As for virtues and vices, the authors' aim is to help their readers see that various cultures hold legitimately different views of what is right and wrong with regard to a host of behaviors and issues. This effects the way we read the Bible when, for instance, we encounter Paul's lists of vices and virtues in Colossians 3:5 and 3:12-13, and assume that we understand what is most and least important to Paul. Finally, with respect to the supremacy of the self in Western culture, the authors press their readers to see that we often read the purposes and promises of God as if they mainly have individual application for me. For example, we tend to read texts like Romans 8:28 to say, "God works all things together *for my* good," when the text means something quite different. This self-centered, rather than God-centered, habit of reading often proves destructive as we interpret, teach, and apply the Scripture.

The authors conclude by offering five helpful suggestions for removing our cultural blinders. First, we should embrace the complexity of reading, interpreting, teaching, and applying the Bible. Exegesis is difficult, and the sooner we come to terms with this fact the better. Second, we should beware of the tendency to overcorrect our habits of reading when we learn new principles like many of those provided in this book. Third, we should be teachable by constantly searching our hearts, by listening to Scripture well, and by seeking perspectives other than, and different from, our own. Fourth, we should embrace error, that is, we should make peace with the fact that we are going to make mistakes on the way to becoming good interpreters of the Bible. Rather than allowing the fear of failure to paralyze us, we should instead commit to seeing our errors and learning from them. Finally, we should strive to read the Bible together with others as God enables us to do so. Reading Scripture with our majority world brothers and sisters, instead of reading it *for* them, will help us to become aware of, and remove, the cultural blinders that cause us to misread the Scripture.

The authors offer *Misreading Scripture* as a conversation starter, and they emphasize that their aim is not to carefully exegete particular texts of the Bible but to illustrate how their principles might be applied in the process of interpretation. With this in mind, they succeed in raising the

cultural awareness of their readers (indeed, unsettling them) by drawing our attention to a number of critical, cultural issues that effect how we read and apply the Scripture. More importantly, they provide a useful framework for pastors, teachers, and leaders who desire to progress in their ability to read themselves, others, and the Bible well.

Where the book falls short is in its exegesis of various texts. Again, the authors are clear that careful exegesis is not their primary aim, but this understandable caveat does not excuse the sloppy application of principles. For example, in the chapter on honor/shame verses right/wrong cultures, they attempt to apply their insights to the story of David and Bathsheba. In essence, their interpretive assumption is that David's world was an honor/shame world and that therefore issues of right/wrong and a guilty conscience had little if anything to do with the story. But by assuming that the categories of honor/shame and right/wrong are mutually exclusive, the authors misinterpret the story in some troubling ways.

The exegetical problems in this book are so serious, and replete (particularly in parts two and three), that I would not recommend it for local church study groups, unless the group included an able exegete. On the one hand, I am concerned that the authors' approach might lead people to conclude that they cannot interpret the Bible for themselves since the issues involved in doing so are too complex. On the other hand, I am concerned that the book might lead vulnerable church members to follow the authors in drawing misleading conclusions about any number of particular texts.

Having said that, I do recommend the book for skilled exegetes who are able to sift the wheat from the weeds, for there is plenty of wheat in the pages of this book. Accordingly, the book will aid pastors, teachers, and leaders as they seek to remove their cultural blinders and thus read the Scripture well. It will, at the very least, stimulate a greater level of self-awareness and humility, both of which are valuable commodities for Bible interpreters.

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**González, Justo. *The History of Theological Education*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015. xi + 155pp. $39.99.**

As an experienced educator, the author of a celebrated two-volume history of Christianity, and an advocate for theological training in the global South, Justo González is undoubtedly qualified to advance a history of theological education. And González's *The History of Theological Education* is certainly more than a repackaging of his previous work with a focus on theological training. As González recounts in the preface, the book emerged from his own reflection on how such history

must inform the contemporary crisis facing traditional theological education. As has been widely observed, enrollment in Catholic and mainline Protestant seminaries has declined precipitously in the last several decades. However, at the same time that these institutions struggle to produce sufficient ministers for their churches, innovative approaches to theological education are experiencing exponential growth. These new institutions focus on both lay and clerical training and sometimes bear little resemblance to conventional seminaries – even though the same faculty may teach at both. Such a paradox invites a fresh reexamination of history as "one of the best tools we can use for guidance into the future" (xi). Historical examination reminds us that much of what the traditional training paradigm takes as necessary "may not be so." For example, "for fifteen centuries the church subsisted, taught its theology, and at times flourished, without a single seminary" (xi). In this way, history can shed light on contemporary challenges both through the shortcomings and the successes of previous generations.

González devotes thirteen brief chapters to surveying the development of theological education from the New Testament period to the present. The book opens with a glimpse of what might be learned from the earliest church. Gonzales notes that the New Testament and earliest church give us very little useful data about theological education, we can infer two basic requirements: worship leaders must be able to read, and they must be able to interpret the Scriptures. Since no schools existed for ministerial training, interpretative approaches, apart from the method evident in the text itself, would have come from the training bishops had received in secular schools of rhetoric. The main means for pastoral preparation was the process every Christian undertook in order to become part of the church: the catechumenate. "In the ancient church," Gonzales writes, "there was no difference between the biblical and theological training that the laity received and that which was required for ordination" (14).

Next, Gonzales demonstrates that the end of systemic persecution of the church both permitted the rise of remarkable Christian leadership and undermined the church's ability to adequately instruct new converts. Undoubtedly the most important figure of this period was Augustine of Hippo (354–430). Building from his own formative experiences, Augustine underscored the importance of community for theological life. His On Christian Doctrine became the basic manual for ministerial training. This period of history also saw remarkable growth in the church. But while the combination of new religious freedom and periodic Germanic invasions brought waves of new converts into the church, it also overwhelmed the catechumenate system, necessitating the reduction of the process from two years to 40 days under Gregory the Great (540–604). This rapid growth, paired with the absence of a formal system of training for the clergy, contributed to a growing ignorance among church leadership.

González, thus, underscores vital importance of the development of monastic and cathedral schools in the early middle ages. Monasteries preserved the teaching of Christian doctrine, recorded

and translated the history of pagan peoples, copied and disseminated the Scriptures, and trained men for evangelistic work. The monastic novitiate also became a functional replacement for the catechumenate; "what was earlier expected of most Christians and offered to them was now reserved for a smaller group of particularly devout Christians" (30). In addition to these independent monastic communities, cathedral schools began to develop around major urban churches. Here too, basic education in the central doctrines of the faith was preserved and, in some places, resources were developed for broader dissemination.

González argues that the most significant period of theological development in the history of the church occurred in the thirteenth century. It was during this period that the university system developed as an alternative to the cathedral and monastic models. What set the university apart was its fundamental independency. Generally speaking, the cathedral model passed down orthodoxy by submitting to the authority of the church. The university model, in contrast, possessed a critical distance. Following the approach of Peter Abelard (1079–1142), the university model saw the benefit of challenging what had been passed down –not as a rejection of authority, but as a means for the discovery of truth. This was the period of great scholastic teachers like Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) and the development of monastic orders (Fransicans and Dominicans) dedicated to the life of the mind. The flourishing of scholasticism in the 13th century also led to a growing distance between the academy and the church and, despite the theological awakening in much of the academy, little penetrated to the parish church.

The development of the university, the growing gap between theology and piety in the academy, the profound ignorance of the parish clergy, and the restriction of theological training to the clergy all contributed to the reformations of the 16th century. Among Protestants, formal university education became a requirement for ordination, biblical training was emphasized as necessary for the laity, and universal systems of primary and secondary education were developed. Among Catholics, reforms at Trent addressed the reformation of clerical training and expected that such training should be reflected in a life of profound spirituality. It was during this time that the word seminary was first used in Catholic Britain to describe institutions dedicated to the training of English clergy. These "seedbeds" existed to cultivate a large number of candidates and then transplant them to the places where their ministry was to take place (81).

González notes that the period following the Protestant and Catholic reformations saw several important developments. Protestant scholasticism sought to systematize the doctrines of the Reformers, paying more attention to the 'practical' dimensions of theology (ethics and devotion) than their predecessors. Nevertheless, certain tendencies contributed to the dangerous idea that knowledge itself constituted faith, an error that the Pietist movement sought to address. Modern theological education was born out of Pietist goals and new scientific and critical mentality. The latter, however, soon came to eclipse the former. The best schools were no longer known for their

relevance for the church or ministry so much as for the prestige of their teachers. The increasingly scientific approach to scripture was one of the elements that led to the conflict between liberals and fundamentalists. Fundamentalists "canonized ignorance" (115) and promoted a "biblical imperialism" while the latter canonized science and promoted discussions having little to do with the life of the church. This led to a persistent tension between the academy and the church.

In his conclusion, González notes that recent shifts in demographics and in culture threaten to make theological training in traditionally accredited programs as elitist and irrelevant as those of the medieval universities in the 15th century. He suggests several ways in which a historical survey informs present thinking on theological training. First, theological education should be returned to its proper place, the heart of the church – particularly in its local expression. Second, methods of teaching and evaluating should be developed that focus on equipping students to be able to share and teach the content and process of learning. Third, theological education should be fundamentally seen as a life-long endeavor and should be flexible enough to deal with evolving circumstances and unexpected challenges. Fourth, theological education should be expanded to encompass not only those moving towards ordained ministry, but those who are already ministering without training as well as laypersons who desire training for non-vocational ministry pursuits. Theological education should develop mentors trained in theological reflection and pastoral practice. Finally, materials for study and reflection should be developed to resource on-going theological training.

González historical survey is masterful. The brief chapters address primary sources without getting bogged down in excessive detail. Chapter summaries draw together the main themes and make the book very accessible. González's historical treatment is even-handed, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of various historical approaches to training. But the book clearly aims to do more than its title suggests. González sees weaknesses in the contemporary seminary model. While he does not precisely identify these weaknesses, he argues for a return to a focused learning community comprised of both vocational and non-vocational ministers who are devoted to personal piety, rigorous study, and practical ministry for the sake of the local church. While his directives correspond to historical realities, one does wonder if he discovers in history precisely the answers he already had in mind. Perhaps the most significant weakness of González's book, however, is the lack of reflection on doctrine. He does not note how the abandonment of certain theological commitments (e.g. the nature of Scripture, exclusivity of Christ) has contributed to the current crisis in mainline theological education and the corresponding decline in mainline churches. His historical survey similarly fails to examine the significance of theological tensions in periods of decline and reform in theological education (e.g. justification, sacramentalism).

Overall, this short book is an excellent primer on the history of theological education. While the book may have the concerns of mainline institutions in view, all readers will benefit from González's historical insights as well as his suggestions for reforming theological training. As González notes,

many non-traditional and church-based theological training programs have already begun returning to a discipleship model of education shaped by a profoundly biblical spirituality. But he is also right to argue that what is necessary for traditional seminaries is "no less than a radical transformation in theological education…grounded on a renewed vision of theological education. In this vision, all of Christian life is, among other things, a life of theological study and reflection" (119).

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## Gorman, Michael J. *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. 305pp. $22.54.

Michael Gorman, Raymond E. Brown Chair in Biblical Studies and Theology at St. Mary's Seminary, has now completed his "accidental trilogy." The trilogy began with *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* in 2001, before continuing with *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* in 2009. Along the way, in addition to numerous articles, Gorman has contributed *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters*, a major study of the Pauline corpus. *Becoming the Gospel* is well served by this prior work, which enables Gorman to make a variety of important exegetical and theological moves with simplicity and in short compass. The thesis of these 1500 pages on Paul, and again the central claim of *Becoming the Gospel*, is that "Paul wanted the communities he addressed not merely to *believe* the gospel but to *become* the gospel, and in so doing to participate in the very life and mission of God" (2, emphasis original).

The book begins with an "Invitation" to mission and participation. Here Gorman's twin concerns, represented by the Gospel and Our Culture Network for whom he writes, move immediately to the forefront. The first concern is theological, and takes as its focus who God is and what He is up to in the world. This is the gospel. The second concern is pastoral, and deals with the transforming effect of the gospel. This is becoming. Of course, these two are intimately connected because what God is up to in the world is the transformation (new creation) not just of His people, but of the entire created order. Therefore, and this is the reason for the subtitle, as we believe the gospel and become the gospel, we participate, by virtue of this transformation, in the advance of the gospel. As we are joined to God, we join God in His mission in the world. "One of the primary contentions of this book is the inseparability of the church's life together and its activity, or witness, in the world" (18).

Chapter One moves to answer the gospel question: what is God's global mission? "For Paul the answer to that question is clear: to bring salvation to the world" (23). What then is salvation? Here

Gorman's language diversifies rapidly. Salvation is pictured as transformation, as new creation, as liberation, as justification and reconciliation. (The reader wonders whether Stephen Westerholm's caution regarding justification might apply; "we confuse rather than clarify what Paul has to say about justification when we try to include, in the meaning of this term, other sides of his thought" [Justification Reconsidered, viii].)

Nevertheless, the "umbrella" under which Gorman gathers these biblical images of salvation is "participation" (25). The defining concern in this participation is that the church live as an exegesis of the gospel (43). To put it negatively, his aim is to break down the distinctions between "pastoral" (or the church being) and "missional" (or the church acting) that plague the Western church. Gorman is saying more here than the important claim that our mission(s) is a natural and necessary consequence of our salvation. In making participation the dominant image, his claim is that in the gospel, "benefitting [being] and participating [acting] are inseparable, even synonymous, realities" (34). We are as saved as we are engaged in God's saving mission. The remainder of the chapter is given to seven features Gorman discerns in Paul's letters that highlight the centrality of participation. Having shifted the question from "what is God up to" (salvation), to asking "how will He bring it about" (our becoming the gospel), chapter two serves as the methodological nerve center for the book. Here Gorman presents us with the hermeneutic required for "reading Paul missionally" and thus answering the "how" question. The lens brought to the text by this subset of the theological interpretation of Scripture, is "how did Paul expect his communities to participate in the *missio Dei*" (58)? This missional hermeneutic rests on significant presuppositions such as the existence of a *missio Dei*, the divine intention for His people to participate with Him in it, and the confidence that Scripture not only calls but equips original and contemporary audiences to engage it. Whatever exegetical quibbles may come as this hermeneutic is put into practice, the five questions Gorman suggests a missional hermeneutic will ask of the biblical text are worth significant reflection (56).

The remaining six chapters are the strong point of the book, tracing the call to become the gospel, or to participate in God's mission, across most of the undisputed letters (Galatians lacks a discrete chapter). In I Thessalonians, the focus falls on the Pauline virtues of faith(fulness), hope and love. In Philippians, Paul's "master-story" of Christ emptying himself for the sake of embodied service is examined. Following a chapter on the OT background of "peace" in Paul more generally, the chapter on Ephesians traces the way the church embodies the work of Christ the peacemaker. 1 and 2 Corinthians present us with "justice" or "saving justice" or "make just" as the biblically and missionally preferable translation of all dik- cognates. The book ends with a treatment of Romans that returns in a focused way to the concept of theosis (or participation) with which the book began. Gorman's aim in each of these chapters to demonstrate how the gospel virtue under discussion not only issues in but is experienced in mission. Our participation in God's saving mission is bound up, essentially and experientially, with our reception of His saving benefits.

There is much to celebrate about this book. It is rare to find a study that combines a recovery of theosis/deification language and the experiential implications of the kingdom of God having broken into the world (the "already"), with a sober-minded expectation that we will suffer as we participate in Christ's cruciform mission. In a needed and devastating move, Gorman takes the biblical expectation that our faithful witness to Christ will provoke suffering and puts it as a question to the un-suffering church in the West. This kind of balanced eschatological vision provides the book with spiritual vitality.

Additionally, Gorman provides a real service by insisting that we take missions out of a line-item in our budget, and take the holy out of its huddle, and place the church on mission in the world. Because of how quickly personal and regional concerns can dominate the horizon of our vision, we cannot hear too often that God is on a mission that is cosmic in scope, and that He means to use us (a "gospel-ized" us) to do it. Though he admits that a perfect pairing is difficult to discover, Gorman is to be thanked in this regard for his hard work at finding words that capture this internal/external, pastoral/missional, centrifugal/centripetal, being/act dynamic. Allowing the gospel to continually have its way in us is surely the way to honor God in our whole life, as well as to integrity and power in our evangelism.

Third, this book is a refreshing example of how to write around the ruts. Gorman's writing is not only clear and filled with evident conviction, he also refuses to be cornered by interpretive "binaries." For example, in his chapter on Philippians, he suggests that the way through the *epechontes* (hold fast vs. hold out the gospel) controversy is to realize that the church would not need to hold fast to the gospel in the face of social pressure unless it had first held it forth in cruciform witness! Likewise, in treating justification in his chapter on Corinthians, he transcends the way of thinking about justification that characterizes both the OPP and the NPP, opting for a "more robust [understanding]…that is both participatory and transformative" (221). This kind of exegetically responsible creativity makes the book a compelling read.

With all of its strengths, and with all of the important challenges we should heed, there are several questions that remain about the book as it stands. Though these seem to characterize Gorman's earlier writing as well, it is still best to phrase these as "issues in need of further clarification" rather than out-and-out disagreement. Nevertheless, because these issues are central to our understanding of the very gospel Gorman wants us to serve, creativity cannot be allowed to substitute for a lack of clarity.

Gorman rightly calls us to "broaden" our understanding of salvation so that it extends beyond the "privatistic" concept of the forgiveness of sins. He assures that this "more robust understanding of the gospel radically alters everything without losing the message of forgiveness and eternal life" (298). Yet, as we look around the book, this message has almost entirely disappeared. The language of the wrath of God as the wages of sin, of our need for propitiation, of our hope in the passive and

active obedience of Christ, is all linked with the Old Perspective and muted as "the mere verdict of acquittal for an individual sinner" (221). Words like "merely" and "simply" jar against the reality of a sinner escaping the eternal horror his unrighteousness has merited. One hears the ghost of Anselm rise up at this point and question whether we have yet considered the seriousness of our sin.

This "radical" change Gorman attempts is just that, a relocation of the roots of our salvation. This relocation is not in terms of how we are saved (Gorman is clear that salvation is by faith in Christ). Rather, it is a relocation of what happens when we are saved, and all that follows from this salvation. The Old Perspective is equipped to explain how a believer takes up the charge (or lays down his life) for the sake of the gospel in terms of a foundational indicative giving rise to a functional imperative. That is to say, the root of justification (or positional sanctification) will and must bear the fruit of (progressive) sanctification. Gorman, however, explicitly rejects this idea of a "cause and consequence" in his insistence on the inseparability (even identity) of justification and justice (239). Rather than allowing a forensic root to bring forth moral fruit, he conflates justification with ethical transformation ("justification as inclusive of transformation" 8, or "each is part of the other" 239). This change in behavior, therefore, rather than drawing on the resource of our changed relationship with God, seems to have become the gospel. It is, at least, what we have become as we "become the gospel."

What we have suffered, then, in the language of "becoming the gospel" is the loss of progressive sanctification. This loss requires Gorman to leap over the life-long struggle of the "now" and the "not yet" and call for a degree of participation in God (embodying His kingdom) that does not easily square with the reality of suffering he holds up elsewhere. In wanting to preserve their inseparability, he has pushed act (being made like Christ) too far into being (being declared righteous), and so now pushes the eschatological fullness of our being (deification) too far forward into the inseparable, but nevertheless not-yet, reality of Spirit-empowered sanctification.

Additionally, this language of "becoming the gospel," seems to leave little room for the gospel to remain the proclamation of historical, external events that continue to confront us, norm us, and fill our mouths with a message of hope. Gorman insists that there remains a place for "telling" the gospel, though his emphasis falls on being and doing (44). This is a needed emphasis and fair enough. Nevertheless, the vision he sketches must accommodate the telling. Where, in the talk about a living exegesis does the call to herald, or steward, or guard the gospel fit in? Having been so closely identified with the gospel, how can we continue to speak like Paul in 2 Cor. 4:5, "we preach not ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord"? Where, in the emphasis on social justice is a wrestling with the fact that it is possible to comfort people on their way to hell? Where, in the subversion of binaries is the eternally relevant division in 1 Corinthians 1:18 of all of humanity into either "those who are perishing" or "those who are being saved"? Where, in the invitation to join the just community, is the call first and foremost to "be reconciled to God!" While assuring us we have not lost the vertical

message of forgiveness, Gorman's examples of this "becoming" in action unanimously trades on social, horizontal dimensions of justice.

The lingering question, then, regards whether this broadening of our gospel vision has in fact yielded a truncated practice. This truncation seems inevitable if the relocated roots are not deep or wide enough to support the widening canopy. Just this "radical" change seems to have happened in conflating forensic and ethical dimensions of justification/justice, and in collapsing the binaries of worship/outreach, vertical/horizontal salvation, spiritual/social justice (192, 303). By rejecting the cause - consequence (indicative - imperative) relationship, therefore, Gorman has not only undermined theological nuance, but he has drained pastoral motivation. Ironically, he has decapacitated the church for new covenant (Spiritual) obedience to the mission of God.

In sum, many of the impulses of this book serve as vital correctives to spiritual presumption or simple laziness prevalent in the Western church. This call raised by a missional hermeneutic is a challenge we need to hear and heed. Gorman is among a growing number of scholars who are sounding it repeatedly and well. However, there is enough denied in (or absent from) the book to suspect that the NPP, which is where Gorman's sympathies and sources clearly lie, may actually undermine the very thing it is trying to accomplish. What is needed is a proposal that works out the missional implications of our forensic justification rather than abandoning those for the unclear substitutes of "mission" and "participation." To cite one example, Constantine Campbell's work Paul and Union with Christ may bring us to a similarly embodied destination but on surer theological footing.

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## Hunsberger, George R. *The Story that Chooses Us: A Tapestry of Missional Vision*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. 160pp. $19.35.

George R. Hunsberger (b.1944), professor emeritus of missiology at Western Theological Seminary, has woven ten previously published essays into a "tapestry of missional vision" for The Gospel and Our Culture series. Hunsberger has contributed two other volumes in this series, which aims to foster what Leslie Newbigin terms the "missional encounter of the gospel with North American culture." These volumes include *Bearing the Witness of the Spirit: Leslie Newbigin's Theology of Cultural Plurality* (a revision of his Princeton dissertation), as well as a volume edited with Craig Van Gelder, *The Church between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America*.

Turning briefly to form before content, Hunsberger is to be commended for his effort to merge these essays using more than a preface. There are clear marks of internal coherence, including footnotes directing us to discussions in previous chapters and a thematic, rather than chronological, arrangement of his material. It is also notable that the tapestry he weaves from articles published between 1991 and 2006 does not appear strained by divergence or development. We are reaping here the harvest of a scholar personally invested in his subject matter and mature in his thinking.

Despite the fine effort at integration, however, these ten chapters contain the thematic overlap that is inevitable with a book of this type. Rather than present the content of each chapter, therefore, this review summarizes Hunsberger's project under themes that "gently recur and echo throughout" [ix]). Hunsberger identifies these themes himself by highlighting the commitment of The Gospel and Our Culture Network, of which he is the founding coordinator, to "the integral relationship between…cultural analysis, theological reflection, and congregational mission" (102). His book can be engaged under these three heads.

"Cultural analysis" for Hunsberger is a focused enterprise. He is not tracing the "Enlightenment-Modernity-Postmodernity" gamut, but investigating "the fundamental missiological challenge [for the church]…in view of that sociocultural heritage" (75). Standing on the shoulders of Leslie Newbigin, whose categories and priorities are regularly appropriated across the book, Hunsberger identifies three facets of this missiological challenge. First is the collapse of Christendom, so that the church no longer serves as an esteemed "cultural chaplain." Second is our saturation with the Enlightenment assumption that religious conviction cannot lay claim to truth in any factual, public sense. Third is a pragmatic confidence that truth can be measured by success.

The challenge occurs when the church either fails to recognize, or unthinkingly adopts, these cultural shifts. In the first category, the church in North America still defaults to the assumption that we speak from a position "over" culture rather than "with" it. The missiological implication of this failure to reckon with the collapse of Christendom is that we work from an "exodus" model of social engagement that hopes to reshape societal structures rather than living out of an "exilic" model where we offer ourselves, submitted first to the authority of an invisible kingdom, for the good of society (148).

In the second category, Hunsberger points to mission statements and popular modes of speaking to illustrate that the North American church "thinks about church the same way we think about everything else." Thus "the church" has grown distinct from "the congregation," for whom it exercises its primary role as provider of religious services. This corporate, disembodied mindset has led to the abandonment of theological thinking, which means we have lost the ability to justify ourselves as a distinct organization. What is needed, therefore, is not the methodological tweak we so often attempt, but a deep rethinking of the fundamental identity of the church.

Hunsberger's cultural analysis leads him to the conviction that we need a missiological agenda for the church in North America. Though it comes late in the book (p. 102-103), Hunsberger acknowledges that this way of talking runs the risk Stephen Neil has identified as, "if everything is mission, nothing is mission." His answer, which serves as the justification of his book and his work, is that our current lack of a "domestic, contextual missiology for our own North American setting" is a greater danger still (9). This conviction, turning on the issues of identity and integrity, draws deeply on the fund of his own theological reflection.

In terms of identity, Scripture presents us with a church that is missiological in its essence. It is "a body of people sent on mission," to use David Bosch's oft quoted phrase. The church is "spawned by the mission of God and gathered up into that mission" (47). From the missionary significance of our election (6) to the welcome and warning of our eschatology (159), the church is in the world for the sake of the world.

If the church is going to walk out this identity with integrity, therefore, its entire character must be shaped by this mission. In a wake-up call to a church that tends to compartmentalize mission as "over there," Hunsberger rejects the idea that missional character is received by boarding an airplane. If this leaving is to be genuinely missional, he insists, it must arise from a prior disposition that "takes leave of cultural loyalties alien to the gospel" and swears allegiance to Christ (104). The missiological agenda of the church at home is to cultivate this habit. "For us who are in the place from which so many cross-cultural missionaries emanate, our most fundamental calling is to live the same way in our own culture that we counsel others to live in theirs" (103).

If this book has a theological center of gravity, it is chapter 5, "Representing the Reign of God." Here Hunsberger takes up the task of definitions. Three are vital. First, the church is to be "apostolic" in the sense that the apostolic writings (Scripture) serve as its foundation and the apostolic task (re-presenting Christ) serves as its commission (48). On this note, Hunsberger devotes a separate chapter to an intriguing interpretation of the purpose of the Great Commission texts. He sees the pastoral purpose of Jesus' words not primarily to motivate a silent church to action (the "command-obey" model we often use) but to provide warrant and validation for the witness they were already engaged in, in the face of cultural protest (91).

If the church spreads the gospel out of its essence, and not primarily in obedience to a command, what is "the gospel"? In a significant move, Hunsberger reminds us that the gospel is not only "Jesus himself" but also includes what Jesus said. "Proclaiming a gospel about Christ that is not shaped by the gospel Jesus preached distorts the gospel" (53). The subject of Jesus' gospel preaching, as Hunsgerger takes it, is the "reign of God." In a third definition the reign of God is in short, to quote Romans 14:17, "justice, peace, and joy" through the New Covenant gift of the Holy Spirit. It is the way the world will be when God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. It is what God has

inaugurated through Christ, and what He continues to bring as the church receives it, enters it, and welcomes others to do the same.

Here the impulse of our essential identity has transitioned us outward from theological reflection into congregational mission. The church expresses its essence as a "sent community" as we are engaged by the gospel of God's reign, and as we engage our culture with this gospel. Here Hunsberger cautions us against assuming that "we sit on God's side" in the gospel/culture encounter (104). Following Newbigin, he adds a third pole. We are first encountered ourselves by the gospel, and then are able to encounter our culture with the same. This is the way not only to missional integrity, but also to the "challenging relevance" gospel ministry demands with (instead of "at") our culture.

The term Hunsberger prefers for the church's mission, in our home culture and any foreign culture, is "representation" of the reign of God. This representation has both a passive and an active edge. Passively, we are the sign and the foretaste of the kingdom. That is, we bear the shape of the gospel in such a way as to show our culture that life lived according to the pattern of commitment to Jesus is possible and relevant. In this way, the church becomes the "hermeneutic of the gospel," the only lens through which people can see and interpret what it is about and how it is embraced (99). Actively, the church is also the agent and instrument of the gospel. Hunsberger takes repeated umbrage, rightly in my view, at the language of the church "extending" or "building" the kingdom. Not only must the church and kingdom remain distinct (if inseparable), but the church's own encounter with the gospel of God's reign, which we have received, entered, and in which we serve, chastens us to speak (even of repentance and faith) with humility and welcome.

It is in his discussion of the gospel that Hunsberger is perhaps at his most provocative and most disappointing to Evangelical convictions. Of all his definitions, sin is noticeably absent. He seems to define sin inside the church as a wrong understanding of our identity, and outside the church as a lack of participating in the welcome God has extended. There is no talk of rebellion against a holy God worthy of eternal condemnation. This perhaps explains why there is also so little talk of "heralding" the gospel. Instead, the gospel is embodied and sinners are welcomed. His stress on speaking "with" rather than "at" our culture, and avoiding triumphalistic language is important. So too is his conviction that the gospel is a public truth for the whole world. But there is perhaps too much stress on cultural relevance and not enough space for the kind of prophetic relevance that would herald the King's gracious offer of amnesty. One reason for this shyness may be an over-appreciation for the situatedness of our knowledge and the perspectivalism of our language. His commendable attempt to avoid hubristic ways of knowing and to appropriate postmodern ways of speaking would benefit from a robust embrace of God's design for human language not only to point to the truth (who is Christ), but also to carry it. Andrew Walls and/or N.T. Wright would have provided him some useful conversation partners in this regard. His (chronologically) later articles

seem to grow less and less certain that humble dialogue does not exhaust the biblical options for a church on mission.

Overall, this book bears the marks of seasoned reflection and a refusal to think about significant challenges superficially. For this we should be grateful. There is much here to appreciate. And much that should challenge us to repent, and to learn.

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**Schreiner, Thomas R. *Commentary on Hebrews. Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation*. Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Reference, 2015. 539pp. $29.**

Schreiner begins his commentary by rehearsing the storyline of the Bible and contends that since the events of the gospel antedate the writing of the book of Hebrews they thus form the theological backdrop of the letter. He shows that Hebrews picks up key themes from the Bible's story line. After this he undertakes a verse-by-verse explication of the various literary units of the letter, prefacing each commentary section with a summation of the flow of the argument in each unit. The main point of the first four verses, says Schreiner, is that God has spoken definitively in His Son (p. 52). Schreiner argues that the author of Hebrews takes up this argument again in 1:5-14, but here, the author of Hebrews makes each argument by citing the Old Testament (p. 63). The central theme of 1:5-14 is the Son's superiority to angels (p. 63) and 1:5-14 forecasts the rest of the letter and may even form a bookend with 12:18-29 (p. 64). The reason for the masterful argument in chapter one is set forth in 2:1-4, namely, that the author warns the readers not to drift away from the message they received, as there is no escape for neglectors of such a great salvation (p. 78). According to Schreiner, God has given dominion over the coming world to humans and not to angels. But, Schreiner underlines, this subjection of the coming world to humans is only realized in Christ (2: 10-18; p. 94).

In Schreiner's view, 3:1-4:13 teaches that Jesus is superior to Moses and Joshua (p. 112). In 3:1-6, the author presents Jesus as one who was sent by God to accomplish the mission of cleansing his brothers and sisters from sin (hence the appellation high priest in 3:1) and He was faithful in this mission as Moses was in his. Jesus, however, deserves more honor because Moses is in the house and Jesus is over the house: Jesus is the builder of the house (p. 112-113). In 3:7-4:13, Schreiner argues, the author extends what he said in the previous unit by warning the readers that they must not harden their hearts as did the wilderness generation (p. 121). The readers must guard against having a sinful and unbelieving heart surface among them. For this reason, the addressees are called upon to encourage each other as long as it is called today (p. 125). Schreiner posits that the main point of

4:1-5 is that the readers should fear with a fear that motivates them to enter the rest of God (p. 133). In 4:6-13, the recipients of the letter are instructed to be diligent to enter God's rest so that they do not miss out by disobedience (p. 140).

According to Schreiner, 4:14-16 introduces the third major section that runs through 10:18 in which the author argues that the Melchizedekian priesthood of Jesus is better than the Levitical priesthood (p. 150). The titles; great high priest and Son of God glue 1:1-4:13 to 4:14-10:18. While 4:14-16 enjoined the believers to hold fast their confession and draw near to God to receive grace and mercy, 5:1-10 supplies the ground for that command, by arguing that the recipients have a better high priest, one who is appointed by God. In 5:11-6:20, the author interrupts the flow of his argument and issues a warning with four components to his readers: first he shames them (5:11-6:3), then he states the warning proper (6:4-8), after which he encourages them (6:9-12) and then assures them (6:13-20; p. 168).

In Schreiner's estimation, chapter 7 presents the superiority of the Melchizedekian priesthood over the levitical from various vantage points. 8:1-6 explores two realities: the relationship of Jesus' priesthood to the tabernacle and the new covenant. The author demonstrates that Jesus' priesthood establishes a better covenant, which is itself predicated on better promises and thus grants believers access to God's true sanctuary (p. 241, 246). 8:7-13 lays out the reason why the new covenant is better than the old. It does this by appealing to Jeremiah 31:31-34 (p. 248). 9:1-10:18 summons the addressees not to fall away because they have a better sacrifice (p. 257). The following unit (10:19-25) is shaped to direct the readers from the high priesthood of Jesus to faithful endurance (p. 313). Perseverance is absolutely crucial. If they turn away, there will be no forgiveness for them because only judgment is reserved for those who fail to persevere (10:26-31).

Chapter 11, Schreiner contends, is inserted into the exhortation section of the letter, not as an exhortation per se, but examples of saving faith that help reinforce the exhortation. Jesus is the ultimate exemplar of such persevering faith (12:1-3). The readers are called to endure as those who are being disciplined for the sake of their maturity and holiness (12:4-11). Schreiner further argues that the recipients are commanded to strengthen their weak hands, make straight paths for their feet and pursue sanctification so that they are not like Esau who didn't receive the reward (12:12-17). The author of Hebrews explains in 12:18-24 that the readers have such privileges that they must beware of refusing to heed the voice that came from heaven (12:25-29). Schreiner interprets this section as saying that a Kingdom is coming that cannot be shaken and the addressees (of Hebrews) will do well to diligently guard against facing the wrath of God. Chapter 13 further develops what was introduced in chapter 12. In other words (as Schreiner puts it), "the vital issue of worship or service that is pleasing to God, … is explicitly developed in 13:1-21." (p. 409).

At the close of the commentary, Schreiner examines theological themes in the book of Hebrews, which he judges to be key and central to the message of the book. The first central theme he handles

is God. Schreiner contends that Peeler's suggestion that "God's standing as Jesus' Father makes his status as Father of humanity a reality" is a fitting summary of the epistle's teaching on God. Next, Schreiner affirms that the humanity and divinity of Jesus are clearly central and major themes to the author (p. 441). Following this he deals with the priesthood of Jesus and Jesus' better sacrifice.

Schreiner moves on to deal with the theme of perfection and assurance. On this he argues that the theme of perfection in Hebrews has two foci, namely, "the perfection of Jesus and the perfection of human beings" (p. 466). He further argues that perfection in Hebrews is closely associated with the new covenant and assurance of salvation. On Jesus' resurrection and exaltation, Schreiner claims that contrary to the assessment of others, resurrection and exaltation play a major role in the letter. Regarding the new covenant, he submits that Jesus is better than the levitical priests because he inaugurates a better covenant (p. 474). Apropos of the Spirit, Schreiner notes that, though sparse, the references to the Spirit bespeak a vibrant view of the Spirit.

On the warnings and exhortations in Hebrews, Schreiner summarizes the four main views and argues that these warnings are addressed to Christians. The sin warned against is apostasy and the result of not heeding is loss of salvation. However, in consonance with the designation of his position (means of salvation view) he argues that the warnings are always effective, as the means by which those who are elected and chosen are kept. In his treatment of the theme of sojourners and exiles, Schreiner claims that the status of the recipients as sojourners dovetails with the dire warnings in the letter. Faith, obedience and the situation of the readers form the elements of another theme, which Schreiner discusses. Also, he argues that there is a clear presence of the theme of assurance as the author does not only warn his readers but emphasizes the assurance they have in Christ. The last but not least of the themes he deals with is the theme of future reward. He notes that future reward in Hebrews is married to the promise of salvation and that the author of Hebrews uses metaphors such as rest and a city to refer to future reward.

## Critique

One general remark that can be made about Schreiner's commentary is that he greatly succeeds in achieving his (and the series') goal of being deliberately oriented toward Christian proclamation. He is obviously "brief and nontechnical" but is not disconnected from scholarship on the book of Hebrews. He engages the text seriously and labors to give other interpreters a fair representation, making sure that he leaves no ambiguity about his own views.

Schreiner's commentary upholds the organic unity between the Old and New Testaments. He does well to draw the attention of his readers to the countless Old Testament allusions with which Hebrews abounds. His submission on Hebrews 2:16 and 18 is typical example of this. He argues that the author's use of specific Greek words in Hebrews 2:16 and 2:18 hearkens back to Isaiah 41:8-10 where Yahweh references the fact that He took Jacob from the ends of the earth and pledges to

help him. Summarily, Schreiner subtly makes the case that the OT, rather than the Greco-Roman background, is the dominant theological and literary matrix from which Hebrews emerged.

Another admirable trait of Schreiner's commentary is that he is not in a hurry to make biblical theological connections. He practices the kind of biblical theology that meticulously attends to the exegetical features of the text before showing his readers how the biblical theological themes he proposes emerge from the text of Hebrews. For example in Schreiner's discussion of the superiority of Jesus over Moses, he makes sure to point out that when the author of Hebrews refers to Moses as a servant, he is using an exalted title as Numbers 12 bears out. Therefore, Hebrews does not argue for the superiority of the new covenant by denigrating Moses as the mediator of the old covenant. On the contrary he is praised as God's servant. Yet despite Moses' greatness we look forward to something better.

It should be pointed out that for those with an interest in technical discussions on text critical questions concerning specific texts in Hebrews and extensive discussions on how the cultural setting of the letter could be a factor in the interpretation of various sections of the letter, Schreiner's commentary is not the place to go. He keeps such discussions at the barest minimum. Another thing to note is that Schreiner's argument concerning the Greek word rendered covenant in 9:16-17 by some translators is liable to being controverted by interpreters of the opposite persuasion. Even though Schreiner mounts a significant case for the view that in 9:16-17 the word should be translated will or testament and not covenant, one wonders if his contention fails to answer all the cogent arguments that other scholars have presented for the alternative view.[1] All in all, Schreiner's commentary on Hebrews helps its readers to read the epistle with their eyes on the whole Bible.

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[1] Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Mich. : Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 329-32. Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews, The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2012), 405-7 etc.

**Westerholm, Stephen, *Justification Reconsidered: Rethinking a Pauline Theme*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013. viii + 104 pp. $15.00.**

Stephen Westerholm's Justification Reconsidered is an accessible 100-page[1] overview of the complex and controversial debate surrounding Paul's use of the term "justification." The author faithfully presents the primary assertions of "New Perspective" scholars (one per chapter) and graciously provides credible rebuttals to their reconstructions while refraining from pointless ad homonym attacks.

Chapter one engages Krister Stendhal's assertion that "modern theologians"—like Augustine and Luther—have distorted Paul by lifting him out of his first-century context by linking his teaching on justification to their need for introspective assurances of God's grace. Stendahl contends Paul's central concern was, "How am I, Paul, to understand the place of in the plan of God of my mission to the Gentiles, and how am I to defend the rights of the gentiles to participate in [his] promises" (p.2).

While Westerholm acknowledges that Stendhal's proposition "contains a grain of truth" (p.3), he demonstrates the so-called modern question "How am I to find a gracious God?" was, indeed, an ancient question by surveying Paul's epistles. He contends that Stendahl is the one who modernized Paul, because Paul's own words demonstrate that a personal response to the gospel is the only thing that distinguishes those bound for salvation and those doomed to wrath. In the end Westerholm declares, "to be found righteous was the goal, and two paths to its attainment came into question,: that based on his own compliance with the law, and that received as a gift from God through faith in Christ, he opted for the later" (p.22).

In chapter two Westerholm addresses E.P. Sanders's contention that that modern understandings of justification are incorrect because Judaism didn't teach a works-based path to salvation. Rather, Judaism celebrated God's election of Israel as his covenant people and emphasized this election as an act of divine grace (p. 25). If this proposition is true––as Sanders and other "New Perspective" reconstructionists reason—"legalism can hardly have been 'what Paul found wrong in Judaism;" his teaching on justification must have a different target" (p.26).

Westerholm's close reading of Sander's work is manifest in his evaluation of Sander's claims. "We are indebted to Sanders for the reminder that Judaism saw the importance of divine grace, but Sanders himself gives us reason to doubt that it assigned the same importance to grace as the apostle" (p.31). This distinction is anchored in two observations. First, Westerholm also points out

[1] Books on this topic are normally 300+ pages. (Cf. N. T. Wright, *Justification: God's Plan & Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2009); N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013) 279 pages; N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God/ Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol.1* (1st North American edition.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992) 535 pages; D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001) 619 pages; D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Paradoxes of Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004) 560 pages.

that even according to Sanders, some rabbinic texts teach "God 'chose Israel because of some merit found either in the patriarchs or in the exodus generation or on the condition of future obedience'" (p.31). Second, is also Sanders own admission noting, "[the] concept of original or even universal sin is missing from most forms of Judaism" (p.33). This admission, by Sanders, demonstrates marked discontinuity between the rabbinic and Pauline understandings of sin because Paul understood all humans to be enemies of God, slaves of sin whose minds are hostile toward God, and individuals who are utterly incapable of pleasing him (p.32).

Chapter three addresses Heikki Räisänen's contention that Paul's teaching on sin is either incoherent or that there is a difference between what he spontaneously thought and his dogmatic convictions (p.42). This belief flows from the fact that Paul indicates unregenerate humans "both can, and cannot, do what is good" (35.6). Westerholm engages this apparent incongruency on two fronts, one theological surveying the works of Augustine, Calvin, and Luther and the other exegetical examining Paul's epistles. Regarding the later he demonstrates Paul's consistent teaching that the fundamental nature of sin is the failure to honor God and that all other sins listed simply serve as examples of those things to which "God gave [people] up" because they did not "give him thanks" or "see fit to recognize him as God" (p.48). This concept is further clarified by Paul in Romans 14:23, "What ever is not based on faith is sin" (p.49). Through his interaction with both textual and theological resources Westerholm demonstrates that Paul's understanding of sin is truly coherent, in that the underlying attitude—faith—of the individual determines the moral value of any activity that, considered apart from the attitude, might appear virtuous and praiseworthy (p.49).

Chapter four engages N.T. Wright's proposition that justification is the judicial declaration that believers are members of God's covenant community, which means that biblical references to an individual's "righteousness" are indications of their membership among the people of God not divine declarations of their moral quality (p.57). This definition flows from Wright's redemptive—historical—paradigm that asserts God's covenant with Abraham assigned the task of undoing Adam's sin to the Jewish nation (p.53).

Westerholm responds with a simple question "Does Wrights understanding of righteousness corresponds with Paul's" (p.59)? To answer this question he surveys the relevant scriptures that shed light on the "essential vocabulary" from which Paul built his doctrine of justification (p.59). His findings indicate:

1. The terms righteous/righteousness indicate an individual's blamelessness or uprightness (p.59).
2. Righteous behavior refers to what is deemed morally appropriate (p. 60).
3. "The righteous" are those who do what they ought to do (i.e., righteousness) (p.61).

In light of these findings Westerholm concludes, "Paul certainly had striking things to say about 'righteousness' but he used the language of 'righteousness' as [other Biblical authors] used it, 'to refer to what one ought to do'" (p.65). Furthermore, he notes that the apostle applied this righteousness terminology to the moral behavior of all human beings, regardless of their covenantal status (p.66). Therefore, Westerholm contends that Paul never intended to indicate or bestow covenant membership with the term righteous.

In chapter five, Westerholm interacts with James Dunn's contention that first-century Jews and Paul's opponents in Galatia were not legalists, in that they believed justification was earned through good works (p.76). Rather, the central issue was "the works of the law" as "boundary markers" that distinguished Jews from Gentiles. Therefore, Paul's concern is that Gentiles should not be circumcised, since the true "boundary marker" that distinguishes the people of God is faith in Jesus Christ (p.76).

Westerholm provides an excellent exegetical response to Dunn's hypothesis noting that Paul was not attacking Jewish ("legalistic") distortions of the law, because the law—by its very nature and according to its divine intention—cannot lead to righteousness (p.79). Paul's point in Galatians is that the law itself, as given by God, cannot be set aside by or combined with God's promise to Abraham as a condition of divine blessing. First, the law curses those who transgress its commands. Second,it the law designed to serve as a guardian between the time of Sinai and the coming of Christ. Therefore, believers are not redeemed from legalistic distortions of the law but from the law itself, its yoke, and its curse (p.79-80).

Justification Reconsidered is a faithful overview of the arguments surrounding the "New Perspective." While Westerholm has written a more extensive treatment of this topic, this book is ideally suited to provide the busy pastor or college student with a concise introduction to the primary tenants of "New Perspective" theology.

The greatest strength of this book is its concise rebuttal of the "New Perspective" itself. Time after time this reviewer was encouraged to find clear answers to hard questions that were grounded in good reading and solid exegesis. Stendhal's claim that modern scholars misrepresent Paul's primary concerns (p.2-6) is addressed by surveying Paul's soteriological message throughout his epistles, noting his consistent message of impending doom (p.5.8). Sander's proposal that Jews didn't pursue works based righteousness but rather lived in light of divine grace (p.25) is demonstrated to be faulty on the basis of Sanders own admissions (p.29-33). Even N.T. Write's proposal that justification is left wanting after Westerholm's careful exegesis (p.65-69; 74). Westerholm's consistent thoughtful exegesis is an exemplary model for engaging difficult topics like this because it demonstrates the process of allowing scripture to interpret scripture—even in the face of "well-reasoned" and researched scholarly proposals.

In my opinion this book has two significant weaknesses. First is the author's cumbersome writing style. I often found myself re-reading a sentence or paragraph multiple times to understand the author's point. One example can be found on page 65, "Paul certainly had striking things to say about 'righteousness,' but he used the language of 'righteousness' as others used it, to refer to what one ought do—and (as in the Old Testament) even to things that are what they ought to be; covenant status was not the issue." In my opinion this first weakness moderately undermines the books ability to serve the audience it is so qualified to reach. The second issue is the author's treatment of "Justification theory" (chapter 6) in merely six pages. His argument was difficult to follow and the chapter seemed like it was hastily added to the end of the book. I wish he had provided a more thorough treatment of this topic or a chapter specifically devoted to imputation.

I appreciate the dedication and personal sacrifice[2] it takes to engage such an immense topic in the confines of a 100-page book. Furthermore, I appreciate Westerholm's honest engagement and thoroughly Biblical treatment of this contentious topic. I recommend this book to anyone wrestling through the propositions of "New Perspective" proponents.

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[2] Page 87, n1, the reader should, "[appreciate those] who, for the benefit of others, and at the cost of a significant segment of their own academic lives, have reviewed an idiosyncratic, 1200-page book."

# ABSTRACTS

## *Ordinary Theology of Young Protestants in Serbia—An Ordinary Study*

Ivan Kalaric, MET. Tyndale Theological Seminary (2015)

This thesis follows the guidelines of fundamental practical theology, and goes from practice to theory and back again. The thesis discovers, examines and evaluates patterns and dynamics of a Christian community in Serbia, namely the SJUJ Youth Movement. In doing so, it seeks to investigate the *ordinary theology of the movement*, to delimit its practical implications and to derive some pastoral suggestions for that particular context. Using a qualitative study as the theoretical framework, the researcher, as practical theologian makes use of other frameworks and methods, such as ethnography, participant observations, ordinary theology, and method of mutual critical conversation. Thus this thesis argues for a genuine indigenized, reflexive theology and worship, with respect for the context and culture.

The first and the second chapter of the thesis belong to the descriptive part of the thesis. The first chapter follows the historical development of the movement, discovering its patterns and dynamics through participatory observations and ethnographic research. The second chapter presents the ordinary theology of the participants in the movement. This section ends with six questions that will further develop into six interpretive sections of mutual critical conversation between the academic and ordinary theology.

The third and the fourth chapter belong to the interpretive and thus practical section, as the process of mutual critical conversation. This theological conversation was done from three distinctive perspectives affirmative, persuasive and informative. Such conversations bring forth new and fresh concepts and definitions, indigenous and specific for the context, that allow the researches to argue for a so called indigenized *reflexive theology*, which in Evangelical circles of Serbia should be socially responsive, culturally relevant and denominationally irresolute.

## *Forgetting the Incarnation: A Critical Examination of the Incarnational Approach to Missions in the Netherlands*

Maurits Luth, MET. Tyndale Theological Seminary (2015)

Secularism in Western Europe, and The Netherlands specifically, shows the need and the challenge for proper contextualization of the Gospel message. A justifiable biblical foundation for each specific kind of contextualization ought to be a main concern for evangelicals. Many have found

the incarnation of Jesus Christ to be an inspiring foundation for their way of doing ministry. In the context of Western Europe and The Netherlands this has been the case for the creative church planting movement "Urban Expression," as represented by Stuart Murray. In this thesis we give an extensive amount of attention to the context and content of several Scripture passages (like John 20:21; Philippians 2:5-8 and the notion of the Church as the "Body of Christ") that could possibly support their positive view on and defense of the incarnational approach to mission. Treating these passages exegetically, however, make us argue that Scripture does not support such a thing as undertaking mission work "incarnationally." Moreover, the incarnational approach to mission is found to be very precarious, especially because of its dangerous implications concerning systematic theology and praxis. Therefore, two alternatives to the incarnational model are considered and discussed; representationalism and the model of union with Christ. All of the above leads us to the conclusion that if one desires to live and work in a way that is currently described as "incarnational," paradoxically, one is very likely to forget and to devalue the unique incarnation of Jesus Christ.

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### *Ending the Cycle of Religious Violence In Nigeria Through An Application Of New Testament Ethics of Nonviolence And Peacemaking*

Adeshina Jayeola, MET. Tyndale Theological Seminary (2015)

The challenge of religious pluralism in Nigeria has always been the cause of an incessant cycle of religious violence between Muslims and Christians, especially in the northern states. As a result of this, there has been continuous mutual distrust and a subterranean struggle for dominance over one another. However, since 2009, this conflict assumed a different dimension due to the insurgency of the Islamic sect known as Boko Haram. The sect's activities have led to a large scale destruction of properties, suicide bombings, kidnappings, and the eventual formation of an Islamic caliphate in the northeast of Nigeria. Christians and their churches became part of their targets. In response to these attacks, Christians in northern Nigeria and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) have threatened to defend themselves if the government fails to stop these attacks.

The task of this thesis is to show that as regrettable as the Boko Haram insurgency is, it is rather a shoot of a deeper problem whose root lies in the recurring cycle of hostilities between the two competing religions. It argues that ending the insurgency of Boko Haram may not necessarily address the perennial religious conflict. Against this backdrop, it therefore proposes a non-retaliatory response to the attacks of Boko Haram. Rather, CAN should see the insurgency as an opportunity to lead the nation into a new proactive, broad-based, all-encompassing, and result-oriented dialogue, in order to bring to an end this cycle of religious violence.

To do this, the New Testament teachings on nonviolence vis-à-vis proactive peacemaking were adopted as a theological framework. In addition, qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (survey) methodologies were used to collect data through representative sampling of selected focus groups and a randomly selected population comprising adherents of both religions. This is to determine the general perception on the true identity of Boko Haram, and to examine the applicability and workability of the biblical principle of peacemaking in order to end the cycle of religious violence in Nigeria.

The results indicate that there is a consensus for an imperative need for dialogue between Muslims and Christians in order to deal with the root cause of Boko Haram. Although there are a few different opinions of the true identity of the sect, results indicate that its members are viewed as terrorists operating under the guise of Islam. Because this research employed the New Testament ethics of nonviolence and peacemaking, it particularly recommends that Christians should rekindle the light of the gospel which embodies proclamation, peacemaking through genuine dialogue, reconciliation, and absolute trust in God's unfailing justice. To achieve this, they should avoid rhetorical statements that portray them as "Christian militants" fighting for the preservation of Christianity as a religion because of the alleged Islamization agenda by Muslims.