

# MIDWESTERN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

Volume 5

Spring 2007

No. 2

## CONTENTS

Editorial		2
Articles:		
A Snapshot of the Emergent Church with Interviews of Brian McLaren, Doug Pagitt, and Ed Stetzer	Elton Toby Frost	3
The Emergent Church and Southern Baptists: Fast Friends or Future Foes?	Mark DeVine	26
Alcohol Consumption: What Would Jesus Do?	R. Philip Roberts	44
The Extent of Christ's Atonement	Terry L. Wilder	48
The Dead End Trail: J. M. Carroll and <i>The Trail of Blood</i> and Its Impact upon Church Planting in the 21st Century	Rodney Harrison	54
Book Reviews		67
Book Review Index		92
List of Publishers		93

## Editorial

This journal is devoted to a plethora of current issues in Southern Baptist life—the emerging church, alcohol consumption, the extent of Christ’s death, questions on Baptist roots, and others.

Toby Frost, Senior Director of Strategic Evangelism for the Southern Baptist Convention’s North American Mission Board, provides an article which gives a broad snapshot of the emerging church phenomenon which many say is having an impact upon Christianity. Frost’s work is based on a study of the Emergent Church launched by NAMB in July 2006 and includes interviews with three men who are central in the discussion of this subject.

Mark DeVine, Associate Professor of Theology at MBTS, furnishes another article on the emerging church phenomenon. He focuses on two efforts to comprehend the movement and discusses its relationship with and implications for Southern Baptists.

Phil Roberts, President of MBTS, contributes a brief article on alcohol consumption in antiquity to determine whether Jesus would drink alcoholic beverages in the present day. Roberts writes this essay because the 2006 SBC annual meeting included debate which took place on the rightness of drinking alcohol. Fueling the issue was a resolution passed by messengers opposing it. The resolution contained an attached amendment disqualifying imbibers from appointment as agency or entity trustees.

Rodney Harrison, Vice-President of Institutional Effectiveness at MBTS, seeks to find and validate source documents cited in J. M. Carroll’s, *The Trail of Blood*. Landmarkism is said to be on the increase amongst Southern Baptists, and Harrison’s concern is what kind of an impact Carroll’s booklet may be having on church planting across North America.

I have written a brief article providing an answer to the age-old theological question: “For whom did Christ die?” Did Jesus die only for believers or for all of humanity? This matter was also discussed at the 2006 SBC annual meeting to some degree by Paige Patterson and Al Mohler. This article is my contribution to the discussion.

This issue is also my last one as journal editor. I have enjoyed serving you, as does Midwestern’s entire faculty. If you would like to have one of us speak in your church, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Terry L. Wilder, Editor

## **A Snapshot of the Emergent Church with Interviews of Brian McLaren, Doug Pagitt, and Ed Stetzer**

Elton Toby Frost

*Senior Director of Strategic Evangelism*

*North American Mission Board, SBC*

*Alpharetta, Georgia 30022*

*The purpose of this article is to define the Emerging Church Movement as the fourth and last strain of American Christianity to emerge during the twentieth century, and to describe its characteristics, strengths, weaknesses, and future directions from our fixed point in history, using selected popular books, participation in and contributions to Emergent websites, and interviews with three leading participants in the Emergent conversation. This movement is described as both a response to and a reflection of the emerging postmodern culture in which we live. Emergence is lauded for its relevance and creativity and cautioned for a tendency sometimes to equivocate biblical authority, theological fidelity, and holy living. Finally, this article challenges Christians to follow the example of this movement in thinking missionally about the new “foreign” mission field of postmodern culture we are confronted with in our own home.*

### **Introduction**

This article is the culmination of a study on the Emergent Church that was launched in July of 2006. It was designed to include an analysis of a selected bibliography of foundational books from the Emergent genre, multiple hours of visits to Emergent websites and blogsites, contributions to said websites, and interviews with recognized leaders in the Emergent Church. The descriptions, definitions, and conclusions of this paper are a “snapshot” of this movement as it currently presents itself.

The subject, scope, and style of this study necessitate this paper being slightly more informal. This is because there is not yet a large enough corpus of academic literature on this somewhat new movement. As far as style is concerned, Emergent works are sometimes very free in respects to classical methods of composition, but the temptation will be avoided to construct this article with elements that are too outside of the box,

although writing it in a more “postmodern” fashion was a consideration for a time!

A stylistic detail has to do with the way the terms, “Emergent,” “Emergent Church,” “Emerging Church Movement,” and the like will be designated. Some are concerned with the technical nuances of the differences in terms such as “Emergent,” “Emerging,” and whether it is valid to call this the Emerging “Church,” or whether the term “Movement” is to be preferred.<sup>1</sup> In the opinion of this writer, we are much too early in observing the Emergent phenomenon to insist on such technicality at this point. Thus, these terms will be used somewhat synonymously in this paper.

Also, there is some editorial disparity when terms such as these are used. Most scholarly articles do not capitalize these terms. Indeed, even on the Emergent Village website, references to this movement are more often than not left in the lower case. A significant number of authors are beginning to capitalize these terms, though.<sup>2</sup> This marks a move from the word “emergent” being simply an adjective describing a major stream of American Christianity to a more formal label or name. The word “Protestant” has made this pilgrimage, now being capitalized by most authors when used, both as an adjective and a noun. This practice of capitalization will thus be utilized in this paper for the various terms relating to the Emergent Church. It is hoped that this article will not only give readers an understanding of the Emergent Church phenomenon within their ministry contexts, but also will contribute to the overall Emergent conversation.

The image of a “snapshot” has been utilized to describe this paper. A snapshot is a still picture, not a video. It is an image frozen in time. Likewise, to describe the dynamic entirety of the Emerging Church Movement from its inception, with fully-formed predictions of future directions based upon a complete study of all pertinent literature, is outside the scope of this study. It is valuable, however, to show an isolated view of where Emergent seems to be at this point in time, based upon the readings and tasks selected.

A snapshot is not a panoramic view. It is limited in scope. In the same way, the author of this paper will frame his view of the Emergent Church

---

<sup>1</sup> Scot McKnight, “What is the Emerging Church?” (Lecture presented at the Fall Contemporary Issues Conference, Westminster Theological Seminary, Glenside, PA, October 26-27, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> An interesting example of this is none other than D. A. Carson, who leaves these terms in the lower case in his book, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), but begins to capitalize them in a journal article later that year. D. A. Carson, “Faith a La Carte?” *Modern Reformation Magazine* 14.4 (July/August 2005).

Movement, drilling down on certain key conclusions, based upon the study of a limited sampling of books, blogsites, and interviews.

A snapshot is simple to take and is frequently an informal picture of real life, rather than a formal portrait taken in a studio. For example, it would be imprecise to call a posed wedding picture a “snapshot.” The effort is being made here to study the Emergent Movement from a real-life perspective. This paper will thus be written from a real-life ministry context rather than a theoretical treatment written from the dusty recesses of a research library.

The “snapshot” terminology describes a visual depiction of reality, telling a story in a colorful and engaging way. American culture is still in the middle of the exciting “new thing” of the Emergent Church Movement. We may be too close to its beginnings to analyze completely and accurately its foundations. We are surely unable at this point to gauge accurately where it will go in the future. We can, however, state assumptions and predictions about this fascinating movement from our fixed point in history in a memorable and compelling way. It is hoped that this perspective will be valuable to fellow learners.

A photographic snapshot is made up of many components parts. Colors and shapes compose the picture. A mechanical device is employed to take the image. Creativity on the part of the photographer is also essential. Likewise, the picture that this article constructs will draw on a variety of sources. First, selected readings will be used to frame this study. These were chosen not because they are the newest, most creative, or latest to be written in the field, but because they are some of the most popular and useful for beginning students, as well as for those with more exposure to the literature of this movement.

Among these readings are included two foundational texts on the Emergent Church Movement, namely Dan Kimball’s *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations*,<sup>3</sup> and *A Generous Orthodoxy*<sup>4</sup> by Brian McLaren. Kimball’s book emphasizes the ancient approach to Emergent, while McLaren seems to prefer its emphasis as a new response to our contemporary age. *Blue Like Jazz*<sup>5</sup> is more of a popular book written by Donald Miller. He has become somewhat of the “bard” of the Emerging Church, giving readers a sense of the *ethos* and *pathos* of the Emergent phenomenon, and complimenting the *logos* of the first two volumes previously mentioned.

---

<sup>3</sup> Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Donald Miller, *Blue Like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003).

A fourth contribution provides an important counterbalance to the three Emergent-leaning books cited above. *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church*<sup>6</sup> by D. A. Carson takes a look at Emergent from the perspective of an outsider looking in. Although Carson has some good things to say about the value of this movement, his assessment is largely critical. Leonard Sweet takes a more integrated approach to this subject as editor of *The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives*.<sup>7</sup> Essays by five modern Christian thinkers provide the make-up of this book. Brian McLaren and Erwin McManus become representatives of classic Emergent thought in this volume, though McManus is more biblical and understandable by mainstream Evangelicals. Andy Crouch writes as one of the best of young thinkers among Christians of our time. Michael Horton contributes from the perspective of an apologist for reformation theology, and Frederica Matthewes-Green provides great insight from her Orthodox background.

*Leadership Wisdom from Unlikely Voices*<sup>8</sup> by Dave Fleming shows the evolution of the Emergent Church from its initial foundations as a theological, evangelistic, missiological, and ecclesiological movement to an all-encompassing culture affecting business principles, leadership philosophy, and even family life. In other words, Emergent seems to be moving from “how to do church” to “how to do life.”

Besides the readings, another component in the composition of this snapshot was multiple hours of regular and disciplined participation in Emergent websites and blogsites. These sites provide a view of the Emergent culture from a “real-time” perspective. A log of the participation in these websites has been submitted to Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.<sup>9</sup>

Other components of great value in this study were short interviews with recognized Emergent leaders. The content of these interviews are included below, at the end of this article. The first interview was with Brian McLaren, by all accounts the unofficial leader of the Emergent Church Movement. He is a speaker, writer, philosopher, artist, and until recently the pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church in the Washington D.C. area. This interview can be described as “vintage” McLaren, as he came across as very “generous” in his tendency to be open to all views, and to reject very few ideas.

---

<sup>6</sup> D. A. Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Leonard Sweet (ed.), *The Church in Emerging Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> Dave Fleming, *Leadership Voices from Unlikely Places: People of Yesterday Speak to Leaders of Today* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Submitted to Rodney Harrison, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri.

Doug Pagitt is the controversial and cutting-edge leader of Solomon's Porch in the Linden Hills section of Minneapolis. Most attribute the coining of the term, "Emerging Church," to him. Although his views on the Bible, homosexuality, and politics would clearly be provocative to most mainstream Evangelicals, Pagitt's interview was surprisingly constructive and uncontroversial.

The third interview was with Ed Stetzer, Director of Research at the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Even though he could not be described as being part of the Emerging Church, frequently keeping a critical distance from this movement, he is still accepted and respected by the new generation of pastors who either embrace or are influenced by Emergence. This interview consisted of basically one question which asked for an evaluation of the Emerging Church Movement. The answer to this question provided an important frame for some of the conclusions of this paper.

In addition to the books, interviews, and web blog research, additional research became necessary to complete the snapshot. Issues and directions raised during the study created the need for familiarity and knowledge from other sources in order to develop and support the views being posited in this paper. These other significant readings were very valuable in providing context and are footnoted when directly applicable, although hundreds will not be cited.

From the components outlined above, the Emergent snapshot was formulated. Using the unique mix of sources studied, Emergent Church focus and perspective were achieved. Answers to the following questions will be attempted in this article: Historically, from where did this movement "emerge?" Where is it going? What are its characteristics? What are its strengths and weaknesses? Is this snapshot of the Emergent Church an exercise in empty learning or a useful contribution to the ministry mandates in the Bible, specifically for ecclesiological leaders, and for the Christian community at large?

### **Definition and Characteristics**

An assumption of this article is that readers will be familiar with the Great Commission passages in the Bible and in agreement with their priority.<sup>10</sup> In light of this mandate, a study of the Emergent Church is a necessary and important element of the ministry contexts of most readers. If this movement holds the promise of helping to evangelize the people of North America and the world (or conversely, if it endangers the clear proclamation of the gospel through a loose handling of truth), it

---

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 1:17; Luke 24:46-48; John 17:18; Acts 1:8.

is of vital importance to understand its origins, philosophy, methodology, and future direction. It is hoped that this article will be useful to readers, not only for their personal growth, but also for enhanced effectiveness and relevance in ministry.

This study may also be valuable in its contribution to the overall Emergent conversation. The book reviews, interviews, and this paper itself (in segments and as a whole) may be used in future articles, blogs, and other channels of communication to help others to understand and benefit from this movement.

### Definition of the Emergent Church

The Emergent Church would not exist without the emerging postmodern age in which we live. Modernism with its worldview emphasizing science, absolute truth, and Western-style logic in thinking is quickly giving way to postmodernism which holds no specific worldview. Instead of adhering to an overarching “truth,” postmoderns instead accept “truths” with less of an objective standard, valuing a more intuitive approach.<sup>11</sup> It is in this cultural context that Emergent has “emerged.”

The Emerging Church exists to transform postmodern culture with the power of Jesus Christ, but with its “generous” orthodoxy, non-propositional approach to sharing the gospel, and mystical, feeling-based worship styles, the Emerging Church is also a reflection of the postmodern world it seeks to change. Not all, but some Emergents try so hard to communicate to the world that they begin to succumb to the world.

Now that the postmodern context of Emergent has been noted, there still remains the need for a concise definition of the movement itself. Some Emergent authors have themselves been challenged in their attempts to provide a definition. Dan Kimball seems to give up trying and just states that there is not a single model for this movement, and that Emergent is more of a mindset than an objective “thing” that can be defined. He does, however, intimate that “missional” is usually in the mix of characteristics.<sup>12</sup> Emergent critic D. A. Carson prefers to list characteristics of the Emerging Church rather than providing a clear definition. Donald Miller never slows down enough to provide a definition as his stories depict the attitude and actions of Emergent in the motions of everyday life. Fleming’s leadership book assumes that readers are fully familiar with Emergent culture, so of course no definition is forthcoming in his book.

---

<sup>11</sup> Kimball, *Emerging Church*, 58.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.



In the absence of a cogent definition from the works consulted, the attempt will be made in this article to provide one: “As the fourth and last strain of American Christianity to make its appearance in the twentieth century, the Emerging Church is a movement that seeks to reach postmodern culture in relevant ways with the message of Jesus Christ through new modes of thinking in ecclesiology, missiology, and evangelism.”

### Characteristics of the Emergent Church

True to the postmodern culture in which it was spawned, the Emergent Church is a study in contrasts. The best way, then, to define Emergent may be to outline the sometimes conflicting characteristics of this movement.

*The Emerging Church is both positive and negative.* This trait is illustrated as we see this movement emphasizing two shades of the Protestant Reformation, namely “protest” and “reform.” The first characteristic of Emergent is highlighted by critic D. A. Carson as he describes it as a protest growing out of discontent with “contemporary Christianity as an institution.”<sup>13</sup> Although Carson may overstretch in his proposition that protest is the *primary* descriptor of this movement, this quality is indeed present and noticeable in Emergent writings. Far from only protesting, however, this movement also seeks to reform, or more accurately “revolutionize” or even “replace” the Christendom as we know it today with a new and positive force.<sup>14</sup> It is thus a positive as well as a negative movement.

*The Emerging Church reflects both unbiblical and brutally biblical elements.* Postmodernism has been both the friend and enemy of Emergent. It is a friend by infusing this movement with relevance, nuance, and understanding of culture. Postmodernism has become an enemy of the movement, though, with its subjective and even suspicious approach to truth. It is no exaggeration to say that a few leaders in the Emerging Church have become relevant to the point of near-heresy, succumbing to new thinking about salvation, holy living, marriage, and sexual identity. Some of this new thinking is quite contrary to God’s word.

We are at the same time challenged by the sometimes brutal biblicism of Emergent. With its emphasis on apostolic, ancient, and pre-Christendom ecclesiologies and practices, many within this movement

---

<sup>13</sup> Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church*, 14-25.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003), 6-9.

work to break the brass serpent of “contemporary” styles and mores that traditional Christians have looked to for comfort, challenging them instead to gaze with brutal honesty at the ancient word of God as it speaks to the contemporary.

*The Emerging Church is both ancient and new.* Closely related to the dialectic detailed above, is the Emergent Church emphasis on both the very old and the very new. Many in this movement desire a return to a time before the conversion of Emperor Constantine. Before Constantine became a Christian, the church was a revolutionary, radical, and counter-cultural social movement. After Constantine's conversion, Christianity became the status quo, occupying the town square instead of being relegated to the fringes of society. With this newfound acceptance, though, came, in the view of many in Emergent (and many Christians outside of this movement, as well), a fat, lazy, and hypocritical church. It became flooded with pagans and nominal Christians. Its doctrines were hardened. It *became* culture, rather than being *relevant* to culture.

According to many in the Emergent Church a return to an apostolic, and even messianic, form of Christianity is needed. Kimball refers to this as “vintage Christianity.”<sup>15</sup> Others in Emergent, however, see elements of this movement as being absolutely new. According to them, the culture in which we live is unprecedented, thus a new wine with new wineskins required.<sup>16</sup>

*The Emerging Church is both gentle and severe.* There is a certain passive-aggressive personality type that one notices in the Emerging Church Movement. It is both “in-your-face” and gentle in its approach. It is gentle as it engages non-Christians in a non-confrontational manner. Emergent adherents sometime take a more direct and polemical approach with other types of Christians, though. Some Emergent blogsites are full of vitriolic verbiage, not against Satan or culture, but against Christians, mostly traditional Evangelicals.

As one can ascertain, the sometimes conflicting characteristics of the Emergent Church Movement place it clearly within a postmodern context. An attempt to describe this movement within a historical framework will be done in the section below.

### History to Present

New expressions of the church have always been “emerging.” The Roman Catholic Church “emerged” from the persecuted Jewish form of Christianity with the conversion of Constantine. The Protestant

---

<sup>15</sup> Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations*.

<sup>16</sup> Doug Pagitt, interview by Elton (Toby) Frost, October 4, 2006: full transcript below.

Reformation was an “emergent movement” as it moved from the Medieval Church with its superstition and corruption. Evangelicalism “emerged” as a response to the theological liberalism of the late nineteenth century and, to a lesser extent, as an answer to the Pentecostal movement that started in the early twentieth century.<sup>17</sup>

Some have attempted to make Emergent and the Protestant Reformation equals,<sup>18</sup> but when one considers the unique situation of those times past, attempted comparisons with the worldview(s) of today largely fail.<sup>19</sup> As in the definition of the Emerging Church Movement stated above, a better description might be that it is the fourth and last major strain of American Christianity, the first three being Pentecostalism, Evangelicalism, and The Jesus Movement, which burst on the scene during the twentieth century.<sup>20</sup> It is not within the scope of this study to describe these movements in detail, but a short introduction to the three will be attempted.

Pentecostalism was the first strain of American Christianity to emerge in the twentieth century. Most ascribe its beginnings to the Azusa Street Revival in 1906. It was and is characterized by an emphasis on an experience with the Holy Spirit resulting in great energy and vibrancy. The movement of Pentecostalism reflected its newness in new theology, new publishing companies, new churches, and even new denominations. This movement also affected already-existing denominations through the charismatic renewal movement. World-sweeping in its success, Pentecostalism in its variety of forms presently claims over five hundred million adherents worldwide.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Evangelicalism responded to liberalism’s naturalistic presuppositions and radical reinterpretation of the nature and meaning of scripture, and to the emotionalism and undisciplined theology of Pentecostalism, by insisting upon fundamentals of the faith that true Christians must hold. Although it produced new schools and copious amounts of literature, it was largely a movement within already-existing denominations.

The decade of the sixties then ushered in the Jesus Movement, a unique form of Christianity responding to the cataclysmic changes of the times. Not only confined to the “Jesus Freaks,” who saw Jesus as the embodiment of the idealism, love, and pacifism of the times, this became

---

<sup>17</sup> Brian McLaren, interview by Elton (Toby) Frost, October 4, 2006: full transcript below.

<sup>18</sup> Phyllis Tickle, foreword in *A Generous Orthodoxy* by Brian D. McLaren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 9-12.

<sup>19</sup> Pagitt interview.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

a broader-based student movement finding expression in colleges, church youth groups, and the military as well. Unlike Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism, the Jesus Movement did not produce an infrastructure to sustain and spread it. Not as many new denominations, churches, and schools trace their beginnings to the Jesus Movement. Other than music, the “new wineskins” to hold the “new wine” of this movement never materialized. This could be the reason that the Jesus Movement largely failed (or ultimately succeeded, depending upon one’s point of view). Contrary to the opinions of most who hold that this movement dissolved because churches rejected it, the real reason may have been the tendency of at least a large minority of churches in existing denominations to accept and absorb it.<sup>21</sup> As the fourth and last of the new movements within American Christianity in the twentieth century, the Emergent Church has developed and grown as we have entered a new millennium.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

#### **Strengths of the Emerging Church**

The Emerging Church contributes much. It is relevant, creative, and new. It attempts to engage lost people in new ways. It connects with the unreached on many levels. It is experimental and entrepreneurial, proposing creative solutions to the problems of lostness, lack of intimacy with God, and the lack of authenticity in Christendom. Thus, this movement is willing to try new methods, risking failure in order to have the opportunity for success. At its best the Emerging Church is evangelistic, with a heart for the radically unchurched. One obvious strength of Emergent that sometimes goes unmentioned is the fact that it focuses on young people, a group that since the 1970s has been increasingly unchurched.

#### **Weaknesses of the Emerging Church**

The strengths of this movement as outlined above can also be mentioned as its weaknesses as well. It is relevant, but some would say relevant to the point of compromise. It is creative, but its creativity by some of its adherents has extended to the point of near-heresy. Emergent is new, but sometimes so new and innovative as to overextend to the point of irrelevance, contrary to the relevance that it so desperately seeks. It adopts new methods, but at least one of its authors admits to changing the message as well.<sup>22</sup> It connects with the unreached but sometimes

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Brian McLaren, essay in Sweet, *The Church in Emerging Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 191-200.

never gets around to converting the unreached. For example, upon visiting the website of Cedar Ridge Community Church one immediately notices the small thumbnail pictures along with the “stories” (Emergents love narrative) of selected members of the church. Upon clicking on the thumbnail pictures and reading the stories, this author was not able to find one personal testimony of a person that was not “churched” before coming to Cedar Ridge. Surprising is the lack of “radically unchurched”<sup>23</sup> people that this church and other Emergent Churches are currently reaching, although this may be an unfair assessment because of the newness of this fledgling movement.<sup>24</sup>

### Future Directions

The Emerging Church is still developing. It is thus difficult to predict where it may end up. Its future is in jeopardy if it becomes just a lifestyle Christian phenomenon with relevance only to young urban hipsters. Attempts are being made, however, to widen the scope of this movement to other people groups. McLaren reports that in 2006 he visited every continent except Asia.

It also faces an uncertain future if it ends up losing its energy and dynamism in the overexposure by publishers who see lucrative opportunities in producing copious numbers of mediocre books and other ancillary resources, not for any real contribution, but only for sales of products from the Emergent perspective while it is still in vogue. On the other hand, if this movement fails to institutionalize and produce its own infrastructure (books, theology, churches, schools, and even “denominational” networks), it will dissolve as the Jesus Movement did.

Finally, a dim future awaits this movement if its creativity and love of all things innovative and new causes it to drift away from settled biblical truth and toward theological liberalism and social compromise. This looming danger on the horizon has been noted by many.

A positive future awaits the Emerging Church, however, if it continues to move towards missional relevance. By “missional” is meant the ability to “read the culture and translate ministry into a biblically faithful and culturally appropriate expression of church.”<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Term coined by author Alvin Reid in *Radically Unchurched: Who They Are and How to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002).

<sup>24</sup> Elton T. Frost in Weblog Participation Diary, September 13 through October 8, 2006. Transcripts submitted to Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

<sup>25</sup> Ed Stetzer and David Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 20-21.

### **A Concluding Personal Word**

“The world I learned to reach in seminary twenty years ago no longer exists!” These words from a pastor friend have riveted me since I first heard them last year.

I recently took part in what might possibly be the most unique father-daughter mission outing ever planned. DragonCon is one of the largest fantasy film, pop culture, and science fiction conventions in the world. Multiplied thousands of people converge on Atlanta dressed up as their favorite comic book or film characters to enjoy concerts, attend seminars, visit exhibits, trade comic books, and play fantasy games.

My daughter, Perry, and I decided to attend DragonCon to present Christ at this four-day event. We used the JoePix strategy, taking photographs of the conventioners in their costumes and uploading the pictures to an Internet site. Subjects then can go to the website to retrieve their photos, engage Christians, and learn more about the gospel. Witnessing opportunities abounded. There were so many people. They were so far from God. Yet, they were so fascinated with our message of Jesus Christ. In this crowd, where rebellion was the status quo, we were the strangest characters of all with our JoePix t-shirts, hats, and cameras!

Never have I been around a more eclectic crowd. Where else in the world can one go and hear a concert by a new age Celtic band and see hundreds of elves, Romulans, zombies, storm troopers, and Disney characters doing the Macarena to Irish music? As I walked around this sea of humanity in a four square block area of Atlanta, the words of my friend echoed again in my mind, “The world I learned to reach in seminary twenty years ago no longer exists.”

In an international missions context, my denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, is positioned to understand reaching new types of people. We know that, on the foreign field, we must engage new cultures on their turf. We must learn, appreciate, and accept them without losing the essentials of our faith. We must be relevant in communicating to a variety of cultures without conforming to them. We also must reach these people groups with the gospel of Jesus Christ without obscuring their cultural distinctives. We must be missional, exegeting culture and exalting Christ in appropriate ways without succumbing to the world. Southern Baptists get it—at least on the international scene.

Across town from DragonCon, a large metro Atlanta church recently held a Global Missions Conference. This conference was a well-planned event with around one-hundred missionaries from all over the world in attendance. Participants hosted parties in their homes with missionaries present to tell their stories. Sunday School classes and other small groups featured presentations on the customs and practices of different countries. A highlight of the weekend was a missions-themed worship

service on Sunday morning. My favorite part of the conference, though, was the big missions fair that evening. Tables were set up with exhibits about people groups from around the world. People were fascinated by the unusual foods and by the missionaries who wore the traditional costumes of the people they were called to reach. As I walked from exhibit to exhibit I thought of the unique costumes and culture of the new “tribe” I had visited at DragonCon.

You see, the emerging postmodern culture that we encounter in North America is as new and exotic as many on the foreign mission field. But sometimes, instead of celebrating the missionaries and pastors to this culture, we react to their unique style with caution and criticism. Why don't we invite them to set up their tables at the missions fair so we can hear their stories and experience their (and our) new culture? *But as we lengthen the cords of acceptance of new styles and new ideas, we must not forget to strengthen the stakes of biblical authority, theological fidelity, and holy living as we forge into “foreign” territory with the gospel.*

“The world I learned to reach in seminary twenty years ago no longer exists!” I now realize that this statement is accurate. But this was also true when a young woman missionary named Lottie Moon went to a new world she knew nothing about. She endured criticism for adopting some of the dress and culture of that China to reach people for Christ. She served faithfully. She gave her life. And she made a difference.

We must be more like Lottie as we go about reaching and keeping our own continent for Jesus Christ. We must make evangelism “good news” again to the world, both globally and locally. We are challenged and reminded by the “new kinds of Christians” in the Emerging Church Movement who remind us that we must begin to think missionally about our own home.

### **A Short Conversation with Doug Pagitt October 4, 2006**

FROST – Many people have compared the rise of the Emergent Church to the Protestant Reformation. Would you characterize the Emergent Church Movement more primarily as a protestant (protest) movement, or a reformation (reform) movement?

PAGITT – In history, we will probably be looked at as one of the American movements. The three we most resemble are Pentecostalism (1906), Evangelicalism (1930s-1940s), and the Jesus Movement (1960s-1970s). Emergent is its own category with reflections of all three of these movements rather than the Protestant Reformation. Of the three, the

Emergent Church Movement is probably more like Pentecostalism, not resembling it theologically, though. I say this because both Pentecostalism and Emergent radically changed directions and thinking about missiology, evangelism, ecclesiology, and theology all at the same time, with great energy and synergy. The times of the Protestant Reformation were so different that the cultural backdrop makes it more difficult to compare it to Emergent. At its best, Emergent is not concerned with either protest or with reform, but with moving forward.

FROST – But doesn't the term "Post-Evangelical" or even the term "Emergent," terms you frequently use in your books, tie you to the past?

PAGITT – Yes. This is the problem with explaining where you are in relation to where you have been and to keep moving forward. People in the Emergent Church movement say Evangelicalism was a great place to start but we want to keep moving forward.

FROST – Is the evangelical foundation of Emergent the reason why many on blogsites refer to themselves as "Recovering Fundamentalist" or "Recovering Evangelical?" Why are there so many more "recovering fundamentalists" on these sites than "recovering liberals," many of whom I would suspect come from churches just as abusive?

PAGITT – Probably this is because of sheer numbers. There are just not as many liberal converts. Also, liberalism doesn't reward entrepreneurial people. Evangelicalism has always rewarded spunk, so there are many more Evangelicals participating in Emergent.

FROST – Unlike your forward-looking form of Emergent, some would say that Emergent does not move forward, but instead is a radical backward-looking movement to pre-Christendom, apostolic days. Would you characterize the Emergent Church Movement as the discovery of a new paradigm or the rediscovery of an old paradigm?

PAGITT – Emergent has become diverse enough where it is becoming difficult to put a single descriptor around it. Some are enamored with an ancient motif. The turnkey for them is that Christianity in the twenty-first century means a return to the first century. But also there is a stream that looks for things that are consistent through time such as loving your neighbor and being in community with one another.

FROST – Is it time to describe these diverse streams within the Emergent Movement?



PAGITT – In my opinion we are still five to ten years off. Eddie Gibbs has made a stab at it, though.

FROST – Many publishers now use logos and brands for their Emergent books. Is this a sign that Emergent has peaked and is on its way out? Should we get ready for Emergent cup-cozies, t-shirts, and Bible covers?

PAGITT – Organization shows the next stage of the movement. Evolution and social movements have the characteristic of codifying a particular expression. This needs to take place in order for other expressions to respond to it and grow out of it. The Jesus Movement never staked its place in history with organization, so its different streams either dissolved or were absorbed into existing churches.

FROST – As you know there are many emergent-leaning SBC churches with young cutting-edge pastors, but they are a small minority of our over 45,000 churches. In your opinion, can the Emergent Movement teach anything to mainstream SBC churches? What one thing can SBC churches glean from Emergent?

PAGITT – Paul’s vision was that the promise of Abraham is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus. Paul held the faith that some day the thing you hope for is fulfilled. I would say to SBC churches that the things that come after us really are the fulfillment of Paul’s hope. Things don’t end when the traditional SBC expression is less appealing to culture. See yourself in the new expressions of Emergent. Look for similarities rather than differences. Distinctions are important but we are all better off finding similarities.

### **A Short Conversation with Brian McLaren October 9, 2006**

FROST – Would you characterize the Emergent Church Movement as a protest movement, a reform movement, or something entirely different?

MCLAREN – That’s a little hard to answer except to say “all of the above.” Most Emergent churches are protestant, but there is a fascinating conversation happening with some Roman Catholics. In my view, the Protestant Reformation was Christianity “emerging” from the medieval era into modern era. Similarly, Roman Catholicism was Christianity “emerging” from being a persecuted, loosely-networked Jewish offshoot into being the official religion of the Roman Empire. The process of Emergence is constant as the church deals with emerging realities. A

number of people do not like what we are doing because they try to reduce it to one thing or another—calling it just a protest movement, for example.

FROST – Is the criticism of the Emergent Church by many really just a criticism of the culture in which we live, and, by extension, a criticism of churches who speak to this new culture in new ways?

MCLAREN – I think that’s a large part of it. Among all different Christian communities there is the clash where some think of “church” as exciting and new, and others think of “church” as unchanging and always predictable. Some want the church to lead us into a better future, and others want the church to preserve precious things from the past. Again, we need a both/and, not an either/or.

FROST – You have engaged in extensive international travel this year. What have you found? Is Emergent a uniquely American movement, or does it have value to the international community?

MCLAREN – Actually in many ways the Emergent Movement is stronger in Latin America than North America. It is growing stronger in Europe and Africa. I have not been to Asia yet, but there is growing interest and involvement worldwide. My main interest is not in spreading a North American movement abroad, but in learning from what God is doing around the world, and increasing levels of communication and mutual encouragement and edification.

FROST – What is the value of the Emergent conversation to SBC churches, especially the ones who are more traditional or seeker in make-up? Is there a value in the Emergent conversation to them?

MCLAREN – Southern Baptist churches have been at the forefront of understanding missional relevance. SBC missionaries go around the world to many cultures, and they understand that you have to indigenize. You must enter a culture without judgment in order to understand it, and then you must incarnate the gospel in word and deed into that culture, so the gospel can be a liberating and transforming agent within it. So in this way, Emergent is similar to what the SBC is doing abroad, but we’re doing it at home; we’re grappling with ways to faithfully incarnate the gospel in the emerging culture. I guess you could say, in Baptist terms, that we’re a hybrid of international and home missions; we’re using the missiological methods learned in the mission field abroad and applying them to new cultural groups here at home.

FROST – Luther was rejected by the Roman Catholic Church, and a new paradigm thrived as churches reorganized communities and codified their convictions. The Jesus Movement found its way into existing churches and largely faded without a distinctive organizational model (except for Calvary Chapels). Would it help or hurt the Emergent Church Movement to be fully accepted by North American Christianity as we know it? In other words, does Emergent want to be fully accepted?

MCLAREN – For many complex reasons, Luther was not accepted by the Catholic Church when he tried to bring reform. Those complex reasons include an increasing doctrinal rigidity in the late Middle Ages, political and scientific and economic realities in sixteenth-century Europe that tempted the church to become overly fearful and reactive, and even Luther’s peculiar personality. We do not know all the reasons. But before Luther, the Roman Catholic Church showed an amazing capacity to embrace and include reform movements. Saint Francis and Saint Patrick were both radical innovators who were to a great degree accepted, so their influence was able to bring renewal and transformation within the church at large—an influence that continues today. But Protestant churches are usually not like this when it comes to new things. Whenever there is a lot of newness or diversity they tend to choose sides and have insiders and outsiders.

Now applying this to the Emergent conversation, institutions in my view are not bad in themselves. It’s the “things” that are institutionalized that can be bad. For example, if you institutionalize racism, reluctance to change, too much conformity to culture, dominance of the people by a few elite dominating leaders, etc., then you’ve institutionalized things that are contrary to the gospel. But again, institutions themselves aren’t bad—they’re necessary. We should respect institutions. But we should also view them somewhat as we view the new wine of the gospel’s relationship to wineskins in the Bible. We need wineskins. We cannot have wine without them. But we must have new wineskins to contain new wine. The wine is what counts most—the dynamic mission of the kingdom of God—not the wineskins. Or to put it differently, you fit the shoe to the growing foot; you don’t force the foot to conform to the shoe.

FROST – Would you characterize the Emergent Church Movement as the discovery of a new paradigm or the rediscovery of an old paradigm?

MCLAREN – This is a classic case where the answer is “both.” Our entire ethos as Protestants and Evangelicals and Christians in general

always involves going back—back to the Gospels, back to the Old and New Testaments as a whole—but going back to gain resources so that we can then keep moving forward in mission. In many ways we can go back in history to see examples of this “emergent thing.” As I mentioned before, Saint Patrick and Saint Francis are examples. John Calvin is an excellent example. He was only nineteen or twenty when he became a pastor. He finished his first edition of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* by the time he was twenty-five. He realized that the inherited systems for explaining the faith were not adequate to his time and place. So he boldly went back to the Scriptures, and based on what he found there, he dared to differ from medieval articulations and articulated the faith in new ways. There’s this dynamic tension between going back and going forward. Some people’s discomfort with Emergent may come from the fact that for the first time we are living in a global economy with an interconnected global culture requiring new ways to think, organize, and relate. So much is new and challenging, and even frightening—from nuclear weapons to global warming to the internet to the mixing of people of so many different religions in one city or even neighborhood. I’m not surprised that many people react to all this with fear and a desire to recapture the good old days—of the 1950s or 1590s or whatever.

FROST – What in your opinion has been the most important, valuable, or distinctive contribution of the Emergent conversation to the church?

MCLAREN – The most valuable contributions are the many young leaders who are committed to theology and evangelism. They are reading theologians from around the world and grappling with how the gospel should take shape. They aren’t just reading North American and English theologians—they’re reading Africans and Latin Americans and Asians and Europeans, and this is broadening their horizons and helping them to see the Scriptures from a less culturally-bound perspective. They are also looking back historically and seeing ways our understanding of the gospel has been shaped, developed, and even compromised at times by our own modern Western culture. This simultaneous engagement with theology, history, and contemporary global cultures positions them to make significant contributions to the church at large. So, young leaders who passionately care about a thoughtful, biblically-rooted theology and who are equally committed to making disciples . . . they are Emergent’s greatest contributions, in my opinion.

FROST – In your opinion, does the cultural move from modernism to postmodernism advance or detract from our quest to fulfill the Great Commission in our time?

MCLAREN – I would say both. The greatest holocaust in human history happened in the sixteenth century when colonizers went to Latin America. It is estimated that fifty million people were killed by effects of colonization. And the Catholic Church legitimized it. Even though a whole continent was “won” for Christ, a lot of our problems today are a consequence of the Christian faith and how it was spread. And it wasn’t just the Catholics who made terrible mistakes during the modern era. For example, the Protestant church has at times been a bastion of racism, and this continues in too many places today. As part of our response to postmodernity, we Christians must come to terms with the lack of authenticity in our past. If we don’t deal with our dirty laundry from the past, I think we’ll struggle in the emerging context. But if we can deal openly and honestly with our past failures, I believe we will find enormous opportunities to serve God and love our neighbors in the postmodern, postcolonial world.

FROST – How does the propositional approach to Christianity (sharing the Four Spiritual Laws, for example) relate to the mystical, spiritual, narrative approach to Christianity of Emergent? How would these approaches work together?

MCLAREN – This question is so important and multilayered that I couldn’t even begin to respond with the depth the question deserves. Just to mention one area—because of religious broadcasting and publishing, people today have access to all kinds of messages from televangelists and radio preachers and authors, some for the better, some for the worse perhaps. If all people needed were information and propositions about God, they have amazingly broad access to that kind of information already. But what people need first is not just information: they need a relationship with a caring, authentic, transparent Christian to see how that propositional message works. They need to see propositions incarnated in the biblical story, and in the lives of people who are living by that biblical story. If someone comes to them like they are selling life insurance or aluminum siding and just dumps the information on them, that says to them that they are not loved and Christ is not legitimate. Postmoderns do care about truth but can’t forget the fact that those proclaiming the truth have committed terrible injustices. So, to accept propositional arguments from Christians is morally abhorrent to them until they see the quality of our lives—as Jesus said, they need to see our light shining in good deeds before they’re ready to glorify our God. Of course I believe in propositional truth. Any statement is propositional truth. Even the statement, “I don’t believe in propositional truth” is a

proposition—so arguments about propositional truth can become absurd very quickly. But the truth of God can never be limited to propositions—it always is expressed in incarnation and action and relationships as well. An awful lot of superficial things are being said in the various arguments about propositional truth, and we need to reach down to deeper levels of understanding. In the end, if we focus on 1 Peter 3:16-17, we'll get the right balance. Peter says we need to have gentle and respectful relationships with people who don't yet believe. We must always be ready to understand the questions people ask us, so we can gently and respectfully and intelligently answer them. I guess you could say that truth without a relationship is like a cargo plane without wings, and a relationship without truth is like a cargo plane with nothing to carry and nowhere to go.

FROST – If denominations make a contribution to the church in the future, what, in your view, would they have to look like? Or, in your opinion, does the concept of “denomination” have no place in the future?

MCLAREN – Denominations are inevitable. They are simply relational networks. They are a family, preserving history and distinctives. But we do have to get beyond sectarianism. We have to get beyond the dominating or intimidating idea that everyone else has to capitulate to our opinion and submit to our way of doing things. Positive things happen in flexible missions structures as have characterized the SBC in the past and are appearing in Emerging churches. In the emerging world, I think denominations will behave more like networks and less like hierarchies. Again, Baptists have this non-hierarchical value in their history, and it's a precious thing I hope Baptists never lose.

### **A Short Conversation with Ed Stetzer November 6, 2006**

FROST – What is your evaluation of the Emerging Church Movement?

STETZER – I am not sure there is a movement. There are many conversations and organizations under the umbrella of what has been called the “Emerging Church.” But, let me give some thoughts and express my mixed feelings.

It is not a big secret that I have written some things that well-known Emergent leaders do not like. I have the unfortunate distinction of having

been called “unhelpful” by the head of Emergent.<sup>26</sup> However, there are also some who think that anyone who says something kind about some Emerging Church leaders must be apostate. My hope is that we can be discerning enough to see the good as well as the bad, and to know the difference.

I want pastors who lead biblically-faithful churches in emerging culture to be in the SBC. I think that when we start throwing around labels without discernment, we will “preach them out”—much like we did to many contemporary church leaders in the 90s. I just don’t think we need another purge of biblically-faithful, God-centered churches that do things differently than we do.

I do think that there is some serious theological error in part of the “Emerging Church” and I have written about it. We need to speak clearly when the clear teaching of Scripture is disregarded or misunderstood. Furthermore, there are some Emerging churches where there is solid theology but an unhealthy emphasis on Christian liberty (language, alcohol, etc.). We need to speak honestly about the need for discernment and maturity in such contexts. But, most importantly, we need to rejoice when we find a biblically-faithful church in emerging culture, just as we would a biblically-faithful traditional church or a biblically-faithful Purpose-Driven church.

FROST – It seems that there are different types of Emerging Church people? Are there?

STETZER – I think so. Some of the well known writers do not really represent everyone involved. There is a great diversity of people who call themselves “Emerging.” Some I would be comfortable with, others greatly concern me (see D. A. Carson’s book, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church*, for some of those concerns).

I do believe that some are taking the same gospel in the historic form of church but seeking to make it understandable to emerging culture; some are taking the same gospel but questioning and reconstructing much of the form of church; some are questioning and revising the gospel and the

---

<sup>26</sup> [http://blog.christianitytoday.com/outofur/archives/2006/05/is\\_emergent\\_the.html](http://blog.christianitytoday.com/outofur/archives/2006/05/is_emergent_the.html)  
[http://blog.christianitytoday.com/outofur/archives/2006/05/is\\_emergent\\_the.html](http://blog.christianitytoday.com/outofur/archives/2006/05/is_emergent_the.html).

church. I have identified three arenas in which emergent leaders are working.<sup>27</sup>

First, there are those I call “relevants.” These are young (and not so young) leaders who some classify as “Emerging” that really are just trying to make their worship, music and outreach more contextual to emerging culture. Ironically, while some may consider them liberal, they are often deeply committed to biblical preaching, male pastoral leadership and other values common in conservative evangelical churches. The churches of the “relevants” are not filled with the angry white children of evangelical megachurches. They are, instead, intentionally reaching into their communities (which are different than where most Southern Baptists live) and proclaiming a faithful biblically-centered gospel there.

Secondly, there are those I refer to as “reconstructionists.” The reconstructionists think that the current form of church is frequently irrelevant and the structure is unhelpful. Yet, they typically hold to a more orthodox view of the gospel and Scripture. Therefore, we see an increase in models of church that reject certain organizational models, embracing what are often called “incarnational” or “house” models. They are responding to the fact that after decades of trying fresh ideas in innovative churches, North America is less churchied, and those who are churchied are less committed. If reconstructionists simply rearrange dissatisfied Christians and do not impact lostness, it is hardly a better situation than the current one.

Lastly, there are those I identify as “revisionists,” many of whom are being read by younger leaders and perceived as Evangelicals. They are not—at least according to our evangelical understanding of Scripture. We significantly differ from them regarding what the Bible is, what it teaches, and how we should live it in our churches. I don’t hate them or question their motives and I won’t try to mischaracterize their beliefs. But, I won’t agree with them. “Revisionists” are questioning (and in some cases denying) issues like the nature of the substitutionary atonement, the reality of hell, the complementary nature of gender, and the nature of the gospel itself. This is not new. Some mainline theologians quietly abandoned these doctrines a generation ago. Does that mean we cannot learn from them? Certainly not. I read mainline theologians like Marcus Borg and George Lindbeck like others in the

---

<sup>27</sup> A summary of Stetzer’s work is at <http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID=22406>; <http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID=22406>.



past read Karl Barth. These are good thinkers, but deeply wrong on issues I hold as important. I read many Emerging Church writers the same way. They ask good questions, but I am driven to Scripture for the answers.

Let's affirm the good, and look to the Scriptures for answers to the hard questions. And, yes, let's graciously disagree when others hold views contrary to our best scriptural understanding of God, Bible, and church.

## **The Emerging Church and Southern Baptists: Fast Friends or Future Foes?**

Mark DeVine

*Associate Professor of Theology  
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Kansas City, Missouri 64118*

*In this article Mark DeVine attempts to comprehend the emerging church movement and its implications for the Southern Baptist Convention. DeVine explores some of the difficulties of defining the phenomenon and the dangers of hasty attempts to do so. Two major efforts to comprehend the movement are examined: that of Southern Baptist Ed Stetzer and that of Fuller Theological Seminary professors, Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger. Conflicts between these alternative views are explored and the vexing issue of postmodernism is considered. DeVine especially highlights the reformed doctrine-friendly stream of the movement represented by Mars Hill Church and the Acts29 church planting network already drawing Southern Baptist attention and participation. He argues that this particular stream exhibits certain excesses and blind spots indicative of youth but also offers significant insight for the planting of doctrinally evangelical urban churches among a demographic typically resistant to the gospel.*

“What about that cussing, drinking, Baptist preacher out in Seattle? Is he part of that emerging thing I keep hearing about?” Such an inquiry was my introduction to the emerging church movement. Or so I once thought. As bi-vocational pastor of a then declining urban Southern Baptist church, and faced with the sobering and depressing statistics tracking the prospects for such ministries, I cast about for answers. The preacher in Seattle was Mark Driscoll, pastor of Mars Hill Church where more than 6000 gather on a weekend to enjoy Indie Rock, hear sometimes sarcastic, calvinistic, humor-laced sermons, and to be led by a male only pastoral office within the urban core of one of the least Christian cities in the Western world. What is going on here?<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Visit [www.marshillchurch.org](http://www.marshillchurch.org) and Mark Driscoll's blog, [www.theresurgence.com](http://www.theresurgence.com). See also Driscoll's bestselling books *The Radical Reformation: Reaching Out Without Selling Out* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004) and *Confessions of a Reformation Rev.: Hard Lessons From an Emerging Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).

Little by little I discovered something called the emerging church movement, or is it the emergent conversation? Comprehension of contemporary, still developing phenomena often proves frustrating and elusive. But clearly, something is afoot. While it is impossible to gauge the size of the movement with great confidence, it is probably safe to say we are dealing with something quite significant—perhaps not a tidal wave, but not a mere trickle either. The volume of books and blogging alone indicate a movement involving communities of faith numbering at least in the hundreds in Britain and America and involving Christians from the full range of Protestant denominations from Anglican to the Assemblies of God, from Lutheran to Baptist.<sup>2</sup>

For a quasi-quick introduction to the emerging movement, I recommend two books and one article. The first book is *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* co-authored by Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger.<sup>3</sup> Among the numerous and proliferating examinations of the movement coming off the presses, this volume provides a comparatively superior window into the phenomenon by virtue of its heavy dependence upon primary source materials. Gibbs and Bolger's observations emerge inductively on the basis of extensive interviews with 50 actual leaders of emerging communities of faith in Brittan and North America. An appendix allows this same fifty to tell their stories in their own words.

The article I recommend appeared in the February 2007 edition of *Christianity Today* magazine: "Five Streams of the Emerging Church: Key Elements of the Most Controversial and Misunderstood Movement in the Church Today," by Scot McKnight, Karl A. Olsson Professor in Religious Studies at North Park University (Chicago, Illinois).<sup>4</sup> The second book is by Donald Miller, a young lay Christian raised in a Southern Baptist church in Texas, now a denizen of urban Portland, Oregon. The book is *Blue Like Jazz*, a college campus sensation that reached an Amazon ranking of "4"!<sup>5</sup> This book offers a unique purview into both the "protest" mindset Donald Carson notes within the emerging movement as well as a conservative, orthodox, evangelical-ish impulse

---

<sup>2</sup> In addition to EmergentVillage and the Mark Dricoll blogs see also, [www.tallskinnykiwi.typepad.com](http://www.tallskinnykiwi.typepad.com), [www.internetmonk.com](http://www.internetmonk.com), Scot McKnight's [www.jesuscreed.org](http://www.jesuscreed.org), and [www.dankimball.com](http://www.dankimball.com).

<sup>3</sup> Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Scot McKnight, "Five Streams of the Emerging Church: Key Elements of the Most Controversial and Misunderstood Movement in the Church Today," *Christianity Today* 51.2 (February 2007): 35-39.

<sup>5</sup> Donald Miller, *Blue Like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003).

discernible among some emerging types. I now know that *Blue Like Jazz*, not Mars Hill Community Church, was my actual introduction to the emerging church movement.

### **Learning the Lingo**

Whoever wants to understand the emerging church would do well to spend a little time negotiating the nomenclature maze first. “Emergent” refers to the network of interested leaders and laity who converse through the website of Tony Jones, Emergentvillage.com. Jones is a Princeton Ph.D. student whose forthcoming dissertation promises to combine insights from the work of Gibbs and Bolger with that of Jones’ own research and extensive travel to engage face-to-face with emerging community leaders around the world. EmergentVillage.com represents a “conversation” (their word) and not a church movement as such. The governing board of EmergentVillage includes Doug Pagitt (Solomon’s Porch, Minneapolis), Brian McLaren (formerly of Cedar Ridge Community Church, Baltimore-Washington D.C.), and Tim Keel (Jacob’s Well, Kansas City).

“Emerging” refers to the broader phenomenon of churches and religious communities about which participants within EmergentVillage converse but do not lead or control. These leaders and communities strive to create and nurture communities of believers found meaningful to the emerging generation, as they see it, the thoroughly postmodern generation. It is this broader, more diverse, and diffuse phenomenon that I am addressing in this paper.

### **What Exactly is Emerging?**

So what defines this movement? Can we identify a set of indicators— theological, ecclesiological, or otherwise that define the parameters of the emerging church movement? Well, many emerging leaders articulate a desire to “do local church” in ways that take postmodern culture into account. But no uniform, consensually accepted definition of “postmodern” unites the practitioners. How could it? The word “postmodern,” by its very nature, eludes final definition.<sup>6</sup> Serious attempts to comprehend changes suggesting some major cultural, epistemological, and historical watershed compels prerequisite classification of the term “modern,” which itself continues to resist consensus definition. Nor do the various emerging community leaders agree upon whether to embrace, oppose, or sift wheat from chaff when

---

<sup>6</sup> For serious exposure of inadequate, hasty attempts to define postmodernism see Thomas Oden, *After Modernity . . . What? Agenda for Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990).

facing the ill-defined postmodern culture. What unites them is the conviction that culture may and should be taken into account where the making of disciples and the planting of churches is the goal. Some emerging leaders sound like Luther in contrast to Zwingli in defense of the freedom they demand where practical matters of church structure, evangelistic method, or worship style are concerned: “where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are free!”

Author Dan Kimball, pastor of Vintage Church in Santa Cruz California, represents a comparatively more conservative, doctrine friendly, self-consciously evangelical voice within the emerging movement. Note this title of Kimball’s, *They Like Jesus But Not the Church: Insights From Emerging Generations*. Kimball also authored *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for Emerging Generations* which includes contributions from Brian McLaren and Southern Baptist author of the bestselling non-fiction hardback book in American history, Rick Warren.<sup>7</sup> Very sensitive to perceived, unfair stereotyping and caricaturing of the emerging movement, particularly where charges of doctrinal latitudinarianism arise, Kimball insists on his blog, “All the emerging churches I know believe in the inspiration of the Bible, the Trinity, the atonement, the bodily resurrection, and salvation in Jesus alone.” Yet Gibbs and Bolger can conclude, “Standing up for truth . . . has no appeal to emerging church leaders.”<sup>8</sup> Go figure. The more I try to let the self-consciously emerging voices speak for themselves, the more obvious it becomes that, if something unifies them, it cannot be doctrine. Scot McKnight insists that the movement is about ecclesiology, not theology.

In their book *Emerging Churches*, Gibbs and Bolger identify three core practices that define all emerging churches: (1) identify with the life of Jesus, (2) transform secular space, and (3) live as community. Because of these core activities, emerging Christians also (4) welcome the stranger, (5) serve with generosity, (6) participate as producers, (7) create as created beings, (8) lead as a body, and (9) take part in spiritual activities.<sup>9</sup> We will touch briefly on a couple of these indicator activities as we go along.

---

<sup>7</sup> Dan Kimball, *They Like Jesus But Not the Church: Insights From Emerging Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007). Also see Kimball’s *Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), and *Emerging Worship: Creating Worship Gatherings for New Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004.) Kimball is comparatively more conservative theologically than many of the Gibbs/Bolger types and represents the tensions concomitant with the occupation of a kind of bridging position within the movement.

<sup>8</sup> Gibbs/Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 124.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 44, 45.

### **Authentic Communities Sacralizing Secular Space**

The emerging Christians Gibbs and Bolger survey tend to use the words modern and postmodern to designate alternative ways of understanding social and cultural reality. The modern world, they contend, created the division between secular and sacred space and relegated religion to the latter. Emerging believers reject such a division and seek to re-sacralize secular space. God's claim applies to the whole world, thus his presence and lordship cry out for recognition and enjoyment everywhere and always. Futile modern attempts to keep God in his place, so to speak, invite attempts to turn Christianity into a strategy for personal happiness by believers who transition from the secular sphere into the sacred sphere and back again looking for help from God in the pursuit of their secular aspirations upon reentry.

When combined with the emerging quest for an intensely communal practice of Christianity, the sacralizing of secular space results in, among other things, aversion to "drive-in" suburban mega churches in favor of smaller, especially urban enclaves where Christ's lordship has wrongly been neglected or denied. Surely the claiming of lordship over the entire universe harmonizes with the Scriptures' witness to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But does not the New Testament also recognize a certain legitimization (albeit perhaps proximate and provisional) of a distinction between secular and sacred realms in the time between the times in which we exist? Consider Paul in Romans 13 and 1 Timothy 2, Jesus' "render to Caesar," and the almost New Testament wide comprehension of the church, not as "Christianizing" the world as such, but as a witnessing, persecuted, pilgrim (resident alien) people headed for that city of its lasting citizenship. In any case, the current re-energized quest of militant Islam to "sacralize secular space" on a global scale offers a sobering reminder of the dangers lurking where grandiose, utopian hopes for this world take hold among people one faith or another.

### **Orthopraxy Trumps Orthodoxy**

That the three core and six derivative emerging church indicators involve activities reveals a strong suspicion of doctrine in favor of ethics, the prioritizing of orthopraxy above orthodoxy. What you do matters more than what you believe. "By their fruits [not their theology] you shall know them." Fixation upon exacting precision in the articulation of an ever growing list of doctrines wastes energy better spent obeying God's commands and following the way of Jesus. On this score, the emerging critique of Evangelicalism mirrors many historic movements—e.g. monasticism (Francis), Methodism (Wesley), pietism (Spener), the

Navigators—in which the life of the church and the walk of believers had, in the eyes of would-be prophets, fallen so far below formal confessional commitments that only moral (not so much doctrinal) repentance could rescue believer and church from the judgment of God.

### **Missional and Welcoming**

The identity of Gibbs/Bolger emerging churches is self-consciously missional. They understand the resacralizing of secular space through following the way of Jesus in community as a joining of God in his holistic, redemptive activity in the world. Thus, these emerging believers feel compelled to immerse themselves in the settings where they serve, relate to each other as brothers and sisters, and respond to the physical, social, and justice-related needs of their communities. In so doing, many of these emerging believers adopt a belonging-before-believing rather than an in-versus-out conception of church boundaries. Evangelical notions of conversion make them nervous. They tend not to use the phrase “being saved,” or to ask the question, “Are you saved?” They are much more comfortable with the historic language associated with progressive sanctification than with that associated with vertical, event-shaped, punctiliar conversion. They value sacrificial investment in the lives of those they would help and for whom they would model the way of Jesus and invite to join them in following Jesus. Where evangelism is spoken of as the proclamation of a message calling for decision, they tend to hem-haw and clam up.

Undoubtedly, the best window into the positive impulses shaping many of the emerging churches is found in the research provided by Gibbs/Bolger. But whether the core activities identified by Gibbs/Bolger truly illuminate the heart of the movement is not yet clear.

### **Brian McLaren**

Donald Carson’s book, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church*, has been rightly criticized for reducing the emerging movement to matters of epistemology and largely to published writings of Brian McLaren.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless Carson does, I think, accurately describe a

---

<sup>10</sup> D. A. Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005). McLaren’s significant bestselling books include *A Generous Orthodoxy: Why I Am a Missional, Evangelical, Post/Protestant, Liberal/Conservative, Mystical/Poetic, Biblical, Charismatic/Contemplative, Fundamentalist/Calvinist, Anabaptist/Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Green, Incarnational, Depressed-yet-Hopeful, Emergent, Unfinished CHRISTIAN* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004); *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass,

major stream within the movement that Brian McLaren both represents and influences. McLaren, former pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church in greater D.C. Maryland continues to exert wide influence through his bestselling books and worldwide speaking. Penetrating cultural insights together with a disarming personal style help account for McLaren's continuing appeal. His books offer unique insights into the emerging psyche. But what also comes through and what Carson accurately uncovers is the strong protest character shaping much of the emerging movement and highly questionable treatment of the Bible McLaren models for them.

### **Are the Gibbs/Bolger Emerging Types Liberals?**

Technically no, they are not liberals in the historic sense of the word. For example, they do not contend for the separation of a supposed true gospel kernel from New Testament mythological husk. But they are liberal-ish in certain ways. Like the Protestant liberalism that developed between the appearance of Friedrich Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre* in 1822 and the publication Adolf Von Harnack's *What is Christianity?* in 1901, Gibbs/Bolger-type emergers exhibit marked preference for the Gospels as opposed to the epistles within the New Testament and chafe at theology-laced, seemingly ethics-devoid passages within the Gospels.<sup>11</sup> At times, their Jesus tends to be presented as the blonde-haired, misty blue-eyed, group-hug seeking Nazarene carpenter of Hollywood fame. Predictably, the one acceptable object of Jesus' ire tends to become the Pharisee dressed up and made to walk and talk strikingly like the conservative, evangelical, doctrine-loving, Bible-thumping target of the original emerging church protest.

Also like liberals, Gibbs/Bolger types are more comfortable with subjective views of the cross of Christ. Talk of the substitutionary atonement can be a turn off, and like liberals, they really despise Calvinism and tend to articulate more weakened views of God's governance of the universe, sometimes sounding Arminian, sometimes drifting into the language of Freewill Theism or even Whiteheadian process thought. Typical of some anti-Calvinists, they exhibit something of a congenital compulsion to keep incentives for "doing good" propped up securely.

But they are not identifiably liberal in other ways. They display a bit of a bad conscience at their marginalizing and neglect of Paul's pulsating

---

2001), and *The Story We Find Ourselves In: Further Adventures of a New Kind of Christian* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986); Adolf Von Harnack, *What is Christianity?* (New York: Harper, 1957).



theology and Jesus' separation of sheep from goats. At such inconvenient interpretive cul-de-sacs, they tend to retreat into talk of mystery, paradox, and what not reminiscent of Bible-loving but Arminianism-friendly handlers of election and predestination passages: "Well I might not know what Ephesians 1 and 2, Romans 9, John 10, and the plethora of predestinarian passages from Genesis to Revelation mean, but I know what they don't mean!" Manly liberals of the Harnackian type do not talk this way. Instead, they buck up and declare the Bible to be mistaken and just move on to passages that suit them. I do not think most of the left wing of the emerging movement has gotten there yet.

### **Ed Stetzer**

No single source rivals the work of Gibbs and Bolger in terms of detailed, diverse, primary-source-based research on the emerging church phenomenon. Any attempt to understand the movement must reckon with their impressive effort. Gibbs and Bolger admit that they are friendly observers of the movement and welcome many of the critiques, protests, and changes advanced by the communities they have studied. They are joined by other interested observers who bring, arguably, a more nuanced eye and more critical distance to the task. Former church planter, Ed Stetzer, now Research Team Director and Missiologist at the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, is one such observer. Stetzer, author of numerous books dealing with the relationship between church and culture and current trends in church planting, identifies three distinguishable streams within the emerging church movement: the relevants, the reconstructionists, and the revisionists.<sup>12</sup>

#### Revisionists

According to Stetzer, the revisionists not only embrace many of the cultural insights and ecclesiological innovations reviewed in Gibbs and Bolger's work, they want to re-think many historic touchstone doctrinal commitments and moral convictions that have shaped evangelicalism such as the substitutionary atonement, the reality of hell, and the gospel itself. Brian McLaren speaks one moment of his desire to nurture biblical communities and the next moment takes shelter in agnosticism where biblical teaching regarding homosexual behavior is in view. Stetzer applauds D. A. Carson's thorough exposure of the revisionist stream's

---

<sup>12</sup> Ed Stetzer, "First Person: Understanding the Emerging Church," available at <http://www.crosswalk.com/1372534/>.

heterodox doctrinal lapses but remains open to cultural insights to be gained by reading even McLaren.

### Reconstructionists

The agenda of those Stetzer designates as reconstructionists focuses on radical critique of contemporary church structures. In pursuit of missional, authentic, incarnational, communal Christianity, these young emerging leaders seek liberation from the drag of buildings, budgets, and bureaucracies. They favor small house church settings, shared lay leadership, and freedom from distant unknown authorities disconnected from the missional context. Stetzer's response?

. . . if emerging leaders want to think in new ways about the forms (the construct) of church, that's fine—but any form needs to be reset as a biblical form, not just a rejection of the old form. Don't want a building, a budget, and a program—OK. Don't want preaching, biblical leadership, covenant community—not OK.

### Relevants

Stetzer's "relevants" category designates doctrinally conservative, often calvinistic leaders within the movement who value their evangelical doctrinal identity but may reject the regulative principle often prized among reformed Baptists, and who are open to innovative experimentation where evangelistic outreach is concerned.<sup>13</sup>

Included among the relevants are the Mars Hill Church mentioned earlier and The Journey, a Southern Baptist Church in St. Louis. Also significant within the relevants stream is the Acts29 church planting network based at Mars Hill which conducts boot camps at various sites nationwide for the training and assessing of church planters, supports the planting of churches, provides mentoring for newly deployed planters, and helps to raise financial resources.<sup>14</sup> Though Acts29 is non-denominational, according to vice-president Darrin Patrick who also serves as pastor of The Journey, around half of the church planters associated with the network are Southern Baptist. The theology is moderately calvinistic, elder leadership is male only, urban settings are targeted, and evangelistic fervor is front and center.

---

<sup>13</sup> Simply put, the Regulative Principle states: "True worship is only commanded by God; false worship is anything not commanded." This was the Puritan's view of worship. Such a view insists that the church is meant to find direct justification for every facet of her worship. To go beyond Scripture in matters is sin.

<sup>14</sup> Visit The Journey, Darrin Patrick pastor at [www.journeyon.net](http://www.journeyon.net) and Acts29 at [www.acts29network.org](http://www.acts29network.org).

Leaders of these churches look to Tim Keller's ministry at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City as a model for the kind of thing they want to do. Keller, in his fifties, balding, and cutting a grandfatherly figure, preaches very straight conservative, biblical, calvinistic sermons in a low key manner quite different from the rollicking, hip, sarcasm-laced preaching Driscoll sometimes produces in Seattle. Started in 1989, Redeemer now draws over 5000 to its church on Broadway in Manhattan. Key Southern Baptist leaders are understandably intrigued.<sup>15</sup>

The protest contingent of angry white dropouts from conservative mega-seeker churches so prominent among Stetzer's revisionists, reconstructionists, and many of the communities highlighted by Gibbs and Bolger, make up a decidedly smaller fraction of these relevants' churches. At Mars Hill, Redeemer, and the Journey, membership is dominated by new, young, urban believers who, as a group, do not seem to have much of an axe to grind against any particular tradition. The median age within each of these congregations is around 29.

If we attempt to list convictions or values shared by the relevants it might include these: missional focus, authenticity, community, recovery of mystery and the arts, critical cultural immersion, recovery of biblical narrative, and, for the most "successful" (measured in numbers at least) congregations, embrace of the doctrines of grace and governance according to male-only elder rule. The missional focus and the cultural immersion mean that culture, while not viewed as benign, is not identified with purely negative scriptural notions of "the worldly." Instead, emerging leaders take on the burden of biblical discernment as they attempt to sift wheat from chaff where culture is concerned. Dimensions of a community's cultural landscape will be viewed variously as helpful, pernicious, or merely neutral. Getting this just right might not be easy, but the task must be faced. Otherwise the erection of unnecessary stumbling blocks to the gospel could unnecessarily hinder evangelism and church growth. On the other hand, cultural factors incompatible with the gospel and holy living left uncensored may in fact obscure the gospel and drag the church into biblical "worldliness."

Ideally, church leaders will be drawn from and thus be indigenous to the communities targeted for church plants. International mission agencies, including the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, learned this lesson decades ago. The most enduring contribution of the emerging movement could be its utter embrace and implementation of this principle of indigenous church planting here in the U.S., a nation increasingly characterized by multiple sub-cultures.

---

<sup>15</sup> Visit Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Tim Keller, pastor, at [www.redeemer.com](http://www.redeemer.com).

Successful planting of a suburban church is no predictor of success in the cities. In most cases, city folk will have to plant city churches.

Ironically, Stetzer's emerging relevants point to seeker and purpose-driven churches of the suburbs as sad examples of the marginalization of doctrine and a caving-into-culture displacement of the gospel not unlike the kind of thing David Wells has so ably described.<sup>16</sup> In many seeker churches relevants see expository preaching, preaching on whole books of the Bible, and deep teaching on the great doctrines displaced by christianized Boomer values such as self-help, career advancement, fascination with the business world, the accumulation of wealth, and the psychology of self-esteem. Evangelical critics of the relevants point to crude language spewed from the pulpit and an almost giddy, delayed-adolescent pride in the consumption of alcohol in some quarters.

I suspect the shots fired between seeker and emerging churches of the relevants type are partly on target but also partly wide of the mark. For one thing, the church growth movement, in both its seeker-sensitive and purpose-driven modalities, has some age on it, is not monolithic, and in many cases has listened to and learned from various criticisms leveled at it across the years. And people are being converted to Christ in these churches, often people who were not on the radar screen of the vast world of plateaued and declining evangelical churches, including Southern Baptist churches. In best case scenarios, seeker and purpose-driven churches have attempted to do exactly what the "right wing" of the emerging movement is now doing, plant churches indigenous to the community. As for critiques of the doctrine-friendly emerging churches, with a median age of 29 in many of them and with the leaders typically in their mid 30s (Keller at Redeemer is an exception), the blind spots and excesses of youth are to be expected—not excused, but expected.

### Stetzer versus Gibbs/Bolger

I noted earlier that I "had thought" my exposure to Mars Hill marked my introduction to the emerging church only to realize later that Donald Miller's bestselling book, *Blue Like Jazz*, had already brought me into that world. But not so fast. The taxonomy troubles where the emerging church is concerned go deeper. Gibbs and Bolger insist that Mars Hill is not emerging but Gen-X. About such churches Gibbs/Bolger contend:

. . . to generalize, the church services were characterized by loud, passionate worship music directed toward God and the believer (not the seeker); David Letterman-style, irreverent banter; raw, narrative

---

<sup>16</sup> David Wells, *No Place for Truth: Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

preaching; *Friends* (the popular TV series) type relationships; and later, candles and the arts. The bulk of church practice remained the same as their conservative Baptist seeker, new paradigm, purpose-driven predecessors; only the surface techniques changed.<sup>17</sup>

So who is right? What we can say is that Redeemer Church in New York, Mars Hill in Seattle, and The Journey in St. Louis have been spectacularly effective at reaching precisely the demographic the heroes of the Gibbs/Bolger type churches insist will only respond to sufficiently postmodern-immersed and shaped ministries. Note the implied warning from Gibbs/Bolger:

We both [Gibbs and Bolger] believe the current situation is dire. If the church does not embody its message and life within postmodern culture, it will become increasingly marginalized. Consequently the church will continue to dwindle in numbers throughout the Western world. We share a common vision to see culturally engaged churches emerge throughout the West as well as in other parts of the world influenced by the Western culture.<sup>18</sup>

Gibbs and Bolger contend that young people now in their 20s and early 30s are thoroughly postmodern and will not respond to ministries shaped by “modernity.” Fine. How might we then identify ministries that “get it” and thus can help stem the ebb tide of dwindling numbers in the West? How about 5000 plus urbanites in their twenties and thirties streaming to church hungry for Bible preaching on the right and left coasts of America and 1600 in three locations in St. Louis? No, say Gibbs and Bolger. Yes, says Stetzer. Perhaps we should let the Stetzers and the Gibbs and the Bolgers duke it out on the nomenclature front. However the semantics “emerge,” we already see much that can inform evangelical church planting.

### **Barth/Bultmann Debate Redux**

A dispute between Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann of yesteryear with a little bit of Paul Tillich thrown in might help us here. Bultmann complained to Barth that he had no notion of changing the gospel message. His only aim was to translate the gospel message into contemporary language. Barth responded that he had no problem with that, as long as the translator remembers his first task—accurate

---

<sup>17</sup> Gibbs/Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 30.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

comprehension of the original to be translated, in this case, the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>19</sup>

It is just at this point that the mischief enters. Remember that Bultmann considered the question of the bodily resurrection irrelevant to modern men and women. Barth expected that once God got Bultmann out of the ground and to a standing position, the relevance of the bodily resurrection would likely lock in for Rudolf in short order. For his part, Tillich discovered that the word “God” had lost its relevance, and so he proposed an alternative—“the ground of our being.” Oops! That didn’t catch on, did it?

Once you set yourself up as the relevance police, the put-up-or-shut-up test becomes operative—*nicht wahr*? When your perceptions and prognostications don’t pan out, you find yourself running around frustrated that folks keep finding relevant what you just told them they couldn’t and shouldn’t. So, are Redeemer, The Journey, and Mars Hill emerging or not? The jury is out, but what we do know is that these communities of faith are concretely being found relevant by exactly the demographic deemed most resistant to church and gospel in the Western world. It is a fact that kids are dropping out of church in droves (especially from seeker and purpose-driven churches) when they reach their twenties. But churches like Redeemer, Mars Hill, and the Journey attract them. And they do so not with less Bible and theology compared to seeker and purpose-driven churches already ensconced within the Southern Baptist Convention, but with more.

### Ironies

Scot McKnight, friend to the emerging movement, acknowledges the accuracy of Carson’s characterization of emerging (at least of the Gibbs/Bolger type) as a protest movement. The tie that binds the disparate sub-factions seems at times reducible to a plethora of conservative, evangelical seeker, and purpose-driven church irritants that came to tick them off within the traditions from which they emerged. Of course, protest can produce positive outcomes, e.g. Protestantism. But protest alone does not a church make. In much of the emerging literature and on the emerging blogs (especially of the Gibbs/Bolger type) one senses the lack of ecclesial memory, a certain vacuity of ideas, and a groping about for some connection to the wider Christian family. Preening, posturing, and pouting about the still elusive, still indefinable term “postmodern” cannot satisfy the yearnings for community,

---

<sup>19</sup> See especially *Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann: Letters, 1922/1966* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981) and Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 112-60.

authenticity, and relevance that ostensibly prompted the exit of many emerging believers from their former churches in the first place.

Recognition that the call of our Lord must transform our lives is not new, is a good thing, and does undoubtedly inform significant parts of emerging church aspiration. Recognition that fixation upon doctrine can function as a letter that kills is also not new, is a good thing, and does shape the sensibility of many emerging church leaders. But here the “left wing” or theology-averse contingent of the emerging movement may suffer from more than a little naïveté regarding a certain prerequisite for the deep, authentic, sustainable community for which they yearn. That prerequisite is shared conviction. For over two millennia, various forms of formal, confessional, doctrinal articulation have proven necessary for the establishment, nurture, and protection of deep fellowship. Why?—Because the depth of fellowship depends, to a certain extent, upon shared beliefs touching both theology and practice. I may assess my relationship with my neighbor as peaceable, harmonious, even as affirming, especially if my knowledge of them remains scant and superficial. But the moment I learn that they belong to a cult requiring the crucifixion of cats over a pyre on Saturday nights, I instruct my children to steer clear. “Familiarity breeds contempt” did not achieve aphoristic status for nothing.

McKnight may be correct that emerging is best understood as an ecclesiological/praxis movement, not a theological movement. Such a view certainly helps to account for the wide diversity of theological identities (or lack of a theological identity) represented within the movement. Still, as McKnight admits but seems to make little of, because the movement has to do with Christ, Bible, and church, it is inevitably, though perhaps unwittingly, theological. For my money, unwittingly theological movements are the worst kind. They tend to wax whiny and persnickety defending the cherished liberation from doctrine and theology they are just beginning to wallow in. But exactly to the extent that Christ, Bible and church animate their aspiration, so will doctrine and theology ineluctably insinuate themselves within their ranks.

### **SBC Controversy Redux**

Happily, a recent attempt to make freedom from doctrine the heart of a sustainable ecclesiological vision is available for analyses—the now defeated moderate/liberal contingent of the late brouhaha within the Southern Baptist Convention. The conflict was construed by some as a choice between freedom of conscience and Islamic-like Christo-facism. The liberal protagonists suffered repeated shocks as messengers to

successive SBC conventions gave them the thumbs down. Following a decade of defeat at the hands of democratic, denominational self-governance, the left-wing attempted to “sort-of” separate and sustain itself under the flag of freedom and doctrinal latitudinarianism; “Jesus is Lord” would suffice as the confessional minimum for the new fellowship. Within one year, matters ranging from the role of women in ministry to race relations to matters of war and peace found their way into the growing ideological identity of the “freedom” folks. The longer people stay together, so it seems, the more convictions they turn out to have! Longtime sociologist of religion and liberal Baptist herself, Nancy Ammerman, understood the distortions endemic to any comprehension of the Baptist conflict in terms of freedom versus dogma.<sup>20</sup> Both sides were always defined by rather longish lists of identifiable convictions; theological, ethical, political, and otherwise. And what’s more, these ideological proclivities turned out to matter to the liberals in just the same way as they had to the conservatives. Neither group would knowingly employ professors in their seminaries who could not affirm a hefty chunk of their own doctrinal and ethical biases.

What does this have to do with the emerging movement of the Gibbs/Bolger type? It suggests that the sustainability of its sub-factions will prove proportional in significant measure to their ability to face and know themselves as theological entities, and not as mere suggestive experimenters in praxis and things ecclesiological.

Perhaps more likely is that the influence of the Gibbs/Bolger contingent of the emerging movement will mimic (only on a smaller scale) that of the charismatic movement in relation to established churches and denominations. Thus, the emerging movement may not result in a denomination or even in many sustainable local churches, but will instead serve as a conduit for certain ideas, values and emphases back into established churches.

### **Aversion to Conversion?**

Certainly the lack of evangelistic zeal and even distaste for evangelism on principle among some does not presage growth, strength, or stability for the left-wing, doctrine-averse contingent within the movement. Scot McKnight rightly laments the absence of an evangelistic impulse among so many emerging communities:

---

<sup>20</sup> See Ammerman’s penetrating analysis of the controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention in Nancy Tatum Ammerman, *Baptist Battles: Social Change and Religious Conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995). Ammerman drew praise from major protagonists on opposite sides of the conflict.



The emerging movement is not known for [evangelism], but I wish it were. Unless you proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, there is no good news at all—and if there is no Good News, then there is no Christianity, emerging or evangelical.<sup>21</sup>

And McKnight may even be underestimating the problem. Note this from Ben Edson, leader of the Sanctus1 community in the UK and featured in Gibbs/Bolger:

We had a guy from the Manchester Buddhist center come to Sanctus1 a couple of weeks ago and talk about Buddhist approaches to prayer. We didn't talk about the differences between our faiths. We didn't try to convert him. He was welcomed and fully included and was really pleased to have been invited.<sup>22</sup>

Gibbs and Bolger attempt to account for the mindset thus: “Christians cannot truly evangelize unless they are prepared to be evangelized in the process.”<sup>23</sup> Never mind that Buddhism is formally god-less—there is no god to pray to—but for a movement critical of the seeker church, Sanctus1 sounds pretty seeker friendly for Buddhists!

Equally serious looms the simple truism that few things foreshadow more certainly the shrinking, weakening, and threatened demise of a would-be Christian movement than a bad-conscience about proselytizing. Witness the fruit of anti-evangelistic zeal among the mainline denominations that once dominated the religious landscape of America. Here in the Western world, we do not normally need to join anything or invest time, tithe, and talent for the sake of freedom of conscience—we have that already. If we choose to enter bridge-burning, covenant-shaped alliances at all it tends to be driven by the discovery of shared values, goals, and yes, theologies with likeminded believers. To the extent that this or that sub-species of emerging phenomena lack these things, its viability will prove unsustainable. To the extent that emerging churches come to develop and own such old fashioned essentials of real and lasting communion, well then, the ephemeral sheen of abstract freedom and tolerance where core doctrines are concerned will have faded, and defining theological and ecclesiological parameters will land them smack in the middle of the rest of us.

---

<sup>21</sup> Scot McKnight, “Five Streams of the Emerging Church,” 38.

<sup>22</sup> Gibbs/Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 133.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

### Should Southern Baptists Care?

Southern Baptists should care because we are already variously reacting to, being influenced by, and participating in the movement. Like the charismatic movement, the emerging church movement seems bound to permeate the thinking and practice of significant cross-sections of every Christian tradition in the West and probably beyond, especially within urban contexts. And the free church structure of Southern Baptists ensures ease of experimentation and cross-pollination with even the flimsiest of passing trends; witness clown ministries, country music churches, fire engine baptisteries, and preaching puppets.

Default construal of Baptist life by outsiders as hidebound and backward-looking will not stand too close scrutiny. Widespread adoption of seeker-church methodologies alone bears witness to how Southern Baptist church leaders are able to be influenced profoundly. Wherever the lure of potential numerical growth dangles, numerous Southern Baptist knees go wobbly. For many Baptists (and this points to a great strength and a great vulnerability among us), numerical growth covers a multitude of sins. The emerging movement is likely to be with us for awhile and to insinuate itself at both the ideological and methodological levels. We would do well to avoid quick and dirty caricatures that either naively embrace or dismiss this phenomenon.

Since 1994, Baptist statesman Jimmy Draper, now retired President and CEO of Lifeway Christian Resources (the publishing arm of the Southern Baptist Convention) and former president of the SBC, has taken aggressive steps to highlight the need to listen to, reach, and develop young leaders for service within the SBC. After conducting nationwide meetings designed to connect with young leaders, Draper concluded that young leaders were disconnecting from the SBC. Through Draper's influence and sponsorship, *The Young Leaders Summit* met in connection with the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in 2005 followed by a second meeting convened at the convention in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 2006. Draper continues efforts to understand and connect with younger Southern Baptist leaders. Commenting on the popularity of web blogs, Draper encourages young Baptist leaders: "Keep blogging," and "Be nice. Don't judge motives. Celebrate the diversity that we have . . . If you're not careful, you'll be as narrow-minded as you think some of us are."<sup>24</sup>

I expect that many Southern Baptists committed to church planting and grieved at the continued resistance to the gospel within the sprawling megalopolises of our increasingly urbanized nation will follow the phenomenon known as the emerging church movement with keen

---

<sup>24</sup> Available at [www.lifeway.com/weblog/jimmydraper/](http://www.lifeway.com/weblog/jimmydraper/).

interest. I hope that, along with Draper, many of us will listen carefully to the doctrinally evangelical young leaders with a heart for evangelism and church planting. I expect that the emerging church movement will yield much that Bible loving believers must reject. But I also believe it could yield much sound wisdom and practical insight that will help us reach new generations for Christ and plant healthy churches in the very heart of cities once given almost completely over to the devil. Time will tell.

## **Alcohol Consumption: What Would Jesus Do?**

R. Philip Roberts

*President*

*Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary*

*Kansas City, Missouri 64118*

*In this article Phil Roberts calls attention to an excellent yet neglected resource on wine-drinking in New Testament times. He draws from historical and secondary sources on alcohol consumption in antiquity to determine whether Jesus would drink alcoholic beverages in the present day. Roberts concludes that Jesus would do in modern times just what he did in the first century.*

After the 2006 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, debate swirled related to the rightness of alcohol consumption. The matter which fueled this issue was a resolution approved by messengers opposing the consumption of alcoholic beverages with an amendment attached disqualifying imbibers from appointment as agency or entity trustees.

Much of the debate, as expected, focused on a key question. That question is not “What would Jesus do?” but “What did Jesus do?” when it comes to this important concern. After all, many say, did not Jesus miraculously produce wine at the marriage feast in Cana (John 2:1-12)? Additionally, other references such as the “cup” of the Lord’s last supper would indicate, some argue, that alcohol consumption was involved. Surely, if alcohol consumption was routine in Jesus’ day and culture, then there is no way that he could have avoided it. And if Jesus consumed alcoholic beverages, then certainly his twenty-first century disciples should have no scruples about it. This argument would suffice, it would seem, for reasonably minded folk.

It is important for us, however, to step back a moment and ask an important historical question. That query is, “What was it that Jesus did?” Would it have been the case that Jesus created and consumed a beverage akin to the one marked “wine” that would be found in a local package or grocery store? Just what would have been the custom in Jesus’ day related to beverage consumption? Therefore, when we

discover what Jesus did, we can more accurately pose the question, “What would Jesus do?” when it comes to today’s context.

As a start to an answer I turn to an important, but now little read, resource that more Baptists ought to know about. This resource is an article written by now-retired Southern Baptist Theological Seminary professor of New Testament Interpretation, Robert H. Stein entitled, “Wine-Drinking in New Testament Times,” published over thirty years ago by *Christianity Today*, Volume 19 (1975): 923-25. It was brought again to my attention by Daniel Akin’s excellent Baptist Press commentary on this issue of June 30, 2006.

Stein adroitly and succinctly reviews the historical evidence for alcohol consumption in the New Testament era. Secular sources are taken into consideration. He consequently answers the questions of “Was alcohol consumed in the New Testament period?” and “Was it similar to alcohol consumption in our modern context?” with a yes–no response.

Yes, alcohol was consumed as a general custom, and no, it was customarily not synonymous with modern day consumption in the form of table wines, cocktails, mixed drinks, or even beer. Alcohol consumption in that fashion would have been viewed as a prelude to riotous debauchery.

As a rule, alcohol was mixed with water for general consumption in order to provide both a safe or sterile drink, when fresh water was not available, as well as a non-intoxicating one. In essence, alcohol consumed in the first century was so diluted and moderated that, in Stein’s words, “one’s drinking would probably affect the bladder long before it affected the mind.” Surprisingly, even in strictly pagan contexts, alcohol was always diluted except in preparation for the most raucous and debauched of circumstances in the form of a pagan celebration mixed with lewd actions and behavior.

The ancients understood the potency of and the problem with alcohol when drunk without careful precautions. It would cause drunkenness often without warning. And drunkenness was a condition viewed by the ancients as undignified and undisciplined. Inebriation was a condition only barbarians tolerated and undiluted alcohol a drink only they would imbibe.

Notably *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* comments wine “. . . was invariably heavily diluted with water. It was considered a mark of uncivilized peoples, untouched by classical culture, that they drank wine neat (undiluted) with supposed disastrous effects on their mental and physical health.”<sup>1</sup> Other historians comment that wine was “always

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1623.

mixed . . . with water and used more water than wine. Pliny mentions one sort of wine that would stand being mixed with eight times its own bulk of water. To drink wine unmixed was thought typical of barbarians, and among the Romans it was so drunk only by the dissipated at their wildest revels.”<sup>2</sup>

Mixing water with wine both sterilized the drink, avoiding the costly and time-consuming process of boiling, and lightly flavored the beverage. At a very minimum, wine was served by the general public, including the Romans themselves, at a one-to-one ratio, i.e., one part wine with one part water. At this level and certainly with anything less diluted, daily functions and responsibilities would have been impossible for the average person. In this mixture, it was still referred to as “strong wine.” This designation is evidenced among Old Testament writers who made a clear distinction between “strong drink” and “wine” (cf. Lev 10:8, 9; Num 6:3, Deut 14:26, 29:6; Jdgs 13:4, 7, 14, etc.).<sup>3</sup> Wine mixed with more water in the ration was “wine.” In Jewish practice and custom, it was generally three parts of water to one of wine. This beverage was still referred to as wine or *oinos* in the Greek. Even then, Nazarites, Aaron and his sons and others were directed not to consume this form of strongly diluted alcohol.

Additionally in his article Stein notes that 2 Maccabees 15:39 comments, “It is harmful to drink wine alone, or again to drink water alone . . .” Obviously this last directive refers to the danger of drinking unpurified water. Even in the post-New Testament era the process of mixing water and wine for generic use was continued. And interestingly it was this diluted form of wine that early church witnesses directed to be used at the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper (see Justin Martyr, *Apology* I, 67, 5; Hippolytus, *Apostolic Traditions* XXIII, 1; Cyprian, *Epistle* LXII, 2, 11 and 13).

Ah, but some might say, you still have not addressed the question of what did Jesus do when it comes to the question of the wedding feast at Cana (cf. John 2:1-11)? After all, my Bible says “wine” when it comments on the miracle of Jesus. Again, this word is *oinos*, referring to the generally diluted form of wine or perhaps even to an unfermented “fruit of the vine” or juice.

So, what would Jesus do when it comes to contemporary alcoholic beverage consumption? In my thinking, he would do what he did. And that is to utilize only beverages that have absolutely zero chance of causing inebriation. In our modern context, in my opinion, where healthy non-alcoholic drinks are readily available, and where alcoholic drinks are

---

<sup>2</sup> Harold Whetstone Johnston, *The Private Life of the Romans*, 199.

<sup>3</sup> See Paige Patterson’s Baptist Press article of July 7, 2006, for further clarification on this matter.

undiluted, carrying the potential of intoxication and are often consumed to the point of drunkenness, it would be very probable that Jesus would be a total abstainer.

## **The Extent of Christ's Atonement**

Terry L. Wilder

*Associate Professor of New Testament and Greek  
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Kansas City, Missouri 64118*

*In this article Terry Wilder briefly considers whether Christ died only for the elect, i.e. believers, or for all of humanity. He reviews the arguments usually given for each viewpoint and decides which, in his opinion, has the best biblical support. From the start, Wilder is careful to emphasize that this issue is not a matter of orthodoxy and heresy but rather one of interpretation. Further, he underscores that the Southern Baptist Faith & Message 2000 allows room for both viewpoints.*

### **Introduction**

The extent of Christ's death is a subject that theologians and others have discussed for many years. Discussion of this topic shows no sign of letting up anytime soon. Theological students still talk about it. The matter was also discussed to some degree in 2006 by Paige Patterson and Al Mohler at the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting held in Greensboro, North Carolina. This short essay is my contribution to the conversation.<sup>1</sup>

Two viewpoints need to be considered when answering the question, "For whom did Christ die?" First, the idea that Jesus died for certain people is called "limited atonement." Second, the view that Christ died for all people is known as "unlimited atonement." The decision made between these two points of view is *not* a matter of orthodoxy and heresy, but it does represent a difference in interpretation. And, the SBC's *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* allows for both points of view. Despite this difference of opinion in interpretation, advancing the gospel together in love and unity must be paramount for Southern Baptists.

---

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to my former professor, William E. Bell, Jr., now retired, but formerly Senior Professor of Religion at Dallas Baptist University. With some modification, much of this article greatly reflects and is based on notes I gathered in class from his excellent teaching on this subject. Any errors, however, should be counted as mine.



### **Christ Died For Certain People (Limited Atonement)**

Let us first consider the idea that Jesus died for certain people. Limited atonement says that Jesus Christ died *only* for the “elect,” i.e. only for those whom God chose for himself out of the entire company of people before the foundation of the world.

The basis for this view rests in two things, essentially. First, the logical argument concerning “double jeopardy” is used. Double jeopardy is trying a person twice for the same crime, or bringing the same charges against two different people, even though one or the other would obviously be innocent. And, in our laws today—and this has been true in Western jurisprudence for centuries—a man is not to be brought into double jeopardy. In other words, if he has once been acquitted of a crime, he is never to be tried again for that same crime.

The argument goes like this: If Jesus Christ died for the sins of all people, then the sins of all people are paid for, and one has already been judged for those sins. Therefore, if God would bring an unbeliever into judgment because of his sins, even though Christ has already died for those sins, God would, in effect, be putting that unbeliever in a position of double jeopardy. He would be charging him with crimes already judged upon another man, upon Christ Jesus. Therefore, the argument goes, since in our own laws we forbid this sort of thing, surely we would not expect that God would do something which even we in our own laws would not permit. Surely God would not be so unjust and unrighteous as to try a person for a crime if he had already reaped judgment for that crime by the death of Jesus Christ. So, you essentially have the argument of double jeopardy. That is, if the unbeliever's sins are already paid for in the death of Christ, then God would be unjust if he would visit judgment upon the unbeliever himself because he would then in effect be exacting double punishment for a single crime—sin.

Secondly, the position of limited atonement, or particular redemption, fits into the overall concept of “divine election” as understood by the thoroughgoing Calvinist and represented by the acronym TULIP.<sup>2</sup> An essential, rational, and consistent part of the calvinistic system is to say that if God chose in eternity past only certain people to be saved then he would then cause the Son to die for those people. And therefore, there would be no point, apparently, in his dying for the non-elect because God never intended to save them in the first place. And thus, why extend the benefits of the death of Christ to the non-elect, when, as a matter of fact, God has no intention of saving the non-elect? So, as a part of the

---

<sup>2</sup> TULIP represents (T)otal depravity, (U)nconditional election, (L)imited atonement, (I)rresistible grace, and (P)erseverance of the saints.

calvinistic system of TULIP, limited atonement is a consistent and absolutely reasonable assumption as part of the overall system. And this idea, essentially, together with the idea of double jeopardy, is the reason why the thoroughgoing Calvinist essentially believes in the idea of particular redemption or limited atonement. Even the staunchest Calvinist would likely admit that no specific Scripture says plainly, in so many words, that Christ died only for the elect, but rather, they think that this is the strong, overall theological inference from the whole system of the sovereignty of God and the divine, unconditional election of man.

### **Christ Died For All People (Unlimited Atonement)**

Let us now consider the idea that Christ died for everyone. Unlimited atonement is the belief that Christ died for *all* people, even though all people will not be saved. One might ask, "How could God allow Christ to die for people who would never be saved?" Admittedly, we are not given a specific answer in Scripture, but those who hold to this view might reason that perhaps it is in order that when a person stands before the Great White Throne Judgment of God he could never say, "Of course I wasn't saved because Christ didn't die for me." Now that is hypothetical, of course, but one might bring up that argument.

How would the unlimited atonement school of thought answer the double jeopardy argument of particular redemption or limited atonement? Their answer would be something like this: Just because you have a reasonable analogy does not mean that you can establish a biblical doctrine on it. As a matter of fact, you can bring up a very reasonable analogy for unlimited atonement also. For example, take the polio vaccine which has been available for many years. The vaccine is nearly 100% effective and available to every man, woman, and child in this country. If you cannot afford it, you can go to a public health clinic and get it for nothing. And yet, polio has surprisingly not yet been totally stamped out in this country because there are people who still do not get the vaccine. The fact that the vaccine is available, effective, and without charge, if necessary, to every human being in this land does not automatically stamp out the disease. You still have to take the vaccine. So, this side would say, even so with the death of Christ. The death of Christ is available to all people. It potentially covers all people, but it does not automatically save all people. It must be appropriated by each individual. As one theologian has said, "The death of Christ renders all men *savable*, but it does not automatically forgive them; it does not automatically save them."

Now, the decision between these two points of view is not a matter of orthodoxy (as mentioned earlier), nor, frankly, of tremendous concern to me. For, even from the standpoint of unlimited atonement, those who do

not believe in Jesus Christ are obviously not going to be saved. And therefore, ultimately, in eternity, it will make very little difference whether Christ died for them or not because they did not appropriate his death, even if it was available to them. So, the ultimate end result is the same either way.

Nonetheless, I do think that the Bible teaches unlimited atonement. And I accept that position as being biblical and true because I think that this is the clear teaching of Scripture. I do not find it absolutely essential to the whole concept of salvation, but since the Bible seems to teach it rather clearly, then I subscribe to unlimited atonement.

### **Biblical Passages for Unlimited Atonement**

What are some of the biblical passages which substantiate the belief that Christ died for all people?

1 John 2:1-2—" . . . if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he himself is the propitiation (i.e., a propitiatory sacrifice) for our sins; and not for our sins only, but also for those of the *whole world*." In this passage, it is very difficult to make the "whole world" mean the "whole world of the elect" or the "children of God throughout the world." Obviously, the "our" in this text refers to the elect, but the "whole world" includes even those beyond the elect. That is to say, John uses the phrase to refer to the whole of humanity.

John 3:16—"For God so loved the *world*, that *whosoever* believes in Him . . ." In this beloved verse John uses the term "world" again to refer to the world of humanity and the word "whosoever" to say that anyone may come to Christ in faith.

2 Corinthians 5:19—"God was in Christ reconciling the *world* unto Himself . . ." Now, those who believe in particular redemption or limited atonement would again say that this reference is to the "world of the elect." But again that seems to push it into a mold which hardly fits.

1 Timothy 2:6—"Christ gave himself as a ransom for *all*, the testimony given at the proper time." Earlier Paul says that "there is one God and one mediator between God and men (humanity), the man Christ Jesus" (2:5). Verse 6 then is a description or explanation of what Christ did as mediator: He "gave himself as a ransom for all." While there are places in Scripture where the word "all" can refer to "all kinds of people," this verse is plainly not one of them. Paul uses a literary device here to show

that “all people” have access to the salvation that this “one God” provides.

1 Timothy 4:10—“We trust in the living God, who is the Savior (or benefactor) of *all* men, *especially* of those that believe.” This verse is very important. God is the Savior of all men, but in a special sense, he is the Savior of those who believe. He is potentially the Savior of all, but he is particularly the Savior of them who believe.

Titus 2:11—“The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to *all* men.” This verse is another of the many that emphasize the universality of access to God’s grace.

Hebrews 2:9—“We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for *every man*.” Do the words “every man” apply only to the elect? I do not see how you can say that. He tasted death for *every* man.

2 Peter 3:9—“God is not willing that any should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance.” Now the point here is simply this: “How could God wish that all would come to repentance, if as a matter of fact, it would not make any difference if some did come to repentance because Christ did not die for them?” In order for God to say that he wants all men to come to repentance would imply that he has made provision for all men, if they should come to repentance.

2 Peter 2:1—This passage is perhaps the strongest one in all of the word of God on this particular topic. Here we have a verse that specifically states that Jesus Christ died for those who are eternally lost. Now, first of all, in the context of 2 Peter 2 the apostle is speaking here about apostasy. He is talking about false prophets. He is speaking about unbelievers. The latter point is abundantly clear, not only in 2 Peter 2, but also in the parallel passage in the book of Jude. Jude is parallel to 2 Peter 2. The material, in most cases, is almost identical. And yet, Jude says, particularly in verse 19 of his epistle, that these men of whom he speaks (and these are the same type of men of whom Peter speaks), these men were “natural men, not having the Spirit.” In other words, they are specifically declared to be unbelievers. But notice what Peter says in 2 Peter 2:1 about these unbelievers: “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you [he is talking about the false prophets back among Israel in days past], there shall also be false teachers among you, who privately, secretly, shall

bring in destructive heresies [then notice this], even denying the Lord that *bought* them.” The fact that the Lord *bought* them indicates that he died for them. In other words, he provided redemption for them. But they have refused and turned away from it. It is as though a man was given a pardon by the governor of the state, and instead of accepting it and walking out of the prison he refuses it and insists on his legal right to go to the gas chamber or the electric chair.<sup>3</sup> So, here we have those apostates, these unbelievers, who, although the Sovereign Lord bought them in the sense that he died for them, they deny him, and thus, they bring upon themselves swift destruction.

### Conclusion

These biblical passages and others to which we might refer plainly teach that Jesus Christ died for all people. Therefore, all people are savable. All men potentially can be saved. But only those who appropriate the death of Christ by faith will actually realize this salvation. And thus, I think that the analogy of the polio vaccine is more applicable here than the analogy of the law court and the double jeopardy. But remember that we do not prove doctrine nor formulate it by analogies, examples, types, parables, or even by a theological system. They may illustrate doctrine, but they do not formulate it. Therefore, we formulate illustrations and analogies to illustrate a doctrine which we already find clearly taught in the text of Scripture. We do not formulate an analogy and then use it to bolster our doctrine. In my opinion, that is perhaps what has been done in the case of limited atonement. Therefore, the Scripture seems to teach that Christ has died for all men (unlimited atonement), but only those who appropriate his death by faith will be saved.

---

<sup>3</sup> In our country's history a few instances like the one that I have just described have actually occurred.

**The Dead End Trail:  
J. M. Carroll and *The Trail of Blood*  
and Its Impact upon Church Planting  
in the 21st Century**

Rodney A. Harrison

*Vice-President of Institutional Effectiveness*

*Associate Professor of Christian Education*

*Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary*

*Kansas City, Missouri 64118*

*In 1931, Clarence Walker published the body of J. M. Carroll's materials used over two decades supporting the successionist theory of Baptist history. In this article Rodney Harrison reviews his journey through the internet, Texas, Nashville, and Oxford seeking to find and validate Carroll's source documents cited in *The Trail of Blood . . . Following the Christians Down Through the Centuries . . . or The History of Baptist Churches from the Time of Christ, Their Founder to the Present Day*. He discusses the development of Carroll's lectures and his failed attempts to publish his lecture notes during his lifetime. Harrison's conclusion considers the implication of Carroll's work, which to date has sold over 2,230,000 copies. Does the *Trail of Blood* support an anti-intellectual and anti-evangelistic mindset in the hundreds of new and existing churches across North America claiming to use this booklet in their membership classes and instructional programs?*

The notion that "big things come in little packages" can truly be said of *The Trail of Blood*, a diminutive 56-page booklet by J. M. Carroll, published in a compact four inch by six inch format. The full title of this small book originally published in 1931 is *The Trail of Blood . . . Following the Christians Down Through the Centuries . . . or The History of Baptist Churches from the Time of Christ, Their Founder to the Present Day*. By 1994 over 1,955,000 copies were in print. This number increased by over 32,000 copies per year between 1994 and 2002, for a total of 2,280,000 copies covering sixty-six editions in seventy-one years.

The original publisher, American Baptist Publishing Company of Lexington, Kentucky, successfully moved their first 25,000 copies

almost immediately. That same year, the copyright and printing responsibilities were transferred to Ashland Avenue Baptist Church, also in Lexington. Between 1931 and 1998, the church printed over two million copies before transferring the printing rights to Bryan Station Baptist Church of Lexington. Since that time, electronic copies of the book and accompanying study lessons have been available free of charge on the internet. Presently, over 3100 church and para-church websites provide free downloadable copies of this book.<sup>1</sup> A “large print” edition of *The Trail of Blood* became available in early 2006 from the School of Biblical and Theological Studies in Wichita, Kansas. The traditional four by six inch version is still available from Bryan Station Baptist Church, which prints the book in lots of five thousand.

I first read *The Trail of Blood* as an undergraduate student at Dallas Baptist University. At the time, the “Trail of Blood” assignment paled to the reading of Leon Macbeth’s “Baptist History” and “Sourcebook,” so I took little interest in this assignment, other than digesting sufficient information to pass any conceivable essay examination relating to this assignment.

Twelve years later, during a consultation visit as the Church Extension associate with the California Southern Baptist Convention, a pastor shared with me that he was using *The Trail of Blood* in the church new member training. The idea for using *The Trail of Blood* came from his mentor, who also used Carroll’s book for new membership training. Over the next two years, I encountered three bi-vocational church planters supportive of Carroll’s premise of an unbroken succession of Baptist churches. Each of these men endorsed *The Trail of Blood* as an authoritative resource. Due to the lay ministry of these men, I was not overly alarmed until a speaker at a State Baptist meeting challenged conference participants to read *The Trail of Blood*. It was at that point in early 2000 that I refreshed my memory with a re-reading of Carroll’s work, and became interested in exploring the source document Carroll claimed to have used in developing his *Trail of Blood* thesis. Since my peers were also experiencing renewed interest in *The Trail of Blood* by a few church leaders, I would occasionally challenge my colleagues to engage in research as to the source documents cited by Carroll and to gain some additional insights into the life and motivating factors of J. M. Carroll.

---

<sup>1</sup> Advanced scholar search at [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) of “The Trail of Blood” and “J. M. Carroll”; accessed: March 12, 2006. Using Microsoft FrontPage, I was able to determine 3109 active sites and 484 non-active sites providing downloads of J. M. Carroll’s “The Trail of Blood” in Adobe, Microsoft Word, WordPerfect or RTF formats.

In 2002, I had the opportunity to conduct research at Regent's Park College, Oxford. My original plan was to study the "House Church Movement" in England, but that project soon fizzled out, as it soon became evident that those using the Internet had embellished the extent of the movement. With additional time on my hands, my colleagues and I took advantage of availability of the Angus and Bodleian libraries to begin research on the sources cited by Carroll in *The Trail of Blood*. During the fall of 2002 and summer of 2004 the opportunity arose to study the J. M. Carroll collection stored in the archives of the A. Webb Roberts Library at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. In 2005 a study grant allowed me to conduct research at the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in Nashville, Tennessee. This article is the first of several papers that I hope to write based on these research opportunities.

The author, James Milton Carroll (January 8, 1852–January 11, 1931) was a prominent Texas Baptist leader for a period of five decades covering the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. His brother, B. H. Carroll, was the founder and president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Included in his list of personal friends was J. R. Graves, who promoted Landmarkism and Baptist Successionism through *The Tennessee Baptist*, which he edited from 1848 to 1889.<sup>2</sup> According to Carroll, Graves frequently visited Texas and was "loved by the very large majority of Texas Baptists."<sup>3</sup> The influence Graves had upon the Carroll brothers is readily seen in the writings of these two brothers. In addition to the aforementioned *The Trail of Blood*, J. M. wrote *The Eternal Safety and Security of all Blood Bought Believers, A History of Texas Baptists* and *B. H. Carroll, the Colossus of Baptist History*. His brother, B. H. Carroll wrote *Ecclesia—The Church, Jesus Christ, the Baptists and their Doctrines, Christ and His Church, Whitsitt and Wilmington*, and *Dr. Carroll has a Word about the Whitsitt Controversy*. In addition to these publications, both brothers frequently wrote articles for Baptist papers that promoted Landmark ideals, especially during the Hayden controversy.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, "James Robinson Graves," at [http://www.sbhla.org/bio\\_graves.htm](http://www.sbhla.org/bio_graves.htm). Accessed: November 1, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> J. M. Carroll, *A History of Texas Baptists* (Dallas: Baptist Standard Publishing, 1923), 448.

<sup>4</sup> For additional insights into this controversy, see Joseph Early, *A Texas Baptist Power Struggle: The Hayden Controversy* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2006), and Charles Basil Bugg, "The Whitsitt Controversy: A Study in Denominational Conflict" (Th.D. Dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1972).



During the late nineteenth century, the Whitsitt Controversy was a major dividing point among Southern Baptists. William H. Whitsitt, the professor of church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, published *A Question in Baptist History* in 1896. In his book, he established the premise that English Anabaptists began practicing immersion only around 1641. Whitsitt felt that only with the resumption of believer's baptism by immersion should they take the name "Baptists." A firestorm of objection against Whitsitt's book arose from both pulpits and Baptist papers. Curiously, Whitsitt's detractors included both Landmarkers, who held that Baptists were the true church founded by Jesus, and scholars who agreed with Whitsitt's 17th century view of Baptist origin. Jesse Thomas, in response to *Question* wrote:

Had he confined himself to this question alone (the one of Baptist Succession) it is hard to see how he could have displeased those who are sensitive at that point. But he was not content with this. Boldly, and incautiously, he had committed himself to the demonstration of a wide and drastic negative, viz: that there were never any Baptists whatever either in England or Holland before the year 1641.<sup>5</sup>

John T. Christian volleyed an immediate response to *A Question in Baptist History* in his book, *Did They Dip?* Christian, a prominent Kentucky minister, was a professor of biblical studies at Baptist Bible Institute of New Orleans at the time of Whitsitt's writing. In *Did They Dip?* Christian writes, "The footsteps of the Baptists of the ages can more easily be traced by blood than by baptism."<sup>6</sup> With Bible students and Baptist papers now taking on the Whitsitt Controversy, the topic gained importance in the churches and, over time, one of the most popular lecturers on the subject come to be J. M. Carroll.

Following Carroll's death in 1931, many popular speakers and preachers continued to use Carroll's notes and chart, including A. A. Davis, whose 1945 book, *Ten Sermons on the Trail of Blood*, remains in print today. Such men continued to speak on the subject of Baptist Successionism as outlined in *The Trail of Blood* well into the 1960s.

Today, the subject is again becoming popular on web blogs and coffee house conversations. Recently, even popular "Tuned into America" commentator Sean Hannity has taken up the subject.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Jesse Thomas, "Dr. Whitsitt's 'Question,'" *The American Journal of Theology* (January 1898): 2.

<sup>6</sup> John T. Christian, *A History of Baptists*, Vol. 1 (Texarkana, TX: Bogard Press, 1922), 22.

<sup>7</sup> Sean Hannity, "Tuned into America" web blog, [www.hannity.com](http://www.hannity.com), discussion topic: "Religion; The Trail of Blood"; accessed: October 23, 2006.

The development of *The Trail of Blood* is almost as intriguing as its popularity. According to the introduction to *The Trail of Blood*, a Dr. J. W. Porter was one of those who heard Carroll's lectures. He was so impressed that he offered to publish them as a book if Carroll would put them in writing.<sup>8</sup> Carroll agreed and gave Porter the right to publish them as a book that would include the chart Carroll used in his lectures to illustrate his history of Baptists. Although Carroll died before the book was off the press, the first edition was now "before the public and the whole edition was soon sold out."<sup>9</sup>

Soon, copies of *The Trail of Blood* were being sent to pastors and church leaders. Many Baptist associations bought the books in bulk and sent copies to every church. The wide distribution of the book throughout the South was one of the reasons the theory of Baptist succession was widely accepted. Another was Carroll's extensive use of references to support his theory. To many, these references provided the appearance of great scholarship. In fact, the inside and outside back cover of the book includes, "A partial list of books used in preparing lectures on *The Trail of Blood*," containing seventy-nine resources.<sup>10</sup> This in a book that was under sixty pages in length! For many readers, there was no question that Carroll had done his homework.

However, the actual publication of *The Trail of Blood* was delayed over a decade. Carroll originally penned this first manuscript around 1918.<sup>11</sup> He then submitted this manuscript to his friend P. E. Burroughs of the Baptist Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention for publication. In a letter dated December 19, 1918, Burroughs writes:

I spoke to Dr. Van Ness this morning about your manuscript "Betrayal of Blood." He expresses the wish that you will send the manuscript in at your early convenience. It may not seem possible to fit the book into the schedule of our study books, but we will be pleased to have you send the

---

<sup>8</sup> Agreement letter dated January 30, 1930, from J. W. Porter to J. M. Carroll (A. Webb Roberts Library, Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Fort Worth TX).

<sup>9</sup> J. M. Carroll, *The Trail of Blood* (Lexington, KY: American Baptist Publishing Company, 1931), 1.

<sup>10</sup> *The Trail of Blood*, back cover. The author can only speculate on the reasons the first edition published by the American Baptist Publishing Company includes the list of supporting documents in the back pages while subsequent editions published by the Ashland Avenue Baptist Church include the list on the inside and outside of the back cover. In the Ashland Avenue editions two entries are included twice, "Foxe's Book of Martyrs" appears on the inside cover and "Book of Martyrs—Fox" appears on the outside back cover. "Short History of the Baptists" by Vedder is included on both the inside and outside back covers.

<sup>11</sup> J. M. Carroll, *The Trail of Blood*, handwritten manuscript (A. Webb Roberts Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX).

manuscript with the assurance that it will have every kindly consideration in these quarters.<sup>12</sup>

In a letter dated March 11, 1919, Dr. Van Ness writes:

Dear Dr. Carroll,

I have yours of recent date asking about your manuscript. Your manuscript lies on my desk and has been given attention. I have read it with great interest and think if printed it will have a useful place. My difficulty in deciding has been in just what form it should be presented if it is published. I will lay it before our Book Committee at its next meeting and see if we can reach any decision, which will be sometime in April. I am sure you will be glad to leave it with us until this can be done.<sup>13</sup>

Apparently that was not the case, for in a letter dated fourteen days later he writes:

Dear Dr. Carroll,

I have yours of March 21st. I think you construed my letter with a little more interrogation point than existed. My perplexity was in fitting the book into its sphere of usefulness. What you say about making a little book, however, appeals to me. I think if it was worked over it might easily prove to be very acceptable.

Our situation is a little perplexing because we have several historical books before us. We would not know just what to do. Dr. Christian has a manuscript in our hands and then we have the Riley manuscript yet to settle upon.

I am going to return your manuscript as you request . . . .<sup>14</sup>

Beginning in 1920, saved correspondences demonstrate that Carroll decided to begin campaigning for the publication of this work. A letter from the Cloudcast Baptist Assembly pledged the purchase of 1000 copies of *The Trail of Blood*, the name that Carroll was now using for both his lecture series and promised book.<sup>15</sup> A letter from the Baptist Headquarters office in San Antonio, Texas notes the material was “. . .

---

<sup>12</sup> Letter from P. E. Burroughs to J. M. Carroll dated December 19, 1918 (A. Webb Roberts Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX).

<sup>13</sup> Letter from I. J. Van Ness to J. M. Carroll dated March 11, 1919 (A. Webb Roberts Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX).

<sup>14</sup> Letter from I. J. Van Ness to J. M. Carroll dated March 25, 1919 (A. Webb Roberts Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX).

<sup>15</sup> Letter from A. N. Porter to J. M. Carroll dated March 22, 1920 (A. Webb Roberts Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX).

simply remarkable in their scope, marvelous in the fund of information imparted, unapproached in their presentation of interesting and instructive and of inestimable value . . .” This letter goes on to say, “I fully appreciate the efforts of your research, and the careful attention to details and to the authenticity of your statements, and deem them to be one of the most concise reviews of history . . .” However, this letter is also the first to raise the question of source documentation. In his last sentence, Fred Hall writes, “I hope you will find a place in the edition to incorporate some if not all of the facts which you have so ably presented verbally.”<sup>16</sup>

The Baptist Sunday School Board responded with a letter dated December 23, 1922. Part of the letter reads:

Dr. Van Ness spoke to me about your manuscripts afterwards and said that its chief fault was the lack of proper connections between the high points which you touched from age to age. I told him that you supplied these connections in the spoken discourse whereupon he suggested that they ought to be supplied in the written manuscript.<sup>17</sup>

In the second manuscript, Carroll includes a list of thirty-seven works cited and adds numerous parenthetical references in the body of the text.<sup>18</sup> However, these references were often misleading. For example, in the second manuscript and in the final printed form, Carroll notes: “. . . there is not one instance of the baptism of a child till the year 370.” He supports this statement with a parenthetical reference to Christian’s “A History of Baptists, Volume 1,” page 31. However, when one turns to the source Carroll cites, the reader finds the following, “The earliest clear evidence of infant baptism is found in Tertullian who opposed it (A.D. 185). The first direct evidence in favor of it is found in the writings of Cyprian, in the Council of Carthage, in Africa, A.D. 253.”<sup>19</sup>

The Baptist Sunday Board refused to publish *The Trail of Blood*; nevertheless, Carroll proceeded to lay the foundations for publication. Beginning in 1923, churches and Baptist state boards were enlisted to raise funds for the publication of the book. Carroll also benefited from frequent lecture series and seminars, for which his normal remuneration was \$100 per night plus expenses or \$250 plus expenses for a series of

---

<sup>16</sup> Letter from Fred S. Hall to J. M. Carroll, dated July 7, 1920 (A. Webb Roberts Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX).

<sup>17</sup> Letter from E. D. Alldredge to J. M. Carroll dated December 23, 1922 (A. Webb Roberts Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX).

<sup>18</sup> J. M. Carroll, *The Trail of Blood*, typed manuscript with handwritten addendum entitled, “Books to be Examined” (A. Webb Roberts Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX).

<sup>19</sup> Christian, *Did They Dip?*, 31.

five lectures.<sup>20</sup> During this same period, Carroll enlisted the help of private supporters in raising funds for the publication of *The Trail of Blood*. Ironically, the timeline for the development of the source material seemed to change over the years. In a letter dated December 26, 1929, W. S. Carter, in a fund-raising authorized by J. M. Carroll, writes,

Dr. J. M. Carroll, of San Antonio, who has studied and preached and preached and studied an exceptionally large amount of history concerning the Baptist faith. He has also studied the history of Christian religion from Christ down to the present time, and is now engaged in writing a book from the information gained from long years of study. He has read many books on the subject, and gained information in many ways concerning the Christian faith and the martyrdom suffered by many God-fearing souls both men and women. The true Christian religion not being protected by the state like some of the other religions were, caused its followers to suffer and loose their lives for the faith that they held so dear. That caused Brother Carroll to call this history The Trail of Blood.

He partially wrote this history about five years ago, and has given lectures of the subject in many of our churches . . . Our foreign missionaries need this history badly. They could do more effective work in soul saving if they had it. And, as that is the great object of missionary Baptists, let's do what we can to get this good book put into the hands of all Kingdom workers.

As afore mentioned this book was not finished; the references were never put in, and, of course, they have to be there to make the book authentic, so Brother Carroll is now rewriting the book and is putting the references in their proper places. It will take him at least six months to finish the book. He is not charging anything for writing the book, but did ask that we contribute to his living expenses while he does this work, which will amount to \$1200.00, and it will take about that much more to publish the first edition of the book.<sup>21</sup>

Carter goes on to tell the story of one good lady in the church who contributed \$50 from her poverty and others who should give \$100, \$500, or more.

So, the contributions came in. Ironically, Carroll continued to share his need for publication funds. In a letter dated March 25, 1930, the pastor of First Baptist Church, Paul's Valley, Oklahoma, in follow-up to

---

<sup>20</sup> The author has copies of correspondence from Bethel College, Knoxville, Tennessee, the Baptist State Board of Missions, Louisville, Kentucky, and the Baptist Bible Institute of New Orleans supporting these amounts as normative. Several other letters from local churches and pastors supporting these figures can be accessed at the A. Webb Roberts Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

<sup>21</sup> Letter from W. S. Carter to J. M. Carroll dated February 26, 1930 (A. Webb Roberts Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX).

Carroll's visit to his church, writes, "You remember you said if you had \$400.00 that you could go ahead and finish it. Well, I did the best I could for you and got over half of it for you."<sup>22</sup>

At the same time, Carroll forgot to mention that the publication issue had taken care of itself. In a letter dated January 30, 1930, J. W. Porter, the publisher of the American Baptist Publishing Company, wrote Carroll the following:

My Dear Dr. Carroll,

Your kind and valued letter received and noted with pleasure and interest . . .

Now, in regard to the royalty, I will say that I will allow you twenty percent royalty. In other words if the book sells for one dollar you would get twenty cents. I have never received over twelve and one half percent on any book that I have published. You assume no financial responsibilities what so ever. I should say the book should not sell for less than one dollar. However, if it makes one hundred pages it would be difficult to get more than one dollar per copy. We can decide later as to how the chart should be published. I hardly think it necessary to print it in colors. I feel pretty sure that the book will sell if properly advertised. Have you any idea when you could begin publication?

With prayers and best wishes, I am,  
Cordially yours,

J. W. Porter

Despite the promise to publish, Carroll continued to raise funds for this cause. In a ledger dated April 28, 1930, an additional \$63.50 was raised that month for the publication of *The Trail of Blood*.

Ironically, it was only after Carroll's death that the book was eventually published. The original run of 25,000 copies sold out almost immediately at \$1 per copy. The second edition included an introduction by Clarence Walker, Pastor of the Ashland Avenue Baptist Church and sold for 25 cents. In the second and subsequent editions, the introduction, which constitutes the first five pages of the 56-page book, is significant in that it includes several addendums to Carroll's history. Some of these have taken on "legendary" status among some Baptists and among those who seek to refute everything within its pages. These additions include quotes attributed to Carroll, which, to the uninformed reader, seem authentic. For example, the following is said to have come from Cardinal

---

<sup>22</sup> Letter from R. G. Baucom, First Baptist Church, Paul's Valley, to J. M. Carroll, dated March 25, 1930 (A. Webb Roberts Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX).

Stanislaus Hosius, Chairman of the Council of Trent proceedings, which reads,

Were it not that the baptists have been grievously tormented and cut off with the knife during the past twelve hundred years, they would swarm in greater number than all the reformers.<sup>23</sup>

Not surprisingly, this statement cannot be substantiated. Nor can a quote attributed to Sir Isaac Newton be substantiated, in which he is said to have said, “The Baptists are the only body of known Christians that have never symbolized with Rome.” Thus, every printing since the original has fueled the fires of misinformation.

However, of interest and concern to contemporary church ecclesiology are the ten landmarks of the true Baptist or Baptist-like churches. Carroll states in his opening lecture, “If in going down through the centuries we run upon a group or groups of people bearing not these distinguishing marks and teaching other things for fundamental doctrines, let us beware.” He goes on to identify the ten “. . . unerring, infallible marks” of the true church.

1. Christ, the author of this religion, organized His followers or disciples into a **Church**. And the disciples were to organize other churches as this religion spread and other disciples were “made.” (Bapt. Succession—Ray—Revised Edition, 1st Chap.)
2. This organization or church, according to the Scriptures and according to the practices of the Apostles and early churches was given two kinds of offices and only two—pastors and deacons. The pastor was called “Bishop.” Both pastor and deacons to be selected by the church and to be servants of the church.
3. The churches in their government and discipline to be entirely separate and independent of each other. Jerusalem to have no authority over Antioch; nor Antioch over Ephesus; nor Ephesus over Corinth, and so forth. And their government to be congregational, democratic. A government of the people, by the people and for the people.
4. To the church were given two ordinances and only two. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. These to be perpetual and memorial.
5. Only the “**saved**” were to be received as members of the church. (Acts 2:47.) These saved ones to be saved by grace alone without any works of the law. (Eph 2:5, 8, 9.) These saved ones and they only, to be immersed in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Matt. 28:19.) And only those thus received and baptized, to partake of the

---

<sup>23</sup> Hosius, Letter, *Apud Opera*, 112, 113.

- Lord's Supper and the supper to be celebrated only by the church, in church capacity.
6. The inspired scriptures, and they only, in fact, the New Testament, and that only, to be the rule and guide of faith and life, not only for the church as an organization, but for each individual member of that organization.
  7. **Christ Jesus**, the founder of this organization and the savior of its members, to be their only priest and kin, their only Lord and Lawgiver, and the only head of the churches. The churches to be executive only in carrying out their Lord's will and completed laws, never legislative, to amend or abrogate old laws or to make new ones.
  8. This religion of Christ to be individual, personal, and purely voluntary or through persuasion. No physical or governmental compulsion. A matter of distinct individual and personal church. "Choose you" is the scriptural injunction. It could be neither accepted nor rejected nor lived by proxy nor under compulsion.
  9. Mark well! That neither Christ nor His apostles, ever gave to his followers, what is know today as a denominational name, such as "Catholic," "Lutheran," "Presbyterian," "Episcopal," and so forth—unless the name given by Christ to John was intended for such, "The Baptist," "John the Baptist." (Matt. 11:11 and 10 or 12 over times.) Christ called the individual follower "disciple." Two or more were called "disciples." The organization of disciples, whether at Jerusalem or Antioch or elsewhere, was called Church. If more than one of these separate organizations were referred to, they were called Churches. The word church in the singular was never used when referring to more than one of these organizations. Nor even when referring to them all.
  10. I venture to give one more distinguishing mark. We will call it—Complete separation of Church and State. No combination, no mixture of this spiritual religion with a tempor [sic] "Religious Liberty," for everybody.

Carroll contends that ". . . Baptists have an unbroken line of churches since Christ. . . ." that bear these marks.<sup>24</sup> However, the marks seemed to have changed even during his lifetime. In his first manuscript, both the order and content are significantly different. In his second known manuscript, the ten marks are as noted above.

Numerous papers and articles explore the propriety of Carroll's affirmation of groups such as the Novatians, Montanists, Paulicans and Waldenses as Baptist and as holding to these ten unerring, infallible marks. Therefore, the focus will turn to aspects of his character and contribution that have contemporary implication to church planting and missional ecclesiology.

---

<sup>24</sup> Carroll, *The Trail of Blood*, Back Leaf Chart, Explanation of the Church, point 1.



In Carroll's chart illustrating his church history, he calls those churches that fell away from the ten unerring, infallible marks (or landmarks) "irregular churches." In his original manuscript Carroll used the term "earmarks." In the second manuscript, one finds in his script a change to the term "landmark," suggesting that Carroll was seeking to reconnect his audience with the Landmark movement, which had won the battle with Whitsitt, but lost the popularity war. Today, the web-sites and web blogs discussing this issue are also seeking to reconnect their members with the Landmark movement. This seems especially popular among pastors and leaders who might best be called "lay-church planters." One of my favorite sites was that for a new church that promoted itself as a "Purpose-Driven Church" upholding the principles in *The Trail of Blood*.<sup>25</sup>

Another contributor to the renewed interest in Landmarkism may be questioning of the necessity of believer's baptism for membership among some historically Baptist churches including Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Pastor John Piper, and Henderson Hills Baptist Church in Edmond, Oklahoma, Pastor Dennis Newkirk. Such conversations might be causing a reflex response that finds comfort in Carroll's clear-cut definition of a true church.

Despite the fact that Carroll's ministry was perpetually under the shadow of accusation, he maintained both popularity and a committed following. Joseph Early, in his recent work, *A Texas Baptist Power Struggle*, recounts Carroll's scuffle over the Hayden Controversy, a ten-year long battle that raised questions of Carroll's financial oversight as General Secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. In his personal correspondence, one finds a letter from an accountant resigning over unspecified irregularities.

Carroll was a shrewd businessman. He was paid at least \$5000 by the Baptist General Convention of Texas to write "A History of Texas Baptists." J. B. Cranfield, the book's editor, suggests that the total amount was even more. In the editor's introduction he writes, "It was I who made the plea with those good-hearted Christians that led them to contribute *the first* [emphasis mine] \$5000 to our author so that he could devote all of his time to this important task."<sup>26</sup> \$5000 was a huge sum in 1922. Apparently to justify this amount, Carroll writes in the author's foreword that the book was the result of "4 years of writing, 10 hours per day." However, during this same period he was actively revising and seeking publication of *The Trail of Blood*, conducting revivals, involved

---

<sup>25</sup> Sangre de Cristo Baptist Church, [www.scfcsantafe.org/](http://www.scfcsantafe.org/); accessed: April 23, 2006.

<sup>26</sup> Carroll, *A History of Texas Baptists*, vii.

in denominational activities,<sup>27</sup> and leading *Trail of Blood* lectures and seminars.

When discussing the *The Trail of Blood* with those who embrace J. M. Carroll's work as authoritative, it is apparent that Carroll has taken on an almost "god-like" character. The introduction in the Ashland Avenue Baptist Church edition of *The Trail of Blood* calls Carroll, "not only . . . a leader among Texas Baptists, but an outstanding figure of Southern Baptists, and of the world." In the editor's introduction to "A History of Texas Baptists," Cranfield touts Carroll as having "performed a service of incalculable value to our Texas Baptist people, as well as for the Baptists of the world." To his supporters, the historical shadow over Carroll's character is unknown. Surprisingly, none of the current conversations that are on-going on in web blogs and internet chat rooms has raised the character question beyond the "source documentation" issue.

Although it is premature to declare Landmarkism an up-and-coming debate on the level of Open Theism or Calvinism, the number of discussions on the subject matter, especially among some young church planters, should encourage those engaged in Christian formation and theological education to prepare for a conversation with a ready defense.

---

<sup>27</sup> Carroll served as a messenger at each Southern Baptist Convention annual meetings from 1883 to 1930, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee. He also served on several committees during this time.

## Book Reviews

*A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature.* Compiled by Marcus Jastrow. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005, xviii + 1736 pp., \$49.95.

Hendrickson Publishers deserves cheers and kudos for reissuing a classic monumental dictionary that remains unique and indispensable in the field of biblical and rabbinic studies. More than 100 years ago, Marcus Jastrow, a Philadelphia rabbi and scholar published the first, and so far only major, English language dictionary of rabbinic literature. Originally published in two volumes over the course of the last seventeen years of his life, the completed dictionary was not completed until 1903, shortly before his death.

In 2003, the University of Pennsylvania posted a website celebrating Jastrow's life and work and the 100th anniversary of the dictionary's publication. The exhibit is still available on the internet at <http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/cajs/jastrow/>. The website remains an excellent source for students interested in rabbinic learning and lexicography. Included in the exhibit is a summary of Jastrow's life in Germany and Poland and an excellent history of the development of rabbinic lexicography. Of particular interest to Christian students is the discussion of the work of Christian Hebraists in rabbinic lexicography such as the *De abbreviaturis Hebraicis* of Johann Buxtorf published in Basel in 1613.

Hendrickson's edition of Jastrow's dictionary is smaller than the original but larger than the copy issued by Judaica Press in 1971 and subsequent years until 2004. The type in all these editions was not reset but merely reproduced with grainy and uneven print, making the Hebrew font difficult to read at times. Still, Hendrickson's version is easier on the eyesight than the smaller edition by Judaica Press. Hendrickson's price is somewhat steep. But then again, there is no other comparable work of this sort. This work is a necessity for anyone interested in the Jewish background of the New Testament.

The dictionary covers more than an estimated 30,000 Hebrew and Aramaic words employed in the Targums, the Talmud, and Midrash. The entries are fully vocalized to help the reader. Jastrow arranged the dictionary alphabetically by actual form. However, word roots are often noted and cross-referenced wherever possible. Most importantly, Jastrow notes certain etymological features such as when the entry can be found in Biblical Hebrew, whether the word is the same in the Hebrew as the Aramaic, and whether the word is a Greek loanword.

While Jastrow provides less grammatical explanations and morphological examples than desired, he does offer many references to the location of the form in the original texts. Good clear English definitions are given, and an attempt to document the full semantic range of meanings and usages found in the sources is also included. Jastrow also supplies an index to the various Talmudic and Midrashic interpretations of scripture (Hebrew Bible) quoted in the dictionary.

This index offers a useful, though limited, tool for finding interesting rabbinical interpretations of selected texts in the Old Testament.

All in all, Jastrow's dictionary is an invaluable resource for the student of the Targumim, Talmudim, and Midrashim. Hendrickson is to be applauded for making the work available again for a reasonable price in a readable format.

Stephen J. Andrews  
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

*A Catalog of Biblical Passages in the Dead Sea Scrolls.* By David L. Washburn. Text Critical Studies, 2. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002, ix + 161 pp., \$29.95 paper.

David Washburn's catalog began in 1983 as a master's thesis at Denver Seminary under the direction of the late Dr. Robert Alden. This revised version contains a comprehensive listing of the biblical passages found in the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) up to the publication of volume 35 of *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999). Even though the date of publication is given as 2002, the work was not widely available until 2004. Since 1999, however, nine more *DJD* volumes have been published and several additional ones are in press or preparation. Obviously, Washburn's catalog needs to be updated. But even so, Washburn's work as it stands provides a very useful and handy tool for those interested in the impact of the DSS on the text critical study of the Old Testament.

Before the catalog proper, Washburn offers a brief introduction, a list of terms employed in the catalog, and a list of abbreviations. A short selected bibliography completes the entire work. According to the introduction, Washburn's goal is to list where biblical passages are given or cited in all of the DSS (1). Included in his definition of DSS are those scrolls found at Wadi Murabba'at, Nahal Hever, and a few other sites along the west side of the Dead Sea.

He wants this list or catalog to be used as a reference work for scholars and students "who wish to investigate Dead Sea Scroll representation of any given biblical passage or book" (4). The order of occurrence of the biblical passages in the catalog follows the order of the Protestant canon. Apocryphal and deuterocanonical books are not included.

For each passage listed, Washburn provides three important items. First, the scroll containing the passage is cited. Second, publication information on the scroll containing the passage is given, including the plate number when possible. Finally, a brief description and a textual analysis of the scroll passage are offered.

In this last item, Washburn weighs the value of the scroll text for the biblical passage cited. He generally indicates the condition of the text with a comment on a written scale, i.e., fragmentary, somewhat fragmentary, very fragmentary, etc. Washburn tends to say nothing if the text is complete (cf. the comment on Isa 1-66). He also judges the extent to which the scroll reading follows the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint or the Samaritan Pentateuch.

If the text is very fragmentary, Washburn will often give the reader the complete reading, or at least what he can make of it (cf. at Exod 18:21-22). At other times, he will comment on the value of the scroll's reading for textual criticism. For example, Washburn notes where a scroll supports another version like the LXX (Gen 49:4a) or the Samaritan Pentateuch (Gen 41:3) or even the *qere* (Gen 36:5) or the *kethib* (Gen 39:20). Some variants arise from differences in spelling (Gen 3:11?), tense (Gen 41:30) or omission (Gen 48:7). Sometimes, the scribes recorded an omitted word between the lines (cf. Gen 41:16 which adds the negative like the LXX and the Samaritan Pentateuch). I have only noted here examples from one OT book of my own interest. The same types of variants are found in the scrolls citing other biblical passages as well.

A few times, Washburn mentions that the scroll in question contains a unique reading for the cited biblical passage. Unfortunately, he normally does not provide the unique reading. The consolation, of course, is that the reader is given where the scroll text is published and should be able to find the unique reading there. The value of his work is not that he gives every variant, but that he points the reader in the right direction.

Based on his own studies, Washburn offers in the introduction several opinions about the scrolls and textual critical studies. Some of these are worth repeating. For example, Washburn recognizes that some scholars argue that the DSS prove the reliability of the Masoretic Text, while others maintain the opposite that the OT text was in a state of flux. Washburn says the catalog shows that these two views are "oversimplified generalizations" (2). The truth is that this issue is much more complex.

Washburn's catalog also reveals that the DSS do in fact support the MT far more times than the LXX. The representation of the LXX in the scrolls is very slim. This may suggest that the authority of the LXX in Palestine "was not as strong as it was in the diaspora" (2). He also notes that the only biblical Targums found to date are fragments of Leviticus and Job from cave 4, and Job from cave 11. What this lack of Aramaic texts says about the history of language usage during this period is still a matter of debate. All in all, Washburn has produced a very helpful tool for text critical studies based on the citations of biblical passages in the DSS. We look forward to an updated version.

Stephen J. Andrews  
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

*The Dead Sea Scrolls: What Have We Learned?* By Eileen M. Schuller.  
Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006, xviii + 126 pp., \$17.95 paper.

Four of the five chapters of this small book contain expanded and updated versions of the John Albert Hall Lectures delivered by Schuller in October of 2002 at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. The last chapter is an addition written specifically to conclude the book. Schuller is currently Professor of Religious Studies at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

She has been involved in the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) over the last twenty-five years, including serving as an associate editor of *The Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

Shuller's self-professed purpose is neither to present brand-new discoveries nor to attempt a comprehensive and complete survey of all the scrolls (xiii). Rather, her goal is more constrained. After providing the reader with a decade by decade survey of the past fifty plus years of scroll discovery and scholarship in chapter one, Shuller highlights in each of the next three succeeding chapters one specific area "where the scrolls have made a distinctive contribution to how we think about key questions in the development of early Judaism and early Christianity" (xiii). She believes that distinctive contributions have been made in what the scrolls teach us about scripture, prayer and worship, and women. The last chapter identifies areas of scroll research that in the opinion of the author must be addressed in the future.

The first chapter offers brief vignettes of six decades of scroll scholarship. Shuller does not include every detail of the events surrounding the initial discovery and subsequent controversies related to the scrolls, but what she does highlight is significant and often enlightening. For example, she notes that the publication of the *Temple Scroll* in 1977 created a significant paradigm shift in two specific areas of scroll research. The first is the recognition that legal (*halakhic*) material deserved equal study alongside the theological and eschatological passages that had previously been the focus of so much scroll studies. The second and very important shift came in the discussion of the origin of the *Temple Scroll*. Yadin had thought the *Temple Scroll* was an Essene work; other scholars did not. Consequently, a more sophisticated understanding of the complex origin of the scrolls was necessary: "not all works found in the caves necessarily came from the same provenance" (21). The Qumran library now appears to be just that—a library of diverse holdings.

Shuller's second chapter on the Scriptures raises more than just the usual questions on the value of the DSS for our understanding of the transmission of the text and for text-critical studies. Part of her focus is on the complex issue of canon, the development of a fixed body of scripture. It is difficult to tell what the "Bible" of Qumran would have looked like: "We cannot transpose our present understanding of a canon—a fixed list of books in a certain order—back to the first century when such a canon did not exist" (49). A period of fluidity did appear to exist at Qumran, and the community may have regarded certain books to be authoritative that were not accepted by other Jewish streams of tradition. However, it is not so certain to argue analogously from this as Shuller implies that the same may be said for "the bible of Jesus" (50).

Shuller's ongoing interest in liturgy is emphasized in the third chapter on the topic of prayer and worship in the scrolls. In addition to the popular eschatological and sectarian texts, the scrolls contain a large body of prayer texts. The community at Qumran definitely did worship. In fact, Shuller notes that a distinctive feature of the community was that they put their prayers into written form (59). They did so because they believed that prayer was like the sacrifices of the temple. This meant prayer could function as a means of making atonement (60). The prayers and liturgical texts are just now beginning to be studied. Shuller maintains that study of the prayers at Qumran will have impact

in three important areas. First, with proper caution and care in interpretation, the prayers and psalms can point to the religion of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Second, the prayers and psalms scrolls are of great value in studying the historical development of Jewish liturgy. Finally, the prayers and psalms scrolls have an impact on Christian Liturgy.

The last topic raised by Shuller is that of the role of women in the scroll community. The standard “monastic” interpretation of the first scroll scholars pointed to an order of celibate males who isolated themselves in the wilderness to seek God and keep the commandments. Consequently, the scrolls were not expected to give any information about women, marriage, and family life. Shuller has shown this not to be the case.

There is no text that discusses what the leaders of the community thought about women. But many passages indirectly apply to the nature of the relationships women held within community life. One such area is that of divorce. It would appear that one passage from the *Damascus Document* forbade divorce or remarriage after divorce (89-90). Since this is in contrast to the Pharisees and later rabbinic practice, it can be concluded that the issues of marriage and divorce was disputed in the first century BC. Shuller notes (90) that this was most likely why the Pharisees came to ask Jesus specifically about this in Matthew 19:3 (cf. Mark 10:2): “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?” Before the discovery of the DSS, New Testament scholars often regarded this question as artificial. But the scrolls show that this was a legitimate question for Jesus to address (91). The answer of Jesus was more in keeping with the Essenes than the Pharisees.

Just because almost all the scrolls are published and available in English translation does not mean that nothing new needs to be done. On the contrary, Shuller concludes in the last chapter that, although the first stage of scroll publication is almost over, there remain many topics and specific genres that require ongoing investigation. Some of the scrolls that were the first to be published need to be restudied. In addition, modern forensic study of the scrolls and of the archaeological excavations has just begun to be employed. All in all, in the last fifty years we have learned a great deal from the Dead Sea Scrolls; and as Shuller notes, there is much more yet to be learned (109).

Stephen J. Andrews  
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

*Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics.* By Stephen Westerholm. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004, 488 pp., \$35.00.

After sixteen years, Stephen Westerholm has revised and updated his earlier work *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith* (Eerdmans, 1988), in order to offer NT students a new and improved version, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics*. Here Westerholm provides the reader a witty and insightful reference book critiquing the “New Perspective on Paul”

(NPP). Some of this material is also found in “The New Perspective at Twenty-Five,” in Vol. 2 of *Justification and Variegated Nomism* (Baker, 2004).

In *Perspectives Old and New on Paul*, Westerholm presents: (1) a study of “Lutheran” Pauline interpreters from Augustine to Wesley; (2) consideration of contemporary NPP responses from, among others, especially E. P. Sanders; and (3) an assembly of relevant definitions and exegesis of Pauline Epistles, followed by an extensive bibliography of both “Lutheran” and NPP contributors. Here then we have a judicious treatment of the NPP in light of the more traditional “Lutheran” interpretation, accompanied by Westerholm’s fresh analysis and synthesis of Pauline material.

In Part 1 Westerholm reconstructs the “Lutheran” Paul. The author argues against the NPP assertion that (primarily) Luther’s misreading of Paul has influenced many interpreters toward a skewed perspective of the apostle’s emphases. By providing “A Portrait of the ‘Lutheran’ Paul” (chapter 5), from such diverse pens of Augustine, Luther, Calvin and Wesley, Westerholm argues inductively that the traditional “Lutheran” Pauline understanding is the result of *distinct perspectives and generations*—as opposed to the influence of Martin Luther alone. Thus, Westerholm casts doubt on NPP’s foundational thesis that, due to a fascination with Martin Luther’s exegesis, traditionalists have misread Paul. Rather, Westerholm argues, a plurality of “undisputed giants in the history of the Christian West” (xvii) have interpreted Paul’s epistles and arrived rather congruently at the same conclusions.

In Part Two the author surveys the landscape of twentieth-century Pauline scholarship in order to view how the “Lutheran” Paul has fared in recent days. Here Westerholm has expanded Part One of *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith*, to include revised summaries of, among others, E. P. Sanders and Krister Stendahl, along with new analyses of N.T. Wright, James D. G. Dunn, and several other recent contributors to the NPP. Within this extensive survey of contemporary Paulinists, Westerholm provides the most attention to Sanders, Wright, Dunn, and Terrance Donaldson—the later three under the heading, “Saint Paul against the Lutherans” (chapter 11).

Noteworthy in Part Two is Westerholm’s presentation of contemporary scholars who have *not* been persuaded by the NPP, including C. E. B. Cranfield, Thomas Schreiner, Andrew Das, Frank Thielman, and Mark Seifrid. These speak in harmony with the “Lutheran” Pauline reading, “that his doctrine of justification by faith, not by the works of the law, excludes human endeavor as a factor in gaining God’s approval” (201). Westerholm thus proposes that the division between “Lutheran” interpreters and contemporary proponents of the NPP rests on “whether ‘justification by faith, not by works of the law’ means ‘sinners find God’s approval by grace, through faith, not by anything they do,’ or whether its thrust is that ‘Gentiles are included in the people of God by faith without the bother of becoming Jews’” (257).

After catching the reader up to speed on the formation of the “Lutheran” Paul (Part One), and providing an overview of contemporary scholarship (Part Two)—much of which has affirmed the NPP—the author in Part Three presents his contribution to the discussion. Westerholm’s dispute with the NPP is twofold: (1) their redefining of Pauline terms and (2) devaluing texts and themes dominant in Paul’s Epistles—while emphasizing ideas that are often in the



background of Paul's thought. Thus the author devotes ninety pages to the analysis of definitions of righteousness, law, and grace. Then Westerholm turns to examine 1 Thessalonians, and 1 and 2 Corinthians (where the primary function of the law is to magnify humanity's inability to keep it, and where one finds little to demonstrate that the law functioned chiefly to separate Jews and Gentiles), and Galatians and Romans (where both the law's separation of Jews and Gentiles and human inability figure more prominently). Here the author concludes that the NPP has too quickly set aside that which is most pervasive throughout the Pauline epistles, while elevating its division of Jews and Gentiles. Westerholm writes: "Paul's primary objection to the notion that those who would be declared righteous must submit to the Sinaitic regime lies in his insistence that human beings are sinners who do not, and cannot, do the good that the law demands of its subjects" (444).

For those who have not yet fully engaged the NPP, Westerholm's book is an excellent starting point; in one volume the reader is aptly introduced to NPP issues and personalities, and the evidence for a "Lutheran" reading of Paul. Yet Westerholm's *dispositio* and analysis of Pauline epistles also prove valuable for those who have had NPP on their radar for years. This reviewer finds little substantive disagreement with Westerholm's arrangement of material or conclusion(s).

On the whole, Westerholm argues that Sanders and company have brought some important points to the fore, but their errors include: (1) redefining terms like "grace," and "justification," so as to reach their pre-determined ends; (2) almost wholly ignoring some Pauline texts and emphases (viz., "grace" in Eph 2.8-10 and Tit 3.4-7), and the concept of universal sin, while elevating other—arguably less pervasive—themes (viz., how Gentiles become "the people of God") to a place of dominance; and (3) overstating the strength of their claim. The author's final admonition is noteworthy: "As I see things, the critics have rightly defined the occasion that elicited the formulation of Paul's doctrine and have reminded us of its first-century social and strategic significance; the 'Lutherans,' for their part, rightly captured Paul's rationale and basic point. For those (like Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Wesley) bent on applying Paul's words to contemporary situations, it is the point rather than the historical occasion of the formulation that is crucial. Students of early Christianity must attempt to do justice to both" (445).

Todd R. Chipman  
The Master's Community Church

*Ishmael My Brother: A Christian Introduction to Islam.* Edited by Anne Cooper and Elsie A. Maxwell. Grand Rapids: Monarch Books, 2003. 352 pp.

*Ishmael My Brother* is the third edition of a work which was first published in 1985 and revised in 1993. Its purpose is to provide the Christian with information, understanding, and resources about the Muslim faith so that they

may be more effective in their personal testimony and witness. In addition, the book provides a foundation of understanding in order to foster relations between Christians and Muslims and to enable greater communication between the two distinctly different faiths. The informed dialogue helps dispel barriers and preconceptions that impede the personal relationships between Christians and Muslims. There is no attempt to minimize the huge doctrinal differences that separate the two faiths. In reading this book, one will have a better understanding of the Christian's and Muslim's faith which will enable one to articulate the good news of salvation.

The editors use an adult distance learning method as the approach to better study and understand the material. This enables the reader to approach learning in a self-paced process or in a group setting that allows for discussion and comparison of ideas. The book is divided into four parts and each chapter within the parts has specific study guides and activities that enhance the stated learning goals found at the beginning of each chapter. At the end of each chapter are sections that contain notes, bibliography of books referred to in the chapter and a suggested reading list for further study. These features coupled with an extensive bibliography, educational resources, missionary societies, websites, glossary of Arabic words, and an easy to use index makes *Ishmael My Brother* an excellent desk side reference.

Part I addresses the Christian attitude toward the beliefs and faiths of others. This part centers on the need for friendship with Muslims and the difference between the worldviews of the two faith groups. Part II covers Islamic beliefs and practices, the Qur'an, their prophet Muhammad, Islamic law, and collection of Muhammad's saying called *Hadith*. Part III discusses the culture, historical and political development of the Muslim faith. To fully understand the Muslim religion one must also understand the connection between their faith, culture, history, and politics that function as interlaced threads in a tightly woven Middle Eastern carpet. You cannot separate one from the other. Separating one from the other would radically impact their world view. Part IV addresses the issue of Islam in the twenty-first century. Today, there are about one billion Muslims world-wide. Their goal is for the world to become Muslim.

I whole heartedly recommend this book. This book is needed more now than anytime in recent history. As a minimum, I would recommend every church library have a copy and for pastors to have one in easy reach. As an active duty chaplain currently deployed to Iraq I have found this book to be very enlightening and extremely beneficial. This book is a good place to begin for those who want to become familiar with the Muslim faith and practice. It is also well suited for those who are making an effort to reach out to the Muslims in the United States. The editors have compiled information on the foundations of Islam faith and practices.

The only improvements I would suggest in the writing of the next edition would be to articulate the differences between some of the sects within the Muslim faith. The differences between the sects within Islam are substantive. Here are a few suggested groups that you may want to study further: Wahhabi, Salafi, Takfiri, Qutubi, Sunni, Shi'a, Yazidi, and Sufi. In this day and time it is extremely important to have knowledge of the groups you will be living near. If you are going to be living in a predominately Muslim country then it is

extremely important to find out which sects are in your area. Failing to know the unique distinction of the Muslim sect where you live could negatively impact your outreach.

Thomas E. Drake  
18th Airborne Corps, Artillery  
U.S. Army

*A Texas Baptist Power Struggle: The Hayden Controversy.* By Joseph E. Early, Jr., Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2006, 172 pp, \$39.95

The events revisited in *A Texas Baptist Power Struggle* took place over a century ago. They were real and very important historical events. However, this much must be said at the beginning, Early uses the historical backdrop of the Hayden controversy as a vehicle to encourage readers—especially those with ties to Texas Baptist life—to consider the currently state of Texas Baptist Life.

*A Texas Baptist Power Struggle* involves several “larger than life” figures of Baptist History, including B.H. Carroll, best known as the founding president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; his brother, J.M. Carroll, whose *The Trail of Blood* has impacted generations of Baptists; and Samuel Augustus Hayden, whose attempt to reach a peaceful resolution of a local church conflict resulted in a denominational split of what was and is arguably the most significant regional body of Baptists in America.

Early’s work begins by laying the contextual foundations for the first fifty years of Texas Baptist life. Early recounts these formative years in a documentary format that is both engaging and informative. Early also provides a brief historical summaries of the two Baptist conventions that vied for influence among Baptists, the strong rivalry that existed between the two Baptist colleges, Waco University and Baylor University, Independence, and the two independent Baptist papers, the *Texas Baptist* and the *Texas Baptist Herald*, that fanned the flames of denominational controversy.

It is this environment that S.A. Hayden steps into when he is asked to become pastor of one of two “First Baptist Churches” vying for recognition as the “genuine First Baptist Church” of Dallas. The controversy began when J.D. Link attempted to become a member of FBC during a Wednesday night service. Link was the powerful editor of the *Texas Baptist Herald*. At the same time, R.C. Buckner, the editor of the revival *Texas Baptist*, appealed Link’s bid for membership on the grounds that the church’s Rules of Orders had been violated. The ensuing debate resulted in a “newspaper war” as the rival sides on the membership issue used the two independent Baptist papers to air their grievances, opinions, and attacks.

It was during this three-year long controversy that Hayden accepted the call as pastor of the Live Oak Baptist Church, the splinter congregation started by Buckner and others expelled from FBC. Although Hayden stays only a few months as pastor, he is credited with reconciling the two congregations. After

the two churches re-unite, Hayden purchases the *Texas Baptist* and becomes active in Texas Baptist leadership and politics.

The main body of Early's work is devoted to the actual events leading up to the two-decade long Hayden controversy. However, the author does the reader a disservice by jumping back and forth chronologically. For example, on page 8 the reader is brought into 1883 and the calling of Hayden as pastor of Live Oak Baptist Church. But on page 18, the events of 1880 that led to the split and the calling of Hayden are found. Throughout the book, I found myself thumbing back and forth, wondering if I had missed something.

Early hopes the reader will find parallels to contemporary issues in Baptist life. In the months since this book was published, additional similarities have arisen, as the Southern Baptist Convention declined to take action on a State Convention issue relating to the seating of a messenger by a cooperating State Convention. If nothing more, readers will find the parallels intriguing, if not prophetic. The price of admission is steep for a book of this size; however, Baptists who desire to learn from our past will join me in applauding Joe Early for writing this book.

Rodney A. Harrison  
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

*Finding God Beyond Harvard: The Quest for Veritas* by Kelley Monroe Kullberg. Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2006, 248 pp., \$20.00.

In *Finding God Beyond Harvard*, Kelley Monroe Kullberg offers a sequel to her first work, *Finding God at Harvard* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997). The book reads like a deeply personal journal, with the twin foci being the author's personal faith journey and the development of the Veritas Forum at Harvard and other schools across the nation and world. The book is not organized chronologically; it is presented more as an anthology of the author's and the Forum's growth.

The first five chapters delineate the author's personal journey of discovery and the birth of the Veritas Forum at Harvard. After coming to Harvard Divinity School, Monroe Kullberg discovered an ethos of cynical relativism that was joyless and oppressive. Everything was tolerated except for Harvard's founding principle—Jesus Christ's glory. Monroe Kullberg perceptively saw that this environment had a direct correlation to the rise in depression, sexually transmitted diseases, and even suicide among the student body. She felt that the loss of biblical faith at Harvard would lead to the eventual loss of everything valuable. In fact, she began to feel her own faith and vision eroding away. Through a Christian fellowship group Monroe Kullberg was asked to become an intern chaplain for the graduate students on campus.

It was during her time as a chaplain that the Veritas Forum was envisioned and, with the help of others in the fellowship group, made a reality. In the words of the author, "All streams of thought came together as one compelling idea: Why not gather as a vibrant community in one location for a few days and invite the whole university to explore its questions, ideas and hopes in relation to

Harvard's radical vision, its first light—*veritas*, knowable in and through the life and mind of Jesus Christ?" (51) Thus, the Veritas Forum was created to be a place where hard questions could be asked with real and honest answers being given. This was to be the beginning of a movement that would have a worldwide impact.

Chapters six and seven expound on the beginning expansion of Veritas beyond Harvard and the personal faith journey of the author. Chapter six in particular relates the story of God's guidance to Monroe Kullberg in dealing with a militant anti-Christian speaking environment at SUNY Albany. Chapter seven explains the way the Veritas Forum expanded and adapted to the unique environments of each university in which it was cultivated. Monroe Kullberg also speaks of the hard work involved in bringing each forum to fruition and the amazing transformations that resulted.

Chapters eight and nine continue the narrative with further expansion on the growth of the Forum and the author. Monroe Kullberg discovered that the general cynicism and depression she had encountered at Harvard were not limited to that university. In trips to Dartmouth and Yale, she found a consistent shunning of the Christ-centered heritage of the schools. The general malaise and fear of speaking the "J-word" was consistent throughout higher academia. On the positive side, however, Monroe Kullberg also discovered a hunger among Christians on each campus to bring intellectual honesty to their school. Ultimately, she even found herself on the west coast, helping to begin Veritas Forums at schools such as Cal Berkeley and Stanford.

The remaining five chapters of the work make the reader feel a little like he or she has started reading a different book. They focus more on the personal story of Monroe Kullberg, with the Veritas Forum being relegated to the background. Chapter ten relates a period of personal pain for the author. The combination of the loss of a romantic relationship of six years and a diagnosis of Lyme disease plunged Monroe Kullberg into a time of questioning and withdrawal. She questioned whether she had been on the right path and where God was in her time of pain. Eventually, she found restoration in the beauty of nature and in the realization of the nature of forgiveness. With the miraculous healing of the Lyme disease, Monroe Kullberg continued to help with the development and running of Veritas Forums around the country and even overseas.

In these last chapters we are given Monroe Kullberg's devotional thoughts on living the life of faith. As she reflects on her life and the Veritas Forum, she finds divine affirmation in numerous stories of lives changed and people coming to know or re-experience Jesus as a result of the forums. Perceptively, she comes to the conclusion that Veritas is a Person. All of life is defined by and understood within the relationship to Jesus Christ.

*Finding God Beyond Harvard* is an honest and revealing exploration of Kelley Monroe Kullberg's personal journey and the providential development of the Veritas Forum. The book is well-written in a conversational style that reminds one of *Wild at Heart* by John Eldredge (Nashville: Nelson Books, 2001). Organizationally, the book lacks coherence; this derives from the journal-

like style of the book, however, and the reader is fairly warned of this in the preface. The book's main weakness is that it tries to cover too much. The author states in the preface that the book will cover the story of the development of Veritas movement, the content of the forums, and be a personal memoir of sorts. This leaves the reader with only a tantalizing taste in each of these areas. Yet, the effort to integrate these three threads is also the book's strength and reflects the integration of the Veritas Forum itself. The book is an enjoyable read and is warmly recommended for devotional reading, for the encouragement of Christians in secular academia or as an evangelistic conversation starter with students in a university.

N. Blake Hearson  
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

*A Biblical History of Israel.* By Iain Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman, III. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003, 426pp. \$49.95.

The book, *A Biblical History of Israel*, describes the effort of the reconstruction of the history of ancient Israel based on the Hebrew Scriptures. For a long time, skepticism with regard to the possibility of historiography swept over the field of Old Testament studies. This skepticism became almost nihilistic which brought the death of biblical history. Pointing out the problems of various critical approaches, which have devastated the authority of the Old Testament, this book provides the readers with significant literary approaches for historiography.

The authors suggest a coherent methodology for historiography is the reconstruction of Israel's history based on the "testimony" in the form of biblical narratives. According to this book, testimony is the pivotal key for understanding the past biblical events and for rebuilding the history of ancient Israel. In addition, this testimony was written in a narrative form in the Old Testament. If one wants to reconstruct a satisfactory picture of Israel's history, he or she should focus on the faith (testimony) and the literature (narrative) in the Hebrew Scriptures; this methodology can be referred to as the "literary approach." To this end, therefore, Long, Provan, and Longman, all recognized Old Testament scholars in the evangelical circle, wrote this book together.

This book's proper emphasis on the role of testimony in historiography is perhaps one of its most significant contributions. Both the scientific and critical methods in historiography tend to exclude testimony because for these methods, testimony is not only subjective but also fictitious. According to Provan, there is not, however, an objective knowledge independent from human experience and explanation. All knowledge is intricately woven together with human life and perspective. Provan calls this the "human perspective" and the explanation of the past events as the "testimony."

In this book, the three authors try to provide a biblical history of Israel just as the title states, *A Biblical History of Israel*. First of all, the authors' goal is to offer the "biblical" history of Israel. For this reason, they heavily depend on Hebrew biblical passages to reconstruct ancient Israel's history. Actually the

authors explicitly reflect on biblical passages as primary sources for historiography. Second, the authors want to reconstruct the biblical history of "Israel." Therefore, the main focus of this book is not on the ancient Near East or the eastern Mediterranean, but is focused on Israel as revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures.

One unique approach in this book is that the authors focus on the narratives in the OT to reconstruct the history of Israel. The authors consider narratives as the primary sources for historiography. In some parts of this book, the authors offer extra-biblical sources (various sources from the Ancient Near East). The authors do not take, however, these extra-biblical sources more seriously than the biblical texts. Another unique approach is that the authors regard faith as the pivotal fact of the history of Israel. According to the authors, all historians have particular worldviews for understanding history for reconstructing history. The authors, then, argue that Israel's faith is of the utmost importance for reconstructing its history.

This book consists of two parts. In the first part (from chapter one to five), the authors present various critical and scientific methods for historiography. Appropriately pointing out the problems of critical and scientific approaches, the authors conclude that these methods have almost led to the death of biblical history. As already mentioned, the authors insist that a historian should focus on narratives and understand the testimony to keep the biblical history of Israel alive. In the second part of the book (from chapter six to eleven), the authors try to reconstruct the past history of Israel, using the narrative approach. Various literary analyses and interpretations for the historical context based on testimony are presented in the second part.

In chapter six, Longman sketches the history of the patriarchs based on the literary approach. In chapter seven, Long tries to reconstruct the time of the settlement in Canaan. One of the most important parts of this chapter is the significant explanation of solving the contradictions of the books of Joshua and Judges. Long also offers important theological and historical issues related to cities like Jericho and Ai.

In the last part of this book (from chapter eight to eleven), the authors reconstruct the history of Israel in following time frames: the early monarchy, the late monarchy, the later monarchy, the exile, and the post exile. Although the authors succeed in reconstructing the biblical history of Israel, these chapters explicitly show a weakness in that archeological data and extrabiblical sources are rarely used. For example, in chapter eight (the early monarchy), Long remarks on the famous Tel Dan inscription, which makes mention of the "King of the house of David." After brief evaluations, Long asserts that he will focus on the Hebrew narrative itself, because he thinks that all extrabiblical references fall far short of the full picture of David. In addition, the authors scarcely use the archeological and the extrabiblical sources as found in chapter eleven (Exile and post exile). In this chapter, Longman uses extrabiblical sources only once to reconstruct the history of Israel in the context of the post-exilic period. Although he remarks that extrabiblical sources, which are relevant for this period, are numerous, he only mentions their names (like Cyrus cylinder, the Behistun

inscription, the inscription of Udjahorresnet, and Aramaic Elephantine papyrus) without any detailed descriptions of their contents and importance. Relying too much on the literary approach and not using archeological and extra-biblical sources for historiography, this book could be classified as an introductory text to the Old Testament rather than a historical text.

This book possesses the following strengths: (1) The authors rightly point out that historiography is not an objective process. Historians try to find what actually happened in the past and try to reconstruct history as it was in the past. However, as the authors already have demonstrated, all historians use their own perspectives to interpret historical material and their own perspectives to reconstruct history. (2) The authors also properly refer to the limitations of using extra-biblical and archeological sources. The extra-biblical sources and archeological findings which are relevant for reconstructing Israel's history are scarce. Moreover, most ancient Near East sources focused on the situations in their own country, and were edited from the editors' personal perspectives. How can the sources from other countries be used for reconstructing Israel's history? (3) The authors appropriately explain the importance of faith (or testimony) in the understanding and construction of the history of Israel. For the Israelites, faith was the core of their lives. History also seems to be inseparable from Israel's communal faith. (4) Using the literary approach, the authors challenge their readers to rethink the value of narrative for historiography. The Old Testament consists of various narrative histories. A narrative history in the Hebrew text was composed as single coherent story based on historical facts and events. This narrative had descriptive, instructive, and theological characters. This narrative should not be judged by modern empirical criteria. Receiving and using narratives in the Hebrew Bible, historians can have a picture of Israel's past history.

Despite its scholarly strength, this book also has some weaknesses. First of all, the authors scarcely use archeological and extrabiblical sources. Although these sources are rare and fall short of satisfactorily reconstructing the history of Israel, historians should not ignore them. After doing careful research and interpreting, historians can use these sources to reconstruct a plausible past history. In a sense, a history book without supporting archeological and extrabiblical sources cannot be considered a history textbook. In addition, if evangelical scholars fail to elucidate which parts of archeological and extrabiblical sources are helpful to support the historicity and validity of Hebrew passages, liberal scholars will use these sources to destroy the authority of the Old Testament, just as they are doing now and have done in past time.

Depending on one method (the literary approach) too heavily for historiography is another weakness of this book. There is not one absolutely satisfactory method of reconstructing Israel's history. Rather, in order to reconstruct the history of Israel, historians need to adopt a "multi-approach method." For instance, as a start, a historian can reconstruct historical events based on the Hebrew Bible. As the second step, a historian can use cross-cultural comparative approaches, which can enhance the understanding of meanings and backgrounds of biblical passages. With careful researching and interpreting, some authentic extra-biblical sources of archeological findings should be used for this task. Of course, a historian can use the literary approach



to understand contexts and the historicity of documents. During this process, historians can keep a balance for appropriate historiography and can dialogue with various scholars.

*A Biblical History of Israel* is helpful for readers who want to know the history of Israel based on the Hebrew text. When reading the Old Testament and this book together, readers will have satisfactory details about the “biblical” history of Israel, because the authors seek to refute modern critical and scientific methods of historiography. In addition, one who wants to rebuild the history of Israel while using the literary approach can use this text as one of the best textbooks, because while analyzing various literary forms and their contexts in ancient society, the authors provide important interpretations of and insights of biblical narratives to reconstruct Israel’s history.

As the authors mentioned, the scientific and critical methods for obtaining knowledge about the history of ancient Israel not only failed to reconstruct history, but also almost resulted in the death of the study of biblical history. In the midst of ardent arguments about historiography by skeptic and vehement scholars, this book, *A Biblical History of Israel*, offers the possibility for the reconstruction of the history of ancient Israel based on the Hebrew Scriptures. The authors correctly point out the importance of testimony based on faith to understand past history. Moreover, they appropriately use Hebrew narratives to reconstruct the history of Israel. The authors take a literary approach based on the Hebrew text as their methodology for historiography because it is the “biblical” history of Israel that the authors want to reconstruct. This book is the result of their hope and ardent academic efforts.

Ho Kwon

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

*A Reader’s Greek New Testament*. Edited by Richard J. Goodrich and Albert L. Lukaszewski. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003, 8 + 585 pp., \$29.99.

It is amazing that someone did not think of publishing such a helpful text like this sooner. With readers who possess a limited Greek vocabulary, Goodrich and Lukaszewski have provided an excellent tool for students of the Greek New Testament to read the text without the cumbersome need to look every other word up in a standard lexicon. As any Greek professor knows, there is no substitute for sitting down and reading through large passages of the text and this edition of the Greek New Testament removes the most common excuses for not doing so.

What makes *A Reader’s Greek New Testament* unique is that Goodrich and Lukaszewski have replaced the textual apparatus that usually appears at the bottom of the page in the critical editions with footnoted definitions of all words that occur thirty times or less in the Greek New Testament. Basically this is the Greek New Testament and Sakae Kubo’s *A Reader’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975) in one volume. The great

benefit of such a text is that it allows the beginning student to open to a single text and begin to read the Greek fluently—needing only to glance at the footnotes for vocabulary help. This is a tremendous way to learn vocabulary because the student immediately sees how the term is used in context (this not only helps the reader to understand the semantic range of the term but also provides a built-in memory association).

Furthermore, the book itself is slender and soft bound (a synthetic leather that looks and feels very smooth) making it extremely portable. This handy single volume could be used in church, in class, or any number of other places. A text that is easy to carry and easy to use most likely will be read—and that is the goal of the editors. To the point, Goodrich and Lukaszewski lament that seldom can one “simply sit in an armchair and read the Greek New Testament” and further, that the “simple joy of sitting and reading the Greek New Testament” is hindered by lack of vocabulary. This edition of the Greek New Testament gives the student a more natural means to acquire vocabulary while at the same time encouraging the reader actually to read the text.

Having outlined some of the primary strengths of this text it is important that one clearly sees what this book is and what it is not. *A Reader's Greek New Testament* is primarily a tool for learning. It is not a critical edition of the Greek text. For various reasons the editors have reproduced the Greek text which stands behind the popular New International Version of the New Testament. Basically what this means is that the Greek text here follows neither the UBS 4 nor the NA 27, but rather the NIV. Thus, this is a “reverse engineered” version of the Greek New Testament. The text deviates from the standard text of the Greek New Testament only at the points where the NIV translators favored a different variant.

If used within the text's intent this should be no cause for concern. The editors have provided a limited textual apparatus which clearly indicates where *A Reader's Greek New Testament* differs from the UBS 4—here in a footnote the alternate reading from the UBS 4 is provided for comparison. Again, though this is not a critical edition of the Greek New Testament, the text is virtually identical to the standard editions and the points where they differ are clearly marked by the apparatus. So if readers understand that this text should not be used as a critical edition of the Greek New Testament it can be an extremely helpful tool in acquiring vocabulary and encouraging reading proficiency. Though any serious student of the New Testament should own one of the standard critical editions with a full textual apparatus, this text may indeed be even more helpful to first-year Greek students than the traditional UBS 4 edition that includes the Greek-English dictionary.

Ironically, the only substantial draw back of this text is the italicized Greek font used throughout. Though the font size is sufficient, the italicized characters are harder to read than the standard editions. Even with this *A Reader's Greek New Testament* is sure to be a helpful resource for students, pastors, and anyone who values reading the New Testament in its original language.

Darian R. Lockett  
The King's College

*Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*. By Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, vii + 538 pp., \$32.00.

Though, in various ways, the conclusions of form-criticism have been challenged, and at several points overturned, its assumptions live on in modern scholarship regarding the transmission of the Jesus tradition. Here Richard Bauckham challenges the notion born from form-critical conclusions of the last century that the Gospels, as folk literature, were oral traditions shaped and passed on anonymously by communities of early Christians. Because of their anonymous and community nature, it has long been assumed that these Jesus traditions preserve not only information about the historical (“real”) Jesus, but much of the early church’s theological reflections upon the Christ of faith. In what is sure to be a very significant book, Bauckham argues that the Gospels, in their present form, bear large continuity with the testimony of particular eyewitnesses who, rather than through a lengthily process of community transmission, passed along accounts of Jesus’ words and deeds almost at once—at least with in their own lifetime.

Bauckham states his thesis quite clearly in the following:

It is the contention of this book that, in the period up to the writing of the Gospels, gospel traditions were connected with named and known eyewitnesses, people who had heard the teaching of Jesus from his lips and committed it to memory, people who had witnessed the events of his ministry, death, and resurrection and themselves had formulated the stories about these events that they told. These eyewitnesses did not merely set going a process of oral transmission that soon went its own way without reference to them. They remained throughout their lifetimes the sources and, in some sense that may have varied for figures of central or more marginal significance, the authoritative guarantors of the stories they continued to tell (93).

Building upon this assertion of the ongoing influence of named eyewitnesses, Bauckham further argues that: “If the Gospels embody eyewitness testimony, then some at least of the eyewitnesses must have been able to testify not just to particular episodes or particular sayings of Jesus but to the whole course of Jesus’ story” (114). In other words an important criterion for one to function as a named eyewitness of Jesus’ story is that he must have been with Jesus “from the beginning.” This particular requirement could only be filled by the twelve.

Remarkably, Bauckham argues that such named eyewitnesses of Jesus’ entire ministry are well-noted within the very literary shape of the Gospels themselves. He asserts that the “Gospels employ a literary device, hardly noticed by modern scholars, to indicate precisely this qualification [the twelve as eyewitnesses of Jesus’ ministry from the beginning] on the part of their eyewitness sources” (124). One of Bauckham’s examples for this assertion is the fact that, in Mark’s Gospel, Peter is singled out as the primary eyewitness observing Jesus’ ministry from the beginning. The repetition of Peter’s name

(“Simon,” Mark 1:16-18 and “Peter” in Mark 16:7) in strategic places in the Gospel of Mark indicate that it is Peter’s eyewitness testimony which is being recorded. Bauckham notes: “The two references form an *inclusio* around the whole story, suggesting that Peter is the witness whose testimony includes the whole” (125; Bauckham has already made this point in chapter 5 of *The Gospels for All Christians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], but here specifically connects this literary observation to his overall argument regarding the central importance of eyewitness testimony in transmitting the Jesus traditions).

The strategy of using an *inclusio* structure to highlight the testimony of a named eyewitness is repeated in both Luke and John. With respect to the Fourth Gospel, Bauckham argues: “John’s Gospel thus uses the *inclusio* of eyewitness testimony in order to privilege the witness of the Beloved Disciple, which this Gospel embodies. It does so, however, not simply by ignoring the Petrine *inclusio* of Mark’s Gospel, but by enclosing the Petrine *inclusio* within its *inclusio* of the Beloved Disciple” (129). And in the ancient world such use of *inclusio* was a recognized convention as indicated by Lucian’s *Alexander* and Porphyry’s *Life of Plotinus*, roughly contemporary examples. That the literary structure of the Gospels intentionally marks the primary witness conveying information regarding Jesus’ life is extremely compelling and constitutes one of the major accomplishments of the present work.

Furthermore, beyond the twelve, the Gospels themselves indicate the priority of testimony given by named eyewitnesses. Not only does Bauckham argue that most of the named, minor characters do belong in the original Gospel traditions, but further that many of them joined the early Christian movement and were well known in these circles. Bartimaeus, Simon of Cyrene and his sons, and Joseph of Arimathea, among others, were both part of the early Christian movement and named in the Gospels because they continued to tell their stories as “authoritative guarantors of their traditions” (39). Rather than plastic recollections open to community reshaping, these eyewitness testimonies were recounted again and again by the individual eyewitnesses themselves—ensuring the accuracy of the account.

Whereas both the twelve, as authoritative witness “from the beginning,” and many others serve as named eyewitnesses, Bauckham provides a fascinating discussion regarding events in the Gospels conveyed via unnamed characters. Individuals such as the woman who anointed Jesus (Mark 14:3-9) and others did in fact act as eyewitnesses to Jesus’ actions and words, but had to remain unnamed. At first glance this may detract from the broader argument of *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, yet Bauckham convincingly argues that such characters, though their testimony would normally be passed along with their name, actually remain anonymous because of the potential danger such individuals faced. Due to the fact that such witnesses may be in danger of reprisals and because the Gospels themselves were written near to the time of the actual events, these testimonies were included into the Gospels without naming the eyewitness—a situation Bauckham (following Theissen) refers to as “protective anonymity” (chapter 8).

In chapter 10, Bauckham furthers his thesis by reconsidering the nature of oral transmission of tradition. Following the insights of Birger Gerhardsson and Kenneth Bailey, Bauckham argues that the kind of tradition recorded in the

Gospels was “formal controlled tradition in which the eyewitnesses played an important part” (264). To these observations Bauckham, in subsequent chapters, furthers the basic observation that the Gospels contain eyewitness testimony by tapping into recent developments in the study of memory, especially with respect to cognitive psychology, and ends with a sustained defense of the reliability of testimony as a category of knowing.

Bauckham’s work has much to commend it. Full of careful argument, impeccable research, and fresh insight, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* is sure to be a touchstone for further debate and research. Bauckham writes with clarity carefully guiding the reader through the shortcomings of prior assumptions all the while highlighting important evidence previously missed. Scholars and students troubled by the classic division between the “historical Jesus” and the “Christ of faith” will delight that *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* pushes past this false dichotomy arguing rather for the “Jesus of testimony” as faithfully presented by the Gospels themselves.

Darian R. Lockett  
The King’s College

*The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions*. Edited by James K. Hoffmeier and Alan Millard. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004, 403 pp., \$26.00 paper.

Since the early 1970s, William Dever has waged an attack on the discipline of biblical archaeology, particularly on the name itself. Supporters of Dever and his “Syro-Palestinian” archaeology would have readers to believe that “biblical archaeology” is dead and has been for quite some time. So the appearance of *The Future of Biblical Archaeology* is a welcome sight. Hoffmeier and Millard have offered a great boost of excitement and hope to those who believe “biblical archaeology” is a valid name and discipline.

*The Future of Biblical Archaeology* is a collection of nineteen essays from nineteen different authors. The book is an outgrowth of a North Sinai Archaeological Project colloquium hosted by Trinity International University, Deerfield, Illinois. Although the contributors are from different fields and differing faiths, Hoffmeier and Millard say they all “believe that biblical archaeology still has much to offer” (xii). The number and academic skill of the contributors, coupled with the work’s overall strength is an indication that biblical archaeology is still alive and well. As in any collection of works, some articles are better and more relevant than others. The same is true in *The Future of Biblical Archaeology*. Some of the articles are better than others. Yet, their combined force is inescapable.

Hoffmeier and Millard have divided the works into four categories: 1) Biblical Archaeology: The Recent Debate and Future Prospects; 2) Archaeology: Approaches and Application; 3) Using Texts in Biblical Archaeology; and 4) Hermeneutics and Theology.

Many of the contributors are well known to evangelical readers. These include: Edwin Yamauchi, Steven M. Ortiz, Richard S. Hess, John M. Monson, and K. Lawson Younger, among others. Jewish scholars include such individuals as William W. Hallo, David B. Weisberg, and Zion Zevit.

Space does not allow a review of each and every article contained within *The Future of Biblical Archaeology*, but some comments and critique of the whole are in order. The first two sections are probably the sections of most interest for archaeologists. The articles here by Zevit, Davis, Younker, and Hoffmeier are particularly fitting for the title. Zevit's article places the book in the context of the debate over the discipline's name. Davis and Younker describe the presuppositions and goals of their respective archaeological models. Hoffmeier outlines the North Sinai Archaeological Project, also stating the project's goals and presuppositions. Thus, these four articles are superb examples of how biblical archaeology can and does work today. Biblical archaeology is not the "prove-the-Bible" approach caricatured by its critics. Biblical archaeology is a well-reasoned, inter-disciplinary approach to the archaeological study of the biblical texts and lands.

The concluding two sections are particularly aimed to "serve as a response to the threat minimalism poses to biblical history" (xi). At first glance, these sections seemed out of step with the title of the book, especially the last section. One might well ask what hermeneutics and theology have to do with archaeology. In the preface, however, the editors state that they not only sought to demonstrate the future of biblical archaeology (hence the title), but also intended to defend the historicity of the Bible against minimalist attacks (xi). Defending biblical archaeology and biblical history in the same volume is indeed sensible. For, if the biblical texts are not historical, there can be no need for biblical archaeology.

I am impressed with *The Future of Biblical Archaeology*. While it may not go far enough in discussing the future of biblical archaeology, per se, it does bolster my hope for the future of biblical archaeology. The title could have been changed to indicate the dual nature of the book which addresses biblical historicity in over half of the articles. Furthermore, the dual nature might create some uncertainty over where the book would fit in a school curriculum. Still, I would confidently recommend the book to anyone interested in either biblical archaeology or biblical history.

Chet Roden  
Southside Baptist Church

*How People Change*. By Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp. Winston-Salem, NC: Punch Press, 2006, 253 pp., paperback, \$17.50.

Both Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp are lecturers in practical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. In addition, both serve as counselors and faculty members at the Christian Counseling and Education Foundation in Glenside, Pennsylvania. Lane is the director of Changing Lives Ministries at the foundation while Tripp directs Changing Lives International.

Lane is the author of *Forgiving Others: Joining Wisdom and Love* (Winston-Salem, NC: Punch Press, 2005). Tripp is the author of *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2002), *Age of Opportunity: A Guide to Parenting Teens*, 2d ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2001), as well as *War of Words: Getting to the Heart of our Communication Struggles* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2000).

In *How People Change*, Lane and Tripp explain how disciples of Jesus Christ accomplish lasting change from besetting sin. Shunning pat answers and trite Biblicist formulae, Lane and Tripp present their case in a simple, straightforward manner without being simplistic. The end result is a biblical counseling text that surpasses previous writing on the subject in terms of biblical insight and theological sophistication.

Lane and Tripp contend that lasting change from sinful behavior is possible for believers through the proclamation and the articulation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. From the gospel, believers encounter union with Jesus Christ through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Union with Christ is more than a private interiority, however; indeed, the church as the Bride and Body is joined to Christ through the Spirit, forming a community of faith that helps foster the necessary change in believers' lives.

After noting that the dynamic for change is found in union with Christ, the authors present a counseling/biblical change model based on three specific texts (Jeremiah 17:5-10, 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, and 2 Corinthians 1:3-11). The model serves as an illustration of the inner spiritual dynamic of Christians to which counselors may refer.

Drawing from Jeremiah 17:5-10, the model (96) depicts four key elements in the life of the believer: (1) heat ("the person's situation in daily life, with difficulties, blessings, and temptations"); (2) thorns ("[A] person's ungodly response to the situation. It includes behavior, the heart driving the behavior, and the consequences that result"); (3) cross ("the presence of God in His redemptive glory and love"); and (4) fruit ("the person's new godly response to the situation resulting from God's power at work in the heart").

The authors describe how disciples of Jesus Christ react to the daily vicissitudes of life drawing from 1 Cor. 10:1-13 and 2 Cor. 1:3-11. All people experience heat that includes not only hardships but even blessings that may tempt one with self-sufficiency. Disciples of Jesus Christ may respond in one of two ways: either producing thorns which are the unbiblical and unsanctified reactions to life events or producing fruit which is the sanctified response to the matters at hand. All fruit is the product of the Cross, which is God's saving presence in believers manifested by God's mercy through Christ's sacrifice, the prayers of fellow believers, and God's deliverance. The efficient cause of the Cross is union with Christ accomplished by the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit.

In counseling, Lane and Tripp argue, lasting change can only take place by bringing counselees to the Cross through the application of the gospel message to their specific problems. Counseling that proclaims the gospel helps produce fruit in believers' lives by invoking the transformative power of union with

Christ. Through the gospel, believers respond to the heat experienced in their lives not by producing thorns but rather fruit borne by the Spirit.

*How People Change* is divided into sixteen chapters. The first five elucidate the necessity of the gospel within the context of the local church as the power of God working for salvation. Counterfeit hope opposing the true hope found in the gospel is also described.

The middle section explains the model for change described above. After describing the overall model, the succeeding chapters detail each of the elements: heat, thorns, fruit, cross. The result is a more comprehensive treatment of the template for sanctification.

The last two chapters are illustrative of the transforming work of the gospel at a micro and macro level. Chapter fifteen details the power of the gospel in a couple's marriage. Chapter sixteen chronicles the gospel working in the life of a local church.

Lane and Tripp are to be commended for the effort expended in this work. The authors have presented a biblically based, theologically sound model for effecting change in people's lives that is accessible to pastors as well as to laity. Lane and Tripp follow the basic assumption of biblical counseling that the real issue in many problems that people face is indwelling sin resulting in idolatry and false worship. Furthermore, *How People Change* is a testament to the growth in the sophistication of the biblical counseling movement over the last thirty-five years.

The model offered by Lane and Tripp for progressive sanctification in the life of a Christian is a significant improvement from Jay Adams' *How to Help People Change* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986). Whereas Adams' model is so emphatic of externals in a manner strangely reminiscent of cognitive-behavioral therapy, Lane and Tripp invoke a more dynamic model illustrating the interior process of change in the heart of an individual. Furthermore, Lane and Tripp present a change model that is more theologically sophisticated than the "Put On/Put Off" method based on Ephesians 4 frequently taught at seminars from the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors. Union with Christ is an accepted doctrine of the Reformed tradition that recognizes the interior dimension of believers' lives in far greater detail than merely putting off the old man, renewing the mind, and putting on the new man as detailed by the "Old Man/New Man" model.

While Lane and Tripp offer biblical advice that invoke Reformed doctrines such as progressive sanctification and mystical union with Christ, their use of Scripture should bear closer scrutiny. The Scripture citations for the model of change appear to be divorced from the immediate context. Other texts dealing specifically with personal sanctification could have been cited (Galatians 5:16-24; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:1-11). One of the chief criticisms of biblical counseling is the charge of proof-texting.

Lane and Tripp have unfortunately contributed to this perception with a less than careful treatment of Scripture.

Despite the shortcomings, *How People Change* is recommended as a ready reference in biblical counseling. Its readability lends itself for laity as well as for pastors, counselors, and trained ministry staff. Lane and Tripp understand what



Christian counselors have not understood since the last century: the power for real change is found only in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

S. Trevor Yoakum  
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

*A. Philip Randolph: The Religious Journey of an African American Labor Leader.* By Cynthia Taylor. New York: New York University Press, 2006, 291 pp., \$39.95.

From coast to coast in our nation, the Rev. Martin Luther King is recognized and honored as the visible example of Black America's struggle for civil equality. And yet, King was but one amongst many prominent men and women who laid the foundation for the civil rights movements of the 1950's and 1960's that were so successful. Asa Philip Randolph, born in 1889 to an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) pastor, was the towering activist who prefigured King. Cynthia Taylor's book delves deeply into the religious underpinnings of a man who embodied a people's struggle for equality and respect.

For decades, historians and scholars have maintained the perception that A. Philip Randolph was ultimately atheistic in his beliefs, even though his family heritage was imbued with Christian religion. Ms. Taylor contends in the introduction that the man was more complex than commonly accepted. The goal of her book is to look at the evidence anew and reevaluate what she considers to be flawed conclusions about his personal spirituality by other researchers and historians.

Chapter One is titled "One of the Sons of African Methodism," and explores Randolph's religious roots. He was an eyewitness to the wrongs of racial hatred and segregation, and at a very young age was challenged to spend his life's energy fighting for the rights of the downtrodden. It was the values handed down by his father that empowered him to take hold of his African heritage, and the radicalism of the turn-of-the-century AME church that shaped his worldview.

Chapter Two, entitled "The Messenger," follows Randolph as he leaves his native Florida for the streets of Harlem. It is there he lays the groundwork for his socialist leanings and begins to form the network of associates with whom he will work the rest of his life. "The Messenger" is the title of the magazine he and another man created, which was designed to be an open forum for discussion. It became one of the most powerful voices amongst the more liberal in America, and it was through his writings in this magazine that many felt his more atheistic beliefs are revealed. And yet, there is never any real evidence that Randolph renounced his religious upbringing and beliefs. Rather, he was not afraid to question—and even attack—any person and philosophy that did not meet his criteria for liberality and social activism.

The third chapter focuses on his long struggle to achieve recognition of *The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters*, or BSCP, which would eventually become

the first black union in America. The essence of this chapter is to show how Randolph was intimately involved with the Christian church, using it to reach out and gain approval of his dream of a trade union for porters. As he struggled through the years to have the Pullman company recognize the union, he worked intimately through and with the various churches and their clergy leadership.

The next chapter details his expanding 'theology' and the growth of his non-violent tactics. By the 1940s, Randolph was the most prominent name in the civil rights movement in America. He began experimenting with a series of actions that would bring to light the racial evils in the country, most notably the concept of non-violent disobedience. He was significantly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and his principles for non-violent protest, and known by many as the "American Gandhi," though there is no evidence he rejected his own religious foundations. Rather, he became convinced that such proactive social activity on the part of black Americans would so effect society that it would be forced to come to terms with its racial inequalities.

The last chapter is a culmination of the decades of his work. For many, Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on that bus is the beginning of the civil rights efforts in the South, but that is simply not the case. Long before her courageous act of disobedience, Randolph and others had laid a solid foundation built upon decades of writing and teaching and transforming the black churches in American, and especially his beloved AME church.

It was Randolph who was the prime mover in teaching Americans that they could achieve action through non-violent acts of disobedience, and which were finally realized in their fullest in Montgomery, Alabama, when thousands joined hands in the bus boycott. That simple act on a bus was but one small stone of a larger work of decades, but which became a catalyst for all the pieces to come together. And through it all the black Christian church was in the middle of it, a voice crying out to the nation. From this came Martin Luther King, standing upon the strong foundation laid by men like A. Philip Randolph.

Taylor's book is not an exhaustive biography, nor is it intended to be such. For those desiring to know more of Randolph's life, they would need to access the works of other authors cited in the bibliography. Her work is derived from her doctoral dissertation and is not for the casual reader. The information culled from her sources is aimed toward understanding Randolph's religious beliefs—not the chronological flow of his life—and therefore can seem somewhat disjointed. She draws upon facts and events at length, though never departing from the primary focus of effort. Though tedious at times, the details become critical building blocks to support the goal of the book.

While Taylor achieves her goal of defending the religious underpinnings of Randolph that accompanied him throughout his career (and thereby effectively dispelling the belief that he was atheistic in his beliefs), there is no real insight into his true spiritual condition. Without doubt the AME church held a cherished place in his heart, but the real question remains: what did Randolph believe? Was he a professing believer in Christ, or was he simply a man who had extensive knowledge of the Bible and church influence, using both to further his civil rights goals? The book offers no real answer to this question, though it would seem from the evidence presented that Randolph's association with the Christian church was much more than a relationship of design. His religious and

spiritual roots run deep, even though his frustration with the Christian churches across the range of denominations is seen through his writings. He believed the church—especially the AME church—was to be primarily a voice for social reform, not evangelism.

Most of white America—and probably much of black America, also—have never heard of A. Philip Randolph. He died in 1979, and is from an era long past. The struggles all Americans endured during more than sixty years of the twentieth century are likely faded memories. I highly recommend Cynthia Taylor's book to anyone who would seek not only a deeper glimpse of the life of a powerful figure in American history, but a better understanding of the decades-long struggle of the black community for civil rights.

Nathan L. Zimmerman  
U.S. Army Garrison, Mannheim, Germany

## Book Review Index

- Bauckham, Richard. *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*. (Darian R. Lockett) 83
- Cooper, Anne, and Elsie A. Maxwell. *Ishmael My Brother: A Christian Introduction to Islam*. (Thomas E. Drake) 73
- Early Jr., Joseph E. *A Texas Baptist Power Struggle: The Hayden Controversy*. (Rodney Harrison) 75
- Goodrich, Richard J. and Albert L. Lukaszewski. *A Reader's Greek New Testament*. (Darian R. Lockett) 81
- Hoffmeier, James K. and Alan Millard. *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions*. (Chet Roden) 85
- Jastrow, Marcus. *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*. (Stephen J. Andrews) 67
- Kullberg, Kelley Monroe. *Finding God Beyond Harvard: The Quest for Veritas*. (N. Blake Hearson) 76
- Lane, Timothy S. and Paul David Tripp. *How People Change*. (Trevor Yoakum) 86
- Provan, Iain, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman, III. *A Biblical History of Israel*. (Ho Kwon) 78
- Schuller, Eileen. *The Dead Sea Scrolls: What Have We Learned?* (Stephen J. Andrews) 69
- Taylor, Cynthia. *A. Philip Randolph: The Religious Journey of an African American Labor Leader*. (Nathan Zimmerman) 89
- Washburn, David L. *A Catalog of Biblical Passages in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Stephen J. Andrews) 68
- Westerholm, Stephen. *Perspective Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics*. (Todd R. Chipman) 71

## **List of Publishers**

Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Avenue S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49503; (616) 776-7635

Hendrickson Publishers, P. O. Box 3473, Peabody, Massachusetts, 01961-3473; (800) 358-3111

InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, Illinois, 60515; (630) 734-4000.

Monarch Books (distributed by Kregel Publications, P.O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49501; (616) 451-4775).

New York University Press, 838 Broadway, 3rd Floor, New York, New York, 10003; (212) 998-2575

Punch Press, 3143 S. Stratford Road, Winston-Salem, NC, 27103

Society of Biblical Literature, Customer Services Department, P.O. Box 133158, Atlanta, GA, 30333; (877) 725-3334

University of North Texas Press, P.O. Box 311336, Denton, Texas, 76203-1336; (940) 565-2142

Westminster John Knox Press, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, Kentucky, 40204; (800) 227-2872

Zondervan Publishing House, 5300 Patterson SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49530; (800) 926-6548

*Midwestern Journal of Theology*  
Subscription Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ One year—\$20 \_\_\_ Two years—\$35 \_\_\_ Three years—\$50

\_\_\_ Please find payment enclosed.

\_\_\_ Please add me to your general mailing list.

Please send my friend a subscription (payment enclosed):

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
Clip and mail to: Editor, *Midwestern Journal of Theology*,  
MBTS, 5001 N. Oak Trafficway, Kansas City, MO, 64118

The faculty of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary  
invites you to subscribe to the  
Midwestern Journal of Theology,  
a scholarly journal written to assist Christians and churches  
in making disciples throughout the world.

Published biannually, each issue includes exegetical and theological  
articles, inspirational sermons, and reviews of recent important books.

Please visit the MBTS website at [www.mbts.edu](http://www.mbts.edu)