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Nowhere was this more pronounced than in the beginning steps of persons just coming to Christ. These spiritual babes were immediately surrounded with love, and made to feel a part of the family circle. No one could feel left out. Here was a community in which they all shared the bonds of an everlasting covenant. p. 28

APPLICATION TODAY

The implications of this upon the life of the church today dare not be missed. In our stress upon carefully ordered public services and organized campaigns, we may overlook the basic apostolic ingredient of fellowship. Times have become more complex with the passing centuries, to be sure, but the principle of association never changes.

However structured, we must relate closely with each other. There are ways this can be encouraged in the regular worship services, even in formal sacramental settings. Auxiliary meetings offer other opportunities for fellowship, especially in small group gatherings. In this connection, the Sunday School provides many options. Emphasis must be given to the home and family in the programme. And through it all, personal relationships need continual cultivation in the ongoing discipling process.

This is crucial in helping new believers get established. In their first steps of faith, they are particularly vulnerable to doubts and temptations, and need someone with them to give counsel. How fortunate it is when this person can be a more mature Christian with whom they already have some identity. That the church has often neglected such guardian care explains why so many converts fall away, or at least, never seem to grow in the likeness of their Lord.

Maturing in Christ takes time. There is no way that children can be raised in a hurry. To try to get it over quickly can lead only to frustration. The hectic way that churches have tried to force this into a few weeks of confirmation classes, if at all, is entirely inadequate. Disciples must have devoted Christian friends to follow, and the only way this can be facilitated is by being together over a period of time.

The church in Acts can teach us much about living as the body of Christ. If we would learn by their example, the Great Commission can become for us, as it was with them, the pattern of the church.

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Evangelicals and Biblical Inspiration

Kern R. Trembath

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Dr. Trembath has recently completed a doctoral dissertation on 'Evangelical theories on Biblical Inspiration: a review and proposal' at the University of Notre Dame and the following is his summary of the research: Approving the tripartite conception of inspiration (involving God as the initiative agent, the Bible as the inspired agent and believers as the

medium through which the inspiration is communicated). Trembath demonstrates the crucial role the church, the community of believers, has to play in the Bible's authority and interpretation. To quote him: 'The distinctiveness of biblical inspiration is thus not formal as the tradition claims by its bipartite analysis but by its rather material … distinctiveness (as) seen in the church's claim that its salvation, its being located in a process of transcendence is both initiated by God and congruent with the experience of salvation enjoyed by the apostolic generations of Christians to which we have access in the Bible.'
Editor

The past decade has seen an energetic resurgence of books and articles by Protestants on the subject of biblical inspiration.[1] For many prior decades, the topic lay dormant, a condition fostered by uncritical repetition from church 'conservatives' and outright dismissal from church 'liberals'. The current renascence of interest in inspiration may thus be seen as a judgment by both wings of the church upon their former ways of treating the subject, one which, like all honest reappraisals, carries with it the potential for significant advances in theological understanding. As such, it is reason enough to justify the effort. p. 30

Another and perhaps more positive reason exists, though, as to why this subject deserves greater attention within the church. James T. Burtchaell notes in his *Catholic Theories of Biblical Inspiration Since* 1810 that 'the controversy over biblical inspiration is an excellent test case whereby to diagnose many of the ills that have weakened Catholic theology, especially since the Reformation. The real issue here is what confounds scholars in so many areas; the manner in which individual human events are jointly caused by both God and man.'[2] He then goes on to suggest that 'today the most easily examined instance of divine-human responsibility is the Bible.' This diagnosis and suggested therapy is one with which we heartily agree, not just for Catholics, but for Orthodox and Protestants as well. The topic of inspiration gives theologians the opportunity to conjoin many discrete fields of inquiry: theology proper (the doctrine of God), theological anthropology (Christian reflection upon human beings), scriptural exegesis (the art of text criticism and hermeneutics), and ecclesiology (the doctrine of the church). Inspiration thus calls for specialists in each of these fields to expand their horizons to include the others, for at this conjunction as at few others, near sightedness guarantees superficiality.

We believe that it is the shift in emphasis from seeing the focus of inspiration as the miraculous production of words on a page to seeing it as the best test case for 'joint causation' which has in many circles rejuvenated the theology of biblical inspiration. To use a popular metaphor, the shift has opened up the possibility of addressing inspiration

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[1] For a representative sampling, the reader is directed to William J. Abraham, *The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture* (Oxford, 1981); Paul Achtemeier, *The Inspiration of Scripture; Problems and Proposals* (Philadelphia, 1980); James Bart, *Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia, 1977) and his subsequent *The Scope and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia, 1980); Robert K. Johnston, *Evangelicals At An Impasse* (Atlanta, 1979), esp. Ch. 2 and the extensive notes on pp. 160–164; l. Howard Marshall, *Biblical Inspiration* (Grand Rapids, 1982); Jack Rogers and Donald McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible* (San Francisco, 1979) and a criticism of Rogers and McKim by John D. Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal* (Grand Rapids, 1982). Two Catholic analyses of notes are James T. Burtchaell, *Catholic Theories of Biblical Inspiration Since 1810* (see below, note 2), and Thomas J. Hoffman, 'inspiration, Normativeness, Canonicity, and the Unique Sacred Character of the Bible,' *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 44, 1982, 447–469.

[2] Cambridge, 1969, 279f.

'from below' rather than 'from above'.[3] That is, it is now seen to be useful to begin by analyzing the reception of inspiration within the Christianity community, and then proceed to reflect upon what must be true of the Bible itself, and of God, in order to acount for that reception. We believe that a helpful way of rethinking the issue has been to analyze the concept of inspiration *per se*, and then modify that concept in ways necessary to reflect the religious particularities of *biblical* inspiration. William J. Abraham exhibits such an approach in his *The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture*,[4] an approach which we shall first inspect and then employ. p. 31

Abraham draws our attention to the tripartite structure of the concept of inspiration.[5] In any act of inspiration, he says, there are three discrete categories or aspects: the inspiring agent, the inspired agent, and the medium or means through which the inspiration is communicated. Each of these categories in principle may have many members, but still they remain the categories within which all of those members will fall. When considering aesthetic inspiration, for example, the members of the three categories are 'the artists,' 'the audience,' and 'the work of art' such as a painting. We will refer to these categories as the initiating agent, the receiving agent, and the means.

This insight into the nature of inspiration is important because traditionally the concept of biblical inspiration has been conceived of as bipartite rather than tripartite. The two categories were God as the initiating agent and the Bible as the receiving agent. The latter category was variously described as the words on the page, the author or authorial community, the content or message, and so on, but all of these alternatives were only various ways of referring to the specialness of the process which extends directly from God to the biblical words. Thus they altogether ignored what we have called the third category of the receiving agent.[6]

Inspection of the concept of inspiration, notes Abraham, leads to the conclusion that one is not justified in claiming that *inspiration* is present if inspired or receiving agents cannot be identified. That is, while inspiration moves temporally from initiating agent through means to receiving agent, critically it is moot to begin to reflect upon inspiration in any category other than the final one since in the p. 32 absence of inspired agents there is no reason to conside r either inspiring agents or inspired means. If no audience exists which can claim to be inspired by (means of) a certain painting, then it is useless to discuss the 'inspiration' of that painting and even more useless to discuss its artist as an inspiring artist. With inspiration as with so many other areas of intellectual reflection, the mind

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[3] Thus the present 'new look' is in line with similar methodological shifts in other theological locales. For a helpful chart summarizing the shift in christology, see *Horizons* 1 (1974), p. 38. Two very good examples of the same reorientation in theology proper are Victor Preller, *Divine Science and the Science of God* (Princeton, 1967), esp. Ch. 4, and David Burrell, *Aquinas* (Notre Dame, 1979).

[4] Oxford, 1981. Many will note the resonance of this method with that of Aquinas, who in the *Summa Theologiae* 1.3. Introduction says: 'The ways in which God does not exist will become apparent if we rule out from him everything inappropriate, such as compositeness, change and the like.' In an unpublished review of Achtemeier's previously-mentioned *The Inspiration of Scripture*, Abraham writes with respect to the divine activity in inspiration: 'At this point there is no alternative, in my mind, to going back and covering the ground so marvellously opened up by Aquinas and his doctrine of analogy …'

[5] This may be found in Ch. 3.

[6] Abraham notes that the traditional bipartite conception of biblical inspiration characteristically takes the mode of divine inspiration as 'speaking,' with the normative illustration of such inspiration being the Old Testament prophet's 'Thus saith the Lord.' But the mode of speaking precisely obscures what is at the heart of the concept of inspiration, which is the indirectness or mediation by which the initiating agent communicates with the receiving agent. He therefore suggests that the model of the prophet not be used to illustrate biblical inspiration, a suggestion with which we entirely agree.

facilitates understanding by reversing what occurs in the external world and considering the 'latest' events first. Here, such a procedure brings to light the fact that analysis of the concept of inspiration begins by considering those who claim to be inspired. Thus we see that the approach which appears most promising in accounting for biblical inspiration is that which echoes Aristotle's 'final causality'; the concept of inspiration is best understood beginning with the inspired agents.

We shall now modify the general concern of inspiration in a way that we believe does justice to the particularities of biblical inspiration. First we shall discuss such inspiration in terms of what it accomplishes, and shall claim that the product of inspiration is better seen as salvation than as the miraculous production of words upon a page. Then, in line with our methodological orientation, we shall track the 'movement' of salvation within the three categories of inspiration from receiving agent through means to initiating agent.[7]

Abraham's analysis of inspiration reminds us that inspiration is a mediated enhancement of one agent by another. That is, to be inspired means that one person or group has been positively enhanced by another person or group, not directly but rather through some form of means. Although the great majority of the Christian tradition has understood biblical inspiration as a property of the words of the Bible,[8] we may now see that this understanding is faulty in that words are not personal agents at all and thus cannot be said to 'receive' enhancement in any relevant sense. The property or concept of enhancement is one which attaches to persons, not to words. True enough, it is often said that one set of words used to explain a given matter is 'enriched' or 'enhanced' as over against a second set, but we believe that this is p. 33 merely an ellipsis for saying that our understanding of the matter was facilitated more by the first set than by the second. Words are words; their meaning and use is 'enhanced' only if our understanding of the world is enhanced by them.

We would propose this as the conceptual explanation for the tremendous confusion as to precisely *which* 'word' it is that is said to receive inspiration and thus be inspired. The ambiguity present within the Christian tradition with respect to identifying 'the inspired word' is due, we suggest, to designating the wrong aspect as the receiver of inspiration. When separated from the human mind, words are merely ink molecules on a page, and strictly speaking can no more 'receive' inspiration than can the oil molecules with which an artist covers a canvas. It is more in line with the concept of inspiration to see human beings as the receivers, with God as initiator and the words of the Bible as means. To be 'biblically inspired' would thus mean that persons receive enhancement by God through the Bible.

We would claim that 'salvation' is the most traditional and the clearest way to refer to the enhancement which believers receive from God through the Bible. That is, the only enhancement universally present within the church over time is salvation initiated by the Father of Jesus, mediated through the Bible, and received by the church as the community of believers. Although there are many ways to think of salvation, we would argue in this

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[7] We take this way of breaking down the concept of inspiration to be more helpful than Achtemeier's three categories of 'tradition', situation and respondent' (*op. cit.*, 124–134). This is not only because his categorization leaves no obvious place for God, but in addition because for him 'the respondent' is the authorial community responsible for the final redaction of a biblical work, rather than the present Christian community. Thus, at root his proposal is bipartite; is is but another way to discuss the specialness of the production of the words of the Bible rather than the specialness of its product within the Christian community.

[8] Especially the property of inerrancy or complete truthfulness.

context that it be taken in its broadest possible sense of health, peace and fullness of life.[9] To say that salvation is the product or effect of biblical inspiration is thus at root a confession that God is ultimately responsible for initiating salvation within the church, and that the primary means used to mediate that salvation is the Bible. Stated the other way around, the confession of the Bible as inspired is an admission of the community which thus confesses it that it is incapable of initiating its own conditions of health and fullness of life. The salvation which it both enjoys and proclaims, therefore, it confesses as a gift from God mediated through the Bible.

Thus far we have considered the claim that reflection upon the concept of inspiration invites us to reconstrue the notion of biblical inspiration in a way that first considers how the receiving (or believing) community has been enhanced. We have proposed that 'salvation' is both the broadest and the most useful term the church has to describe its enhancement from God. Thus, claims concerning biblical inspiration are primarily claims to be saved in ways that correspond to the p. 34 ways that believing communities in the Bible were saved. Only secondarily is 'biblical inspiration' an assertion about qualities of the Bible itself.

We may now move on to discuss the second element of the concept of inspiration, the means or medium through which the initiating agent enhances the lives of the receiving agent. For Christians this element is the Bible received and accepted as Scripture. Here we shall build upon a technical distinction to help make the point once again that the presence of salvation within the believing community is what is of primary significance to the notion of biblical inspiration.

Let us distinguish between 'Bible' and 'Scripture,' with the first referring to the collection of books called by that name and the second referring to the way that the church receives those books, i.e., as religiously foundational and normative.[10] With this distinction in mind, we may now note that only Christians call the Bible 'Scripture'. They do this because the Bible for them is, in addition to being a collection of books, an authoritative collection of books, whose authority is ultimately seen as coming from God. However this 'coming from God' is accounted for, for Christians the Bible is God's Word.

The point we wish to make here is that it is only that community which is saved which calls the Bible 'Scripture'. Thus the presence or absence of salvation is the criterion which differentiates between reading the book as Scripture and reading it only as Bible. (To say the same thing the other way around, believers and non-believers read the Bible differently, and that difference is accounted for by whether or not p. 35 salvation is present within them. This echoes Wittgenstein's comment that a happy person and a sad

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[9] See *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 'eirene' (ll, 400–420) and 'sozo etc.' (VII, 965–1024).

[10] For this way of defining 'scripture,' see James D. G. Dunn's *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (Philadelphia, 1977), 81. Although he does not further define 'foundational and normative,' we may by saying that what is foundational is what was constitutively significant to the earliest Christian communities, which we know as constitutively significant by virtue of its presence in New Testament books. What is normative is that which has (trans)formed the character of the Christian community over history, and which is also that which the church expects to guide it in the future. Both of these poles, the chronological and the prescriptive, must be present in order for a work to be scripture. This allows us to account for why a work such as *Imitation of Christ* has had great normative significance in the church but would never become canonical scripture; it can claim to be normative but not foundational. It must be admitted that this definition does not help us to see why works such as 2 Peter and Jude are a part of Christian scripture; they are foundational but have hardly been normative or influential in the church over history. Like James for Luther, they are 'strawy epistles.' Probably the best we can say is that the church has chosen to err on the side of safety; it officially includes these books because of their antiquity but rarely uses them normatively or authoritatively. For a similar distinction between Bible and Scripture, see Leander Keck, *Taking the Bible Seriously* (Nashville, 1979).

person walking together on the sidewalk are in two entirely different worlds.) This allows us to see once again the centrality of salvation to the notion of biblical inspiration. What God inspires through the Bible is salvation, and it is only those in whom salvation has been inspired who have any reason to refer to the Bible itself as inspired. What they mean when they say 'the Bible is inspired' is that the Bible serves as the ultimate means through which they have received, and continue to receive, salvation from God. As we noted earlier, for Christians to say that the Bible is inspired is an elliptical way of saying that it is the means of the divine salvation which they possess and enjoy. For all others persons or communities the question is moot, as we saw with respect to aesthetic inspiration.

The second point to be made with respect to the middle component of the concept of inspiration is that to say that God inspired salvation through the Bible means that present communities of believers understand salvation in ways that are based upon, and can demonstrate continuity with, the ways that New Testament communities of believers understood salvation. In the broadest legitimate terms, therefore, 'salvation' is fullness of life from God through Christ. Again, we may take a clue here from James Dunn, who shows that the only belief which all first century Christian communities held in common was that the Jesus of history was, and is, the risen and exalted Lord.[11] In the present day we do not have any independent access to the experience of salvation within these earliest communities, of course, but we do have access to some of their reflections upon it: the New Testament. To put the matter somewhat oddly, therefore, the only enhancement which can claim to be biblically inspired today is that which is consonant with the ways that the earliest communities of Christians used to write about their salvation in Christ. For communities today which confess Jesus as Saviour and thus see the Bible as Scripture, the Bible is inspired precisely because it has served as the vehicle through which God has inspired Christian salvation within them. p. 36

We may now proceed to consider the final category of the concept of inspiration, the initiating agent. This agent is God, and thus we need to ask how to think of God in ways which are consonant with the 'movement' of salvation in inspiration. Here we would cast our lot with the so-called transcendental subjectivists, whose proposals we shall outline below.

Transcendental subjectivism is an approach to the doctrine of God which commends critical reflection upon the human subject as the clearest avenue to understanding the nature of God.[12] That is, instead of beginning with God, who the Christian tradition has

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[11] To be more precise, Dunn showed that a Christian confession concerning Jesus must identify the historical person and the present exalted person in ways that are appropriate to the particular community confessing faith in him. For some in the first century, that appropriate way was Messiah, for others it was Son of God, Lord, Savior, and so on. Regardless of the term used, though, a confession was (and is) Christian only if it identifies the historical and exalted persons in ways that appropriately reflect and capture the salvation experienced by the community.

[12] We scarcely wish to imply that 'transcendental subjectivism' is monolithically able to be characterized, nor that all proponents of it agree in all ways of construing it. Rather, our intention here is to indicate the general shape of this approach, especially with respect to its implications for the concept of inspiration. For those who wish to explore this approach as represented by Karl Rahner, the best place to begin is his *Foundations of Christian Thought: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (New York, 1978). Two very helpful secondary works on Rahner are Karl-Heinz Weger, *Karl Rahner: An Introduction to His Theology* (New York, 1980) and Leo O'Donovan, ed., *A World of Grace: An Introduction to the Themes and Foundations of Karl Rahner's Theology* (New York, 1980). The beginner will be aided in coming to grips with Rahner's methodology by reading Francis P. Fiorenza's 'Introduction' in Rahner, *Spirit in the World* (New York, 1968), xix–xlv, Gerald A. McCool's 'Introduction' in his *A Rahner Reader* (New York, 1975), xiii–xxviii, and Preller, *op. cit.*, (n. 3). See also the author's dissertation, *Evangelical Theories of Biblical Inspiration: A Review and Proposal*, University of Notre Dame, 1984, Ch. 5.

insisted is incomprehensible and of whom we thus know relatively little, this approach begins with human beings (of whom we know a great deal more) as the receivers of divine acts and intentions.[13] Critical reflection upon anthropology provides greater possibilities for discovering what God is like, nor *per se*, as the tradition attempted to articulate, but rather as the one whose character accounts for and thus corresponds, to what believers have received from him, namely, salvation through Christ.

Transcendental subjectivism seeks to account for how God interacts or co-acts with all human acts in such a way that humans are not denied primary responsibility for them, and God is not made into another mere actor in the world. These two erroneous alternatives are the Scylla and Charybdis of traditional accounts of the nature of God, and may be seen to account for hyper-Calvinistic double predestination on the one hand and for most forms of fundamentalism on the p. 37 other. We shall attempt to summarize transcendentalism as an approach which avoids both of these false views. We shall do so by reflecting on a very characteristic human action, that of asking and answering questions.

Reflection upon the phenomenon of asking questions leads to the observation that questions reveal the self-recognized limitations of the questioner. Questions by definition intend to draw the questioner beyond present limitations into territory not bounded by the finitude which made the question appropriate in the first place. Additionally, while it is surely true that 'all questions contain the seeds of their own answers,' we may also note that the *characteristic* activity of questioning implies that humans are characteristically open to being drawn beyond now-present boundaries. Thus, to use somewhat technical language, the condition of the possibility of asking questions is self-recognized finitude *and* genuine openness to receiving answers to those questions. Apart from these two fundamental conditions, there could be no phenomenon of questioning as we know it.

The 'transcendentalist' aspect of this approach intends to reflect this relatively straightforward facet of human existence; human existence is both bounded and open. In principle it is never more the one than the other, although in fact many persons cease asking questions and thereby signal that they have accepted their present boundaries and are no longer open to change. For those who do not accept such boundaries, though, their finitude is transcended by minute increments each time a question is answered and a particular boundary is thus overcome. Although this is referred to as self-transcendence, it is not a transcendence of the self *by* the self, and so the issue we now need to address is how this is informative to a doctrine of God. How does God fit into this relatively tame process of self-transcendence?

Transcendental subjectivism suggests that the participation or co-activity of God in the process of human self-transcendence is best seen at the point where a question is answered. For any given question there are several possible responses. The answer (or answers) to that question is drawn from this set of possible responses, and thus the set of answers is always smaller than the set of responses. But what criterion distinguishes between them? How are answers seen *as* answers?

An answer arises out of the set of possible responses when it, more than they, satisfies the notion of goodness most relevant to the context of the question. That is, whatever answers a question to the satisfaction of the questioner does so precisely because it is perceived as good, i.e., better than all other possibilities. Fundamentally, therefore, p. 38 goodness is the criterion which all answers have implicitly satisfied once they are seen *as*

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[13] Note the difference between this approach and that of Charles A. Hodge, B. B. Warfield's mentor and colleague, who *begins* his three-volume systematic theology with a 454 page discussion of God and only then commences his anthropology: *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, 1977).

answers. Logically, goodness exists both prior and subsequent to the answering of a question. It exists prior because the phenomenology of questioning presupposes the possibility of a criterion for answering, and it exists subsequent because an answered question allows the questioner to transcend a previous boundary, an end which is itself good. So, goodness is seen to be both the origin and intention of all acts of answered questions.

We may now see how it is that God is involved in the process of asking and answering questions, and thus in the process of human self-transcendence. One of the most enduring attributes of God is God's goodness: 'No one is good except the one God' (Mk. 10:18).[14] However, God's goodness cannot be identical with the goodness of anything else since all other things are assessed as good only after being measured by some prior standard of goodness. Such cannot be the case with God, though, since faith denies that anything exists prior to God against which his character could be measured and assessed as good. What must be the case, then, is that 'God is good' *means* 'God is goodness'; the character of God is that by which humans discriminate between good and evil generally, and between answers and responses in particular.[15] Whenever human beings choose an answer from among possible responses, what they are concurrently doing, consciously or otherwise, is referring to and depending upon the character of God as the measure of goodness. The character of God as 'good' is affirmed in principle whenever people make choices, and thus God co-acts with humans in all acts of choosing.

What this signifies with respect to the notion of inspiration is that all acts of inspiration (i.e., enhancement or self-transcendence) are in principle initiated by God since transcendence is by definition a transition from a less-good state to a more-good state. What it signifies with respect to the notion of *biblical* inspiration is that God initiates the enhancement known as salvation which the Christian community confesses that it receives through the Bible. Biblical inspiration is thus formally similar to all acts of inspiration in which the receiver transcends self-recognized boundaries. The distinctiveness of *biblical* inspiration is thus not formal, as the tradition claimed by its bipartite p. 39 analysis, but rather material.[16] The material distinctiveness of biblical inspiration is seen in the church's claim that its salvation, its being-located in a process of transcendence, is both initiated by God *and* congruent with the experience of salvation enjoyed by the apostolic generations of Christians to which we have access in the Bible.

It is in this final category of the concept of inspiration that we are best able to see the 'joint causation' of the Bible that Burtchaell earlier brought to our attention. Faith affirms all acts of knowledge as joint ventures of God and humans. It thus especially affirms those acts by which believers grow in the knowledge and understanding of God as joint

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[14] A more literal translation here is 'No one is good except the one God.' An interpreting perspective is opened to us if we choose to translate the Greek words for 'except' (*ei me*) literally rather than idiomatically; the verse would then read 'No one is good if the one God is not [good].'

[15] See David Burrell's discussion of Thomas' understanding of God's goodness (*ST* 1.5, 6) in *Exercises in Religious Understanding* (Notre Dame, 1974), 106–113.

[16] That is, the tradition attempted to decipher what was empirically unique about the Bible that only God could account for and which would thus validate the Bible's unique normativity. The response here was, as often noted, empirical inerrancy. We believe that this completely misses what is genuinely central to Christianity, namely, human salvation by God the Father of Jesus through the Bible. In grounding the Bible's normativity upon inerrancy rather than upon salvation, the tradition elevated something of very little religious importance to a position of supreme religious importance. Sadder still, in making salvation dependent upon inerrancy, it unintentionally 'postponed' salvation until inerrancy claims could all be adjudicated, a postponement which is both interminable and pointless because by definition Christians already possess salvation.

ventures. When these latter acts are consonant with the ways that the earliest Christians wrote about their experiences of knowing God, then such acts are said to be biblically inspired. The present church continues to confess 'the inspiration of the Bible,' meaning by that confession that its salvation is mediated through the Bible by the Father of Jesus.

A final note will serve to distinguish more precisely between divine (or general) inspiration and biblical inspiration. We have already said that what specifies biblical inspiration is a saving enhancement understood and experienced in ways commended within the Bible. The following formula makes this point more concisely: 'Biblical inspiration is normative and foundational divine enhancement with respect to human salvation.' This formulation has several advantages: it employs the definition of 'scripture' which we took to be a most successful one, it distinguishes but also relates God's acts in general and God's acts through the Bible, and it does not ignore the personal experience of salvation which we have insisted upon as a constituent of the definition of biblical inspiration. The church must not explain the specialness of its Scripture on grounds that are equally significant outside the church.

The genius of the Christian doctrine of biblical inspiration is the insight that the Bible conveys God's character and intention to the p. 40 world. We have referred to possession of this insight as salvation, for the character of God is to love those who hate him and relentlessly to pursue even those who will be lost. Those persons and communities from whom this insight sprang, and their written products, are properly called inspired by those who presently possess it. Without that original insight and those written products, we would not have the saving knowledge of God which we do have. And, without that saving knowledge, the Bible would be just another book. p. 41

The Quest for Authentic African Christianity

Watson Omulokoli

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Here is one more attempt by an African Christian in the perennial search for authentic indigenous Christianity. Basing his article on the hypothesis that the Christianity which was introduced to Africa is neither African nor Christian, Omulokoli analyses the historical (especially politico-social) causes for such a lapse. His search for an African Christianity valid in all African countries, although somewhat idealistic, has its merits in furthering African evangelical unity.
Editor

In January, 1953, Kwame Nkrumah paid a state visit to Liberia at the invitation of President William Tubman. Addressing a mass rally at the Centennial Pavilion in Monrovia, the future President of Ghana took as his theme: 'The Vision That I See.' He pointed out that, '… it is better to be free to manage, or mismanage your own affairs, than not to be free to mismanage or manage your own affairs.' He went on to explain that it