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## CONTENTS

### Editorial

THEME: CONTEXTUALIZING GREAT  
COMMISION FUNDAMENTALS

Lecture 1: Contextualizing the Glory of God:  
Glorifying God by Communicating the  
God of the Bible

DAVID J. HESSELGRAVE 1-14

Lecture 2: Contextualizing the Power of the  
Gospel: Unleashing God's Power by  
Communicating the Biblical Gospel

DAVID J. HESSELGRAVE 15-30

Lecture 3: Contextualizing the Gravity  
of Lostness: Preaching & Teaching the  
Wrath of God and the Judgment of Man

DAVID J. HESSELGRAVE 31-45

THEME CLASSIC: Jonathan Edwards,  
"What it is to Come to Christ" (Matt 11:28)  
(A Previously Unpublished Sermon)

MICHAEL D. MCMULLEN (editor) 46-53

Anabaptism and James Arminius: A Study  
in Soteriological Kinship & Its Implications

JERRY SUTTON 54-86

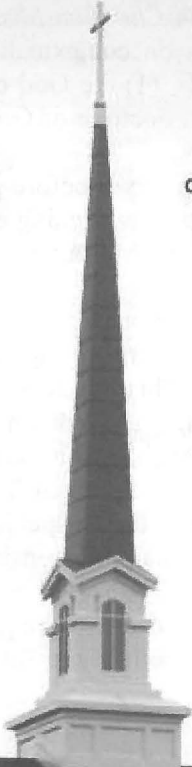
A Medieval Gospel Presentation or a  
Manual of Church Order?

THOMAS P. JOHNSTON 87-94

Sorting out the Jameses: Getting Clear on James the Son of Zebedee and James the Brother of Jesus and their Respective Iconographies. RONALD V. HUGGINS	95-112
BOOK REVIEWS	113-25
Richard S. Briggs and Joel N. Lohr, eds., <i>A Theological Introduction to the Pentateuch: Interpreting the Torah as Christian Scripture.</i> (Reviewed by William K Bechtold III)	113-15
Peter A. Morton, <i>A Historical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind, Readings with Commentary.</i> . (Reviewed by Christopher J. Black)	115-18
Gert J. Steyn, <i>A Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage of the Explicit Quotations in Hebrews.</i> (Reviewed by Tom Galey)	118-20
James Riley Strange, <i>The Moral world of James: Setting the Epistle in its Greco-Roman and Judaic Environments.</i> (Reviewed by Joe Nichols)	120-23
Jerome T. Walsh, <i>Old Testament Narrative: A Guide to Interpretation.</i> (Reviewed by William K. Bechtold III)	123-25

# **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN BIBLICAL STUDIES NEW TESTAMENT AND OLD TESTAMENT**

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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Fall 2012 issue of the *Midwestern Journal of Theology*. This issue's core theme is cross-cultural contextualization of the Great Commission, and features three lectures given at this year's Midwestern Mission Lecture Series (23-25 October 2012) by Dr. David J. Hesselgrave, Emeritus Professor of Missions & Director of the School of World Mission Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Deerfield, Illinois) and author of numerous books including *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1991), *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally* (2000), and *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today* (2005). Dr. Hesselgrave's lectures focus on contextualization of three different Great Commission Fundamentals: (1) the God of the Bible, (2) the Biblical Gospel, and (3) the biblical doctrine of God's judgment of humanity.

We then round out our theme core with a never-before-published sermon on the Gospel (Matt 11:28) by First-Great-Awakening evangelist Jonathan Edwards newly edited by Dr. Michael D. McMullen, Professor of History at Midwestern.

Next on the agenda is an extensive study by historian and Midwestern Seminary's Academic Dean, Dr. Jerry Sutton, comparing the Soteriology of Arminius and the Early Anabaptists. This article is based on research conducted by Dr. Sutton while studying with William R. Estep, noted Baptist historian of the Reformation and Anabaptist movements.

Following this, Midwestern's Professor of Evangelism Thomas P. Johnston translates and discusses a presentation of the Gospel he discovered in a 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century underground Waldensian-Albigensian manuscript.

Finally, the editor presents a discussion on distinguishing between James Zebedee and James the Brother of Jesus both in the Bible and in their respective iconographies.

As usual we conclude this issue with several interesting and relevant book reviews which we hope you will enjoy. Special thanks go to Dawn Clark for her careful proofreading and editing help.

## **Contextualizing Great Commission Fundamentals, Lecture 1: Contextualizing the Glory of God: Glorifying God by Communicating the God of the Bible**



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*“For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen”* (Rom. 11:36 ESV).

In these three lectures on the contextualization of the Great Commission I am intentionally being both rudimentary and autobiographical. My reasoning is that (1) others will be better positioned to inform as to the latest theoretical thinking on contextualization whereas, nearing 90 years of age I may be better positioned to share some earlier history; and, (2) as any discipline develops periodically it is well to go back and rehearse its first principles, particularly when it has theological roots as contextualization certainly does.

As for the Great Commission, I feel quite comfortable with some recent writings of some Trinity colleagues as put forward in a *Festschrift* for John Woodbridge. In this brief lecture series I am particularly indebted to Trinity colleagues Douglas Sweeney and D. A. Carson.

If defined at all, the word “evangelical” has been assigned various meanings. Sweeney notes the definitions of two fine evangelical scholars. Both definitions make mention of evangelical beliefs but one defines “evangelical” basically in terms of the kind of people involved in the movement; the other in terms of the kind of activities in which evangeli-

cals are engaged.<sup>1</sup> Sweeney himself takes an approach that is more in line with our present considerations. He defines “evangelical” mainly in terms of its *belief system*:

I prefer to describe evangelicalism with more specificity as a movement that is based on classical Christian orthodoxy, shaped by a Reformational understanding of the gospel, and distinguished from other such movements in the history of the church by a set of beliefs and behaviors forged in the fires of the eighteenth-century revivals—the so-called ‘Great Awakening’ . . . – beliefs and behaviors that had mainly to do with the spread of the gospel abroad.<sup>2</sup>

In a chapter which concludes the *Festschrift*, “Conclusion: Ongoing Imperative for World Mission,”<sup>3</sup> D.A. Carson first notes various ways in which he might have chosen to treat the Great Commission, but did not. Then he proceeds to highlight “three fundamental biblical truths as they relate to the ongoing mandate for Christian missions”—“the sheer desperate lostness of human beings”; “the sheer power of the gospel of Christ crucified” (both of which I will deal with subsequently); and, the subject of this present paper, “the sheer glory of God.” Concerning the latter he writes,

. . . the sheer glory of God is tightly bound not only to God as Creator, but even more spectacularly to God’s redemptive purposes His missiological purposes, effected by His Son, the vision’s Lion-Lamb [Rev. 5:5-13, ed.] The same tie between the gospel and the glory of God is often portrayed in the New Testament, usually in less apocalyptic terminology. For instance, when Paul depicts his ministry and the proclamation of the death and resurrection of Jesus, he tells the Corinthians ‘All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people *may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God*’ (2 Cor 4:15).<sup>4</sup>

Few evangelicals would take issue when Carson goes back to the apostles and selects his “Great Commission fundamentals” from Scrip-

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas A. Sweeney, “Introduction,” in *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions* (eds. Martin I. Klauber & Scott M. Manetsch; Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2008), 2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> D. A. Carson, “Conclusion: Ongoing Imperative for World Mission” in *Great Commission*, 176-95.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 192.

ture. On the other hand, when considering the Great Commission, relatively few evangelical missiologists give first consideration to the fundamental *beliefs* involved. In fact, though evangelical contextualizers may well give first consideration to the contextualization of the *gospel*, I dare say that relatively few would think in terms of Carson's three "fundamentals" as we will do here.

One more thing. very, very few contextualizers would ever consider those classical rhetoricians of Greece and Rome as contributors to contextualization theory. After all, Plato, Aristotle, Quintilian and Cicero lived over two millennia before the neologism "contextualization" was even coined. Nevertheless they theorized and practiced rhetoric in terms of speaker (source), speech (message) and audience (respondents); and in terms of speaker intention, logical presentation and audience adaptation. So did the Church Fathers, many of whom were masters of rhetorical theory. Since we are thinking in terms of fundamentals, in these lectures I define contextualization in terms of anything that source contributes to communication effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) by virtue of self identification and acceptance, message determination and delivery, and audience recognition and accommodation. The prominence—even predominance—accorded culture in contextualization theory is a very recent development that cannot be completely overlooked, as we shall see.

In this first lecture, then, our emphasis will be on contextualizing the glory of God. Subsequently we will deal with the other "Great Commission fundamentals."

## THE GLORY OF GOD MESSAGE

The greatest and grandest theme of the Bible is the glory of God. I think of that theme in the contexts of three interwoven and determinative biblical metanarratives and especially in the context of the third of those metanarratives—the context of redemption according to which God in grace saves men and women who respond to him first in fear and then in faith.

### THREE BIBLICAL METANARRATIVES IN WHICH THE GLORY OF GOD IS NESTED

1. The metanarrative of Satan and his (fallen) angels—creatures of God but awaiting judgment. Satan is the author of evil all (Luke. 10:19); the one who beguiled Eve (2 Cor. 11:3); and the one who brought death into the world (Heb. 11:13). He is ever and always depicted in Scripture as the archrival of God and as desirous of God's glory. The Bible holds

out no hope for Satan or his fallen fellow angels. Hell has been prepared especially for them (Matt. 25:41).

2. The metanarrative of our cosmos—created *ex nihilo*, marred by sin and awaiting renewal. Also critical to a biblical understanding of the glory of God is the awareness that he is the Creator of the world as we know it. He originated it; it is held together by His Word of power and according to his purpose. Its present state is adversely affected by evil and therefore is depicted as groaning and travailing in the pains of childbirth. But it was created to reflect his glory. Accordingly this “first heaven and first earth” will pass away. He will make “all things new”; there will be a new heaven, a new earth and a new Jerusalem which will be lighted by the “glory of God.” (Rev. 21:5).

3. The metanarrative of the redeemed—humankind created, fallen, restored, glorified. The centerpiece of *Gloria Dei* theology is soteriological. That story is too familiar to need retelling here. But always and ever worthy of retelling are those parts that have to do with the glory and grace of the Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Never to be revised but always to be “re-visioned” are familiar scenes such as Adam and Eve departing Eden in terror after having sinned; Moses with sandals removed at the burning bush; Israel trembling in the foothills of Sinai; Elijah challenging the priests of Baal. The fundamental *problem* of mankind is revealed in Romans 1-3. In essence it is the replacement of the Creator-God with man-made idols. The fundamental *solution* is revealed in Romans 4-11. In essence it is the reception of a gracious God in the person of his Son.

## TWO QUINTESSENTIAL RESPONSES TO THE GRACE OF GOD

1. *Fear* as a first response to the Savior-God. In Romans 1, Paul makes clear the fact that an offended and holy Creator is also a condescending and gracious Savior. God first revealed himself in what his Son made, then in what his Spirit said, and finally in the incarnation of his Son. That revelation itself is a gift of grace. But to be complete, by definition the grace (*charis*) of God is not only God’s “unmerited favor” as we often say. It is also mankind’s response of reverence and reception. We rightly emphasize reception but wrongfully deemphasize reverence. Paul, on the other hand, emphasized it. Idolatry is the result of man’s refusal to *glorify* and *thank* God. Claiming to be wise, men became fools and changed the *glory* of God into man-made images. (Ro. 1:21-23).

Now that is worth thinking about. There are two related but distinct kinds of fear (*yare*’) in the OT and two similar kinds of fear (*phobos*) in the NT: terror fear and reverential fear or awe. Terror fear is not only



justifiable but admirable at times. Jesus says we should fear the God who can destroy both soul and body in hell (Mt. 10:28). But reverential fear is commended and even commanded at all times—especially on the part of those who are in covenant relationship with God (Deut. 10:12-13)

2. *Faith* is the second response to the Savior-God. Paul spends half of his letter to Romans on the truth of the gospel and the response of faith. He begins by saying that gospel is the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes, both Jew and Greek (Rom. 1:16). And he closes this first section of the book with the explanation that God's redemptive plan takes into account, first faithlessness on the part of the Jews, then faith on the part of Gentiles and, ultimately, faith on the part of Jews (Rom. 11). That plan cradles and even constitutes the Christian mission. Its centerpiece is the passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul first rehearses it. Then he recalls the words of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah. And then he breaks forth in a passionate paean of praise.

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.* (Rom. 11:33-36).

## **GOD'S GLORY AND POSTMODERN MESSENGERS**

Much has been written about postmodernism. Here we will highlight but one facet of it to show how postmodern views of God affect—and sometimes “infect”—would-be messengers of God's person and glory.

## **THE GLORY OF GOD IN POSTMODERN WESTERN CULTURE**

As our culture becomes increasingly secularized/paganized, I have become increasingly aware of the gradual abandonment of a rather general respect if not reverence for God and true religion to a widespread disregard for both of them. Do not misunderstand. My parent's generation had a fair share of those who were openly disrespectful and even outrightly antagonistic to God and the church, but both were generally held in rather high esteem. The clergy, including missionaries, were highly regarded and very often favored by merchants and other professionals. All that has changed. Reverence for God is seldom apparent in

public discourse. Clergy are held in low esteem. Worldlings—and perhaps even Christians—may not be unduly shocked when they read atheist Richard Dawkins’s depiction of God as a “moral monster”:

The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving, control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.<sup>5</sup>

Certainly, no clearer contemporary case could be cited for the truth of the biblical pronouncement, “There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Rom. 3:18).

### THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE WESTERN CHURCH

As Western culture in general, and American culture in particular, changed quite dramatically about the time of the Viet Nam War the church began to change as well. Episcopal bishop James Pike challenged the doctrine of the Trinity. He died (1969) under mysterious circumstances in an Israeli desert, reportedly while “on a search for God.” Some prominent theologians concluded that the God of the Bible is dead. Others (Open Theists) questioned, not his existence, but his intelligence and knowledge—insisting that he is alive but simply lacks the foreknowledge required to intervene before bad things happen. More recently some scholars have questioned God’s emotions and feelings—especially his jealousy and anger—and have concluded that the God of Ezekiel, for example, is narcissistic, self-absorbed and ruthless.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, enculturation occurs across the board and across barriers of time and culture. Japanese culture is idolatrous almost beyond belief. I recall a Sunday afternoon some forty years ago when a brilliant Doshisha student came to our Kyoto home with an “urgent” problem. He was deeply disturbed upon reading that the God of the Bible is a “jealous God” when Satan is a defeated foe and all the gods of the nations (including Japan) are idols. A lengthy conversation ensued. Then, about three hours later just before the evening service was about to begin, his mind was set at ease. We had pursued various lines of thinking together

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Bantam, 2006), 51; quoted in Kevin J. Vanhoozer, “Does a Red-Faced God Sing the Blues?” *Trinity Magazine* (Fall 2012): 18.

<sup>6</sup> Vanhoozer, “Red-Faced God,” 18.

but the part of our discussion that had been most compelling had to do with the fact that God is jealous precisely because God is God and God is good. Were he tolerant of either the only rival of his own making, Satan, or of any of the countless Shinto and Buddhist gods of man's making, the world would never be "on Center." Like a wheel off center, the cosmos would eventually self-destruct. *Only when our universe is reconciled to its one true "Center" will there be justice and peace. God is intelligent enough to know that, even if we are not!* Eizoh Maeda learned it that afternoon and went on to graduate from university and seminary in Japan and from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield. And he has served as a pastor in Japan from that time until this.

Here at home, secular postmodern culture affects us differently. My observation has been that the ways in which even evangelicals think and speak of, and to, God has changed along with the larger culture—not to the same degree, of course, but in the same direction. What I have in mind was impressed upon our Trinity community back in the late 1960s when a newly converted Hindu professor of religious philosophy from South Africa, Professor Paul Krishna, enrolled in TEDS in order to study theology. On the occasion I have in mind our chapel was addressed by a young evangelist from California. Dressed in a leather jacket festooned with ribbons and buttons carrying bumper sticker messages, he related how he "invaded" local bars with the gospel. He spoke freely of God as the "Big Man in the sky," of Christ as his "Pal Jesus" and "Big Buddy," and of spiritual matters in generally demeaning terms. As faculty and students filed out of the chapel that day I noticed that Paul Krishna remained seated with head bowed and nested in his hands, tears running down his cheeks. Thinking him to be ill, I approached him and quietly said, "Dr. Krishna, are you ill? Is there something I can do for you?" After a brief hesitation he replied, "Oh no, it's not that. It's just that it hurts so much to hear someone speak of a Sovereign God and my Loving Savior in such irreverent terms."

When you think about it, how dare we do so? Indeed, Jesus is our friend. But though when writing history the evangelists called him Jesus, in normal social discourse none of Jesus' disciples, including the most intimate of them, ever did. They invariably addressed him as Master, as Lord! I say this—and I cite the case of my colleague and then new convert from Hinduism, Paul Krishna—by way of preface to some observations I will not make on contextualizing the glory of God.

### THE GLORY OF GOD CONTEXTUALIZED

In recent years a great deal of missiological interest and literature has had to do with Christian sources (scholars, pastors, missionaries) contex-

tualizing the gospel message (with its component parts) so as to make the gospel understandable (interesting, persuasive, impactful, etc.) to respondents of various cultures (home and foreign). Of course, contextualization does not stand alone. To be contextualized a message must first be “decontextualized”—absolved of at least the most invasive aspects of the source’s culture. Contextualization is a large and complex science. And if it is possible to under-contextualize a message, it is also possible to over-contextualize it. In what follows here we will confine the discussion to the contextualization of aspects of the glory of God as it occurs in two fundamentally different contextualizations of themes that appear in two justly famous NT passages of Scripture: Philippians 2:1-11 and Romans 8:12-25.

### AN IRREVERENT OVER CONTEXTUALIZATION: WM. PAUL YOUNG’S *THE SHACK*<sup>7</sup>

I choose to deal with the “*The Shack*” at this point for what I believe to be some good reasons. First, the book is popular and will be familiar to many. Second, its author, Wm. Paul Young, was raised by missionary parents to a Stone Age tribe in what was New Guinea. Third, the story addresses the familiar question “Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?” Fourth, the book receives not just the imprimatur but also the praise of seminary professor Eugene Peterson, author of *The Message*. And, fifth, on several occasions I have been asked what I think about this work. Actually, it was to respond to this question that I read the book.

1. The story line (for those who are not familiar with it) as stated on the back cover is as follows:

Mackenzie Allen Philips’s youngest daughter, Missy, has been abducted during a family vacation and evidence that she may have been brutally murdered is found in an abandoned shack deep in the Oregon wilderness. Four years later, in the midst of his Great Sadness, Mack receives a suspicious note, apparently from God, inviting him back to that shack for a weekend.

Against his better judgment he arrives at the shack on a wintry afternoon and walks back into his darkest nightmare. What he finds there will change Mack’s world forever.

And what does Mack find there? Well, when Mack responds to the note (from God) and actually visits the shack he has a

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<sup>7</sup> Wm. Paul Young, *The Shack* (Windblown Media: Newbury Park, CA, 2007).

premonition that God might answer the door. He wonders how he should address God. "Should he call him Father, or Almighty One, or perhaps Mr. God, and would it be best that he fell down and worshipped, not that he was in the mood," Young writes.<sup>8</sup> His suspicions were justified. The members of the Trinity were inside: a large African-American woman who engulfed him in her arms and spun him in around with overwhelming love and ardor; a "small, distinctively Asian Woman" who "collects tears"; and a Middle Eastern man dressed like a laborer and with well muscled arms. The large black woman is God the Father whose name is Elousia but who is called Papa. The Middle Eastern man is a Hebrew named Jesus but called Yeshua, Joshua or Jesse. And the small Asian Woman is Sarayu, "Keeper of the gardens, among other things."

From the members of the Trinity Mack not only receives loving and magnanimous treatment, he also receives what he believes to be sensitive and satisfying answers. As a result, Missy's sister Katie is absolved of guilt for taking Mack away from Missy and thus allowing the killer to abduct her. Mack himself is transformed by the realization of who God "really is"; that God is occasioning a revolution of love, tenderness and kindness; and that "*One day, when all is revealed, every one of us will bow our knee and confess in the power of Sarayu that Jesus is the Lord of all Creation, to the glory of Papa.*"<sup>9</sup>

2. An evaluation. The paragraphs from the back cover quoted in part above conclude with the statement: "You'll want everyone you know to read this book! " Actually, I don't. It would be incomparably better to read and study the book of Job. Having read Job it would be better to read C. S. Lewis's *Problem of Pain*. Eugene Peterson thinks that "This book has the potential to do for our generation what John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* did for his. It's that good!" Perhaps! But perhaps not! At least, if it has potential for good it also has potential for ill.

So why would I not recommend *The Shack*? For many reasons, but principally for one. More on that later but first I want to draw your attention to another and more helpful and hopeful contextualization of the glory of God.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 248 (emphasis mine).

**A REVERENT CONTEXTUALIZATION:  
KAMEGAYA RYOUN'S TESTIMONY  
BUKKYOO KARA KERISUTO E  
(FROM BUDDHIST TO CHRIST)**

In *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*, I divulge some contextualization lessons learned some sixty years ago at the very outset of our ministry to the Japanese people. At the time, the Japanese were still living with the devastation that attended World War II and desperately in need of the hope of the gospel. Most missionaries were still new to Japan and ready to proclaim that gospel with deep conviction but unable to proclaim it with equal clarity. In such circumstances the ministry of Kamegaya *Sensei*, a converted Buddhist priest, experienced Presbyterian pastor, and author of the book *Bukkyoo Kara Kirisuto E*<sup>10</sup> was especially appreciated by the attendees of our fledgling church in Urawa.

1. A walk at cherry blossom time. As a group of us walked down an Urawa road and headed out across the rice paddies one day, it became apparent that some emotion deep within Rev. Kamegaya reached out in profound appreciation for the simple beauties of nature that surrounded us. The cherry blossoms were in full bloom and their ever-so-delicate pink petals were special objects of his fascination. Sensing this, one Japanese youth made a move to pick a small branch for *Sensei*—something rarely done in that esthetically inclined culture. Kamegaya gestured for him to desist, smiled slightly, thanked him and said, “Please understand that those flowers are a gift of my heavenly Father. Because he has given me all things in Christ they are already mine. I prefer to keep my blossoms right there on the tree.”

That was early on in a week or so under his Kamegaya *Sensei's* ministry. But already we—certainly I as a new missionary but also eight or ten young Japanese converts who were largely dependent upon me for an understanding of God's Word at that point—were learning what Paul really meant when he said,

You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, but whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him (Rom. 8:15-17).

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<sup>10</sup> I am no longer in possession of any information as to the availability of this book.

2. A testimony of suffering and service. Something of Rev. Kamegaya's enculturated appreciation of nature now enhanced by the Spirit's testimony to his position in Christ had already made itself known. But at that point none of us could have anticipated all that was yet to be learned. It was at the final service that Kamegaya was scheduled to tell his life story. When it came time for the service the gospel hall was filled to overflowing. Kamegaya reciprocated by holding his hearers spellbound for almost an hour as he added his personal narrative to that of the Christian gospel. I clearly remember the gist of it even now after the passage of sixty years. He said,

I was born into the humble home of a Buddhist priest in a small village in northern Honshu. My father had in mind that I would grow up to get the best education possible and succeed him as priest in the temple in which he and our forebears had served for generations. One day when I was still small, he took me into the temple and spoke to me in measured tones. 'My son, I want you to look carefully. See the images of the Buddha. Look at them carefully. Someday they will be yours. See the pictures and tapestries on the walls. Look at them carefully. Someday they will be yours. And look at the candle holders and the incense burners too because someday they will be yours as well. Son, look at this whole temple. Someday it will all be yours. It belongs to your father today, but it belonged to my father before me and to his father before him. But someday it will all be yours and teach all the people about the truth of the Buddha. To do it well, you must study hard now so you can go to a good university, graduate and return to the people of this village as their Buddhist priest.'

I was so proud the buttons on my shirt almost came off. Finally, I was accepted in Tokyo Imperial University in Tokyo. While there I came to know a wonderful missionary who taught me about Jesus Christ. Gradually as time went on I came to realize that, it was not Gautama Buddha but the Lord Jesus Christ who brought us the truth. I became a Christian. But one day about that time I received a telegram from home. It was from my mother and it said, 'Son, come home immediately. Your father has died.' So I gathered my few belongings together, got on a train and returned home immediately.

But I was not prepared for what was about to happen. After the funeral some of village elders came to me and started a conversation. Before long they were addressing me as 'Teacher.' I realized then that they considered me to be their new priest. It was hard, but I said 'Gentlemen. I am sorry but I cannot be your

priest. I am no longer a Buddhist. I am now a follower of Jesus Christ. And I must serve him.'

They were astounded. They kept coming to our home to persuade me that this was my duty. My mother and the rest of my family urged me not to bring shame on the family but to do as my father had wished. This continued until finally I decided that I must leave. So I placed in few belongings in a *furoshiki* in the middle of the night and left by the front gate, holding the bell so it would not ring. I started down the narrow street to the railroad station, and then I stopped. I thought, 'Kamegaya Ryou, what are you doing? You are giving up your name, your family, your friends, and an important place in the village. Are you sure this is what you want to do?'

And then it was as though my Heavenly Father spoke to my heart in teaching you will find in Romans 8:16-17 in the Bible. He said, 'My son, do you see the cryptomeria trees? My Son created them. They belong to him but you are a joint heir with him, so someday they will be yours too. Do you see the mountain top reflecting the light of the moon? My Son created those mountains. They belong to him, but you are a joint heir with him, so someday they will be yours too. And do you see the moon and the stars? They too are his. But some day they will be yours as well. My son, remember. If you suffer with him you will also be glorified with him.'

Hearing that, I literally ran to the railroad station and returned to Tokyo. I went to seminary and after graduation returned to my village, not as a Buddhist priest but as a Christian pastor of a small Presbyterian church. I will be there the rest of my life because of a promise I made to my Heavenly Father. I told him that, since many generations of Kamegayas had led these people in the error of Buddha, at least one generation will lead them in the truth of Christ.

### A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF THE FOREGOING CONTEXTUALIZATION

There are some very obvious differences between these contextualizations. They emanate from vastly different cultures, times and circumstances. One is fictional; one is biographical. Nevertheless both are motivated by Christian aspirations; both are imaginative; both are appealing. Why should one be judged as theologically mistaken if not grossly misleading and the other be judged as theologically sound and



spiritually satisfying? In a word, it is because one is a faithful characterization of the God of the Bible. The other is less so and to the degree that it is not a characterization it is a caricaturization. By way of illustration, compare Young's contextualization of Philippians 2:11 with Kamegaya's contextualization of Romans 8: 15.

1. Young on Philippians 2:11. As we have noted and in a word, Young says that "one day, when all is revealed, everyone of us will bow our knee and confess in the power of Sarayu that Jesus is the Lord of all Creation, to the glory of Papa." Appealing? Yes. In a way, perhaps even compelling. But there is a fundamental problem here. Never mind that Young does not cite the Philippians reference. The passage is well known. "Sarayu" needs attention as part of Young's over-contextualization of the Trinity. But never mind "Sarayu" for a moment. The fundamental problem here is that Young says what Paul did *not* say. He takes the kind of license with the text that is typical of his entire book.

"Abba Father" can be translated "Papa, Father" but not simply as "Papa." Also, "Abba Father" appears only three times in the entire NT and in contexts entirely different from that of Philippians chapter two where he is dealing with the Incarnation of Christ.

2. Kamegaya on Romans 8:15. Whether Kamegaya *Sensei's* interpretation and contextualization of this passage on adoption was based on careful exegesis or not I cannot say. All I can say is that his contextualization was not only compelling, it was warranted by the biblical text. "Abba Father" occurs three times in the NT. First, Jesus uses the expression in Gethsemane when in agony of spirit he prays "Abba, Father, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless not my will but thine be done" (Mark.14:36). Second, Paul uses it Galatians 4:6 to point to the incredible change that occurred when Jewish believers ceased to be slaves under the law, were redeemed, and received the adoption of sons whereby "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into [their] hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" (Gal. 4:6). Third, Paul also uses it in the passage that provides the biblical basis of Kamegaya's testimony (Rom. 8:15) where he exhorts believers to put to death the deeds of the flesh; explains that we have "received the Spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'" and declares that believers are "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, *provided that we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*"

3. A *stoicheion* (rudiment) of *gloria Dei* contextualization. Careful exegesis is critical to faithful contextualization. In Romans 8 Paul is assuring believers—especially traveling and suffering believers—that they have received the "Spirit of adoption" whereby, like the Lord Jesus him-

self, they cry “Abba! Father!” Moreover, the day is coming when, as heirs of God and fellow heirs with his Son, they too will be glorified and inherit all things!

In Philippians 2, Paul is assuring the whole cosmos that the day is coming when every created being in heaven, on earth and under the earth will join in bowing their knees and blending their voices confessing that the incarnate, crucified, resurrected and ascended Jesus Christ is *Lord of all* “to the glory of God the Father.” Christ will be Lord. God will be God. And when that is so, all will be right with the world!

## CONCLUSION

Contextualization has proved to be an exceedingly complex science. For missionaries, its study could—and probably should—last a lifetime. But in these lectures I am proposing that, first of all, Christian contextualizers not overlook or diminish the fact that Scripture itself is a contextualized book with a divine message that is absolutely true and universally applicable. Second, that some of the best instructors on the contextualization of Scripture as it applies to any particular respondent culture are the preachers, teachers and evangelists indigenous to that culture. Perhaps out of their own awareness, what and how they say and write provides some of the most significant insights available to missionaries, preachers, teachers and evangelists from other cultures. Perhaps what they say and write cannot be said in the same way and with the same effect. Nevertheless, it serves to inform biblical interpretation and meaningful contextualization.

## Lecture 2: Contextualizing the Power of the Gospel: Unleashing God's Power by Communicating the Biblical Gospel



DAVID J. HESSELGRAVE

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the Power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16 ESV).*

Two reminders may be in order as we begin this second lecture on contextualizing Great Commission fundamentals. First, I am approaching the subject autobiographically as well as analytically. That's a safety measure. At one and the same time I am taking advantage of seventy years in Christian ministry while also chalking up likely *faux pa* to old age.

Secondly, we are considering of Great Commission fundamentals and the rudiments of communication theory. We can think of contextualization as that which the speaker (source) contributes to make the biblical text meaningful by virtue of self identification and acceptance, message determination and delivery, and audience recognition and accommodation. This would be very much in accordance with classical rhetorical theory. The prominence—even predominance—accorded culture in contextualization theory is a very recent development.

Now in this second lecture we are focusing on contextualizing the power of the gospel.

D. A. Carson writes:

We tend to overlook how often the gospel of Christ crucified is described as 'power.' Paul is not ashamed of the gospel, he declares, 'because it is the *power* of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes' (Rom. 1:16). Writing to the Corinthians, Paul insists that 'the message of the cross is foolishness to those

who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is *the power of God*” (1 Cor 1:18). He takes painstaking care not to corrupt the gospel with cheap tricks like manipulative rhetoric, what he dismissively sets aside as ‘words of human wisdom’—‘lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its *power*’ (1:17). The ‘incomparably great power’ that is working in those who believe is tied to the exercise of God’s mighty strength when He raised Jesus from the dead (Eph 1:19-20).<sup>1</sup>

We will return to Carson before we finish, but first I will rehearse just a few of those requirements that, rightly or wrongly, I was advised very early on and have been proposed more recently are most needful to success in communicating the power of the gospel. Then we will turn to what I understand to be the biblical requirements for such a daunting task. Finally, in conclusion, we will consider two cases in point and their significance.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR MINISTERING AND MISSIONIZING EFFECTIVELY: ONLY PERCEIVED OR REALLY REAL?**

In my case, the missionary call was an outgrowth of a deep-seated early conviction and periodic confirmation that the Lord wanted me to serve in some area of Christian ministry. Early on I thought that I might be an evangelist. That changed over the years. But what has not changed over the years and right down to the present hour is a continuous flow of suggestions as to the essentials of effective gospel communication. In retrospect you will likely be familiar with most—perhaps all—of these suggestions. Some pertain to the minister/missionary himself/herself as message source; some to the message that is to be proclaimed; and some to audience/respondent expectations.

#### **Pertaining to the Source**

My parents were converted to Christ when they first heard the biblical gospel preached by a protégé of the then well known Chicago evangelist, Paul Rader. Accordingly, they joined one of the “gospel tabernacles” erected in the likeness of Rader’s Chicago Gospel Tabernacle. My childhood was spent in two different “gospel tabernacle” churches in

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<sup>1</sup> D. A. Carson, “Conclusion: Ongoing Imperative for World Mission” in *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions* (eds. Martin I. Klauber & Scott M. Manetsch; Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2008), 193.

Southern Wisconsin. It was during my teenage years that our particular gospel tabernacle church joined the Assemblies of God denomination. At that time and as best as I can recall, I was led to believe that there are at least two prerequisites for effective gospel ministry: the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the “unction” of the Holy Spirit.

1. The baptism of the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues. This I sought with all my heart. But in spite of the prayers and encouragement of church elder, I never spoke in tongues. In fact, as far as I can recall, I never even came close. That was deeply disappointing at the time.

2. A special unction of the Holy Spirit. This, I understood, could come later and in various manifestations. But it was modeled and made especially important and attractive by successful ministers of the gospel, some of the finest of them being Pentecostal leaders from Assembly leaders from their headquarters in Springfield, Illinois. However, due to a series of events, I enrolled in Trinity (then the Free Church Bible Institute and Seminary) in Chicago instead of the Assemblies of God Bible School in Springfield. Both Trinity and the Evangelical Free Church of America were small and of Scandinavian origin, but matriculation at Trinity brought me into contact with the larger evangelical movement. In that context, proposed “essentials for ministering the gospel” were destined to undergo almost continuous change, although not completely so.

### **Pertaining to the Message**

Beginning with seminary and right on through university training, mission field experience, and academic involvement, emphases on what is important and even necessary to effective ministry have tended to shift from the source to the message and respondents, and from the experiential to the cognitive. I am not saying that this is either completely so or entirely good. It is not. Nevertheless it has been a tendency and I will offer several examples of what I have in mind.

1. Dynamic equivalence translation and contextualization. This is the label that Eugene Nida first applied to meaning-based or thought-based (as opposed to word-based) Bible translation. The approach was more or less pioneered by J. B. Phillips in the 1950s. I deal with some of its complexities and limitations in *Paradigms and Conflict*<sup>2</sup>. It has yielded numerous and profoundly varied colloquial versions of the New Testament especially. It has also yielded numerous and, at times, profoundly mis-

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<sup>2</sup> See my *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2005), 243-78.

leading approaches to contextualization. One that was most prominent in our seminary discussions in the 1980s and 90s, was that of anthropologist Charles Kraft who, in his *magnum opus*, *Christianity and Culture*, proposed that the Bible is like an ocean with supra-cultural truths floating around on it. It is potentially the Word of God but not propositionally the Word of God. Accordingly it is the task of the anthropologically and linguistically equipped translator-contextualizer to make the gospel message “impact-full,” meaningful and relevant to respondents of various cultures.<sup>3</sup> This approach led to adventurous contextualizations that were unacceptable even to some of Kraft’s former national co-workers in Nigeria.

2. Holism and Kingdom of God missiology. My long time friend and colleague, Ralph Winter, countered the kind of holism proposed at Lausanne in 1974 by championing the priority of reaching unreached peoples with the gospel. After the conclusion of the effort to reach unreached peoples and complete the Great Commission by the year 2000 (and beyond), however, he embraced a holistic interpretation of the Great Commission. He indicated that the phrase “Teaching them to obey all that I have commanded” made “Kingdom Mission” essential by requiring good works of all kinds and opposing Satanic evil by efforts such as research designed to eradicate evil microbes that cause disease and death. For several years until his death Winter and I discussed these subjects. I argued that the resurrection of Christ is God’s conclusive evidence for the truth and dynamic of the biblical gospel. But to the very end Winter argued that Kingdom Mission vindicates the gospel, lends credibility to the Christian mission, and glorifies God.

In the past few years one or another type of Kingdom-oriented good works/social justice message and mission have come to dominate much of evangelical missionary thinking and practice. I believe that approach to be less than biblical. At best it takes a portion of what the Great Commission may require and makes it out to be the Great Commission priority.

### **Pertaining to the Respondents**

There has been and still remains yet another and somewhat subtle approach to obeying the Great Commission and contextualizing the gospel. It is perhaps implicit in proposals already considered but it explicitly calls for contextualization based on respondent interests and expectations of one kind or another. It can lead to something as simple as audience

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<sup>3</sup> See Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979).

manipulation. But it can also lead to far more significant forms of audience accommodation—legitimate and illegitimate.

1. Contextualization as “prophetic accommodation.” The origin of the neologism “contextualization” is usually associated with a consultation “Dogmatic or Contextual Theology” held in Bossey, Switzerland in 1971 at which Bishop Nikos Nissiotis presided. It is also associated with the Third (Reform) Mandate Program (1970-77) of the Theological Education Fund sponsored by the World Council of Churches and its director, Shoki Coe. Coe wrote,

. . . in using the word *contextualization*, we try to convey all that is implied in the familiar term *indigenization*, yet press beyond for a more dynamic concept which is open to change and also future-oriented.

Contextuality . . . is that critical assessment of what makes the context really significant in the light of the *missio Dei*. It is the missiological discernment of the signs of the times, seeing where God is at work and calling us to participate in it.<sup>4</sup>

The basic idea was that, in our day, God is working in special ways among adherents of the various religions of the world and among the poor of the world. Out of the former matrix came contextualized theologies such as “Third-eye theology,” “Waterbuffalo theology,” and “Yin-Yang theology.” Out of the latter matrix came “Black theology” and “Liberation theology” in a variety of forms. During the years of and immediately following the Third Mandate Program a number of evangelical scholars expressed deep reservations with this approach. My reservations were expressed in various writings, perhaps most completely in a volume co-authored with my colleague, Edward Rommen, and titled *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods and Models*.<sup>5</sup>

2. Power encounter as a missionary strategy. From almost the very first, anthropologist-missiologist Alan Tippett was closely allied with Donald McGavran in forwarding the Church Growth Movement. Tippett coined the term “power encounter” to refer to the strategy of actively confronting the power of local spirits and ancestral deities with the power of the Christian God resulting in a victory that would be evident to all. The method has biblical precedent and therefore legitimacy—to a point. However, if its limitations were not obvious previously they became so

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<sup>4</sup> Shoki Coe, “Contextualizing Theology,” in *Mission Trends No. 3: Third World Theologies* (eds. G. H. Anderson & T. F. Stransky; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans / New York: Paulist, 1976), 21-22.

<sup>5</sup> Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989.

when C. Peter Wagner supplemented power encounter with “territorial spirits” theology and practice. His idea was that “territorial spirits” have taken over the rulership of the various target areas and peoples. Those spirits must be overcome and expelled before evangelization can be effective. Controversy reached the point where leaders deemed it best to take up these matters at an annual meeting of the Evangelical Missiological Society. Wagner’s approach did not fare well, but Tippet’s power encounter strategy itself was not similarly examined.

As is the case with many if not most of these strategies, there is some truth to power encounter. We know that from Scripture. But we also know that what it pleases God to do in certain times and circumstances may not be what pleases him to do in all circumstances. Because God sent fire in Elijah’s case does not mean that he will do so in ours. It is not God’s will to do everything that his power would allow him to do. The Jews sought certain signs but Jesus would not comply. The Greeks sought a kind of wisdom upon which Paul would not rely. He preached Christ crucified, “a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:22-24).

## **PREREQUISITES TO EFFECTIVE CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL**

Readers will be aware that the foregoing does little more than illustrate some of the parameters of recent thinking concerning requirements for contextualizing and communicating the power of the gospel. There can be little doubt that most of these proposals are imaginative and creative. But that is not the question. The question is, “Are they valid?” And the answer to that question must be “*They are valid only to the degree that they square with biblical prerequisites to gospel communication in general.*” There are at least four such.

### **The Verbal-Plenary Inspiration of Scripture**

Revelation and inspiration go together. As is well known, “revelation” comes from the Greek word “*apokalupsis*” which literally means “unveiling” or “making visible.” Most often it is used metaphorically and refers to making truth known either “. . . in propositional form, or . . . in the form of an experience from which propositional truth may be inferred.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> J. Oliver Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion, Vol. 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1962), 183.



The critical importance of this for contextualization merits elaboration. We will remember that the Lord Jesus answered Satan's ruse "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread" by quoting Moses: "Man shall not live by bread alone but by *every word that comes from the mouth of God*" (Matt. 4:3-4). On another occasion, Christ Jesus also said, "For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished" (Matt. 5:18). But in classic evangelical theology the passage most usually elaborated in regard to verbal-plenary inspiration is from the Apostle Paul: "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training for righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). With reference to the latter passage I would make four important points.<sup>7</sup>

1. The Bible is identified in three ways in this passage. It is identified as "Sacred Writings" (*hiera grammata*); as "Scripture" (*graphe*); and, as "the Word" (*to logos*). Mahayana Buddhists often speak of a "meaning" or "word beneath the letter" of Buddhist sacred books. Paul's teaching admits of no special word or meaning beneath, above or beyond the actual words or letter of the Bible. All three of Paul's identifiers refer to one and the same Word of God written.

2. Scripture is the product of the "creative breath of God." According to Warfield, the Greek word *theopneustos* ("God-breathed") does not mean "breathed into by God" nor does it refer to the product of "in-breathing" into human authors. The meaning is that Scripture is the product of the "creative breath of God." In other words, the Scriptures are a divine product without any indication of how God operated in producing them. Warfield insists that no term could more clearly and emphatically assert Divine production because in the Bible "breath of God" is a symbol of God's mighty power and creative word.<sup>8</sup>

3. The biblical text is without error in the autographs. With the above in mind, we should approach Scripture with the very strong presumption that the autographs contain no errors, not with the idea that we must examine all the "facts" before we can entertain the doctrine of inerrancy. We believe this doctrine on the basis of the witness of the apostles and prophets and the Lord Jesus himself. Therefore the biblical text itself must be considered to be as trustworthy as any of its "rules of faith and

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted from my *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2005), 247-48.

<sup>8</sup> Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1967), 133.

practice.”<sup>9</sup> This being the case, Warfield’s title for one of his chapters is “‘It Says’; ‘Scripture Says’; ‘God Says’” by which he implies that what Scripture says, God says.<sup>10</sup>

4. Scripture both “makes wise for salvation” and is “profitable” for spiritual growth. Grammatically and contextually, *theopneustos* in this passage can be understood as either part of the subject or part of the predicate. That is, one could correctly translate the phrase as either “All Scripture God-breathed is . . .” or “All Scripture is God-breathed.” The latter reading is found in most translations and is the preferred reading of most conservative evangelicals. Warfield himself thought it to be a matter of indifference. He interpreted the phrase to mean that Scripture is of divine origin, so that “Every Scripture, seeing that it is God-breathed, is profitable”<sup>11</sup> Scripture (note that the Old Testament is in view here and that the gospel, therefore, is in the Old Testament as well as the New) is able to make one “wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15). More than that, Scripture is “profitable (*ophelimos*, i.e., beneficial, useful, advantageous) for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16)

The relevance and importance of the foregoing for both the defining and doing of verbal Christian contextualization cannot be overstated.

### **BIBLICAL PRIORITIES IN THE INTERPRETATION OF GOSPEL AND MISSION**

The socio-political interpretation of gospel and mission currently popular among evangelicals is nothing new. Already in 1976 Stephen Neill wrote that it had become so dominant among ecumenists that the centerpiece report on “Confessing Christ Today” at the Nairobi Assembly in 1975 “probably saved the World Council of Churches from disintegration”<sup>12</sup> Subsequent history has proved that kind of “salvation” to be both temporary and partial.

Apart from a resurgence of the priority of the spiritual and eternal in our understanding of the gospel and of world evangelization in Christian mission, evangelicals now run the same risk. D. A. Carson gets close to the heart of the matter when he labels “the sheer power of the gospel of

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid, 215, 406-7.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, 299.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 134.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Neill, *Salvation Tomorrow: The Originality of Jesus Christ and the World's Religions* (Guildford & London: Lutterworth / Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1976), x, quoted in James A. Scherer, *Gospel, Church, & Kingdom: Comparative Studies in World Mission Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1987), 129.

Christ crucified” to be one of the fundamentals of the Great Commission. I want to pick up on that again later, but at this point I want to emphasize something with which I am quite certain Carson would agree. Namely, that while the cross is certainly a centerpiece of the biblical gospel, so is the empty tomb. In fact, as the apostles press forward in obedience to the Great Commission (more accurately “Holy Spirit-inspired obedience to the Great Commission”) in the Acts of the Apostles, the overriding theme of their message is the resurrection of Christ. And there is still more to the gospel. Paul makes that clear when he reminds the Corinthians of “the gospel I preached to you” and includes not only the crucifixion and resurrection but also the burial of Christ’s crucified body and the appearances of his resurrected body (1 Cor. 15:1-11). At first that may seem strange. But upon closer examination it is not at all strange. If, as some said, Christ’s dead body was spirited away and not actually buried, how could it be shown that he was actually dead? And if after his burial he was never seen, how could it be shown that he was resurrected bodily?

Of course, there is still more to the gospel. Though the gospel can be defined very simply and poignantly in the words employed by the Lord Jesus in John 3:16 and also in the words of the Apostle Paul in First Corinthians 15:1-11, in its completeness it can only be described in terms of the sum total of divine revelation from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21. Insofar as we can grasp and articulate that *gospel* we must be true to all of it in our interpretations, declarations and contextualizations.

### **A DEFINITION OF CONTEXTUALIZATION THAT ENABLES BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING**

Ralph Winter is correct when he says that “contextualization” is a dangerous word<sup>13</sup> First, it is used with relationship to non-verbal as well as verbal communication—music, lifestyle, strategy and so on. Second, even when applied basically to verbal communication, contextualization has been defined very differently depending (mainly but not solely) upon the theological interests and commitments of the contextualizer. From very early on in contextualization discussions there were significant differences in definitions of the word even among evangelicals.

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<sup>13</sup> Ralph D. Winter, “The Theology of the Law of God” in *Foundations of Global Civilization: Semester One. Mentors Handbook* (Pasadena, CA: Institute of International Studies/ U.S. Center for World Mission, 1993), 27.1.

1. **Byang Kato:** “We understand the term to mean making concepts or ideals relevant to the situation.”<sup>14</sup>

2. **Bruce J. Nicholls:** “[Contextualization is] the translation of the unchanging content of the Gospel of the kingdom into verbal form meaningful to the peoples in their separate culture and within their particular existential situations.”<sup>15</sup>

3. **George Peters:** “Contextualization properly applied means to discover the *legitimate implications* of the gospel in a given situation. It goes deeper than application. Application I can make or need not make without doing injustice to the text. Implication is *demand*ed by a proper interpretation of the text.”<sup>16</sup>

4. **Harvie M. Conn:** “Contextualization is the process of *conscientization* of the whole people of God to the hermeneutical claims of the gospel.”<sup>17</sup>

All four of these definitions—and various others that could be cited—are, of course, stipulated definitions. As far as I know none of them has outlived its author. So until something approaching a dictionary definition is determined there will be a good deal of difference in the ways in which even evangelicals view contextualization. Nevertheless, the strength of these particular definitions is that all four of them emanate from a solid commitment to the full authority of the biblical text. Since the biblical gospel itself is intrinsically powerful, the preeminent task of the contextualizer will be to do what must be done to make the text *meaningful* to respondents. And that is the way in which I believe that contextualization should be both defined and enjoined.

## THE INVOCATION OF HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTION IN RESPONDENTS

The Apostle Paul reminded Corinthian believers that he,

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<sup>14</sup> Byang H. Kato, “The Gospel, Cultural Context, and Religious Syncretism,” in *Let the Earth Hear His Voice* (ed. J. D. Douglas; Minneapolis, MN: World Wide, 1975), 1217.

<sup>15</sup> Bruce J. Nicholls, “Theological Education and Evangelization,” in *ibid.*, 647.

<sup>16</sup> George W. Peters, “Issues Confronting Evangelical Missions,” in *Evangelical Missions Tomorrow* (ed. Wade T. Coggins & E. L. Frizen, Jr.; Pasadena, CA.: William Carey Library, 1977), 169.

<sup>17</sup> Harvie Conn, “Contextualization: A New Dimension for Cross-Cultural Hermeneutics,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 14 (Jan. 1978): 44-45.

did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

Most of us are inclined to interpret “demonstration of the Spirit and power” in line with our own theological commitments, but whatever may be included it certainly involves that kind of Holy Spirit conviction prophesied by Jesus when, before his ascension, he promised his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, he said, would do two things. First, he would bring to their remembrance that which Christ Jesus had taught them. That is the basis of the inspiration of Scripture. Second, he would convict (*elengxei*, convince, reprove, rebuke) the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment. Note that carefully. Of what sin? Of the sin of unbelief in Jesus, the one sin most difficult to convince people of. And why righteousness? Because the one person of all history who personified righteousness was Jesus Christ, and he would no longer be personally present as a standard of comparison. Of judgment, but which judgment? The judgment of the god of this age, Satan, whose judgment occurred at the cross! Satan may be very active, but he is not in control. Jesus is Lord! So where is this kind of power? In the gospel of Christ. And who has the power to convict men and women of its truth? The Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

## TWO CONTEXTUALIZATIONS OF THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

Before concluding we take note once more that D. A. Carson’s Great Commission fundamental is “the sheer power of the gospel of Christ *crucified*.” In commenting on this he adds,

There is a superb irony in all this, of course. When Jesus was executed in the first century, the cross had no positive religious overtones. The Romans had three methods of capital punishment, and crucifixion was the most painful and the most shameful. Yet here were the Christians, their leader executed as a

damned malefactor, talking about Him with gleeful irony as if He were reigning from the cross.<sup>18</sup>

When Ed Rommen and I collaborated in writing *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods and Models*<sup>19</sup> we decided to include some examples of contextualization drawn from our respective respondent cultures—Germany and Japan. Some readers judged that exercise in one way and some in another, but resultant discussions did, I think, prove helpful. So, I will attempt the same kind of exercise here. The common thread in these two examples is that both have to do with the cross of Christ—its wisdom and its power. One contextualization is directed to and Americans audience; the other to our Japanese friends. One is more exegetical while the other is more existential. Both examples are quite intensely personal, especially my sermon “The Polyhedrous Cross.” But perhaps I can be forgiven for including it because my purpose is not to point to it as a model sermon but for a very different reason. Namely, to emphasize once again that the biblical text itself is a contextualization *par excellence* when it comes to fashioning divine messages relevant to distinct cultures and subcultures but, even more importantly, relevant to the entire human race.

### “THE POLYHEDROUS CROSS”—A SERMON BASED ON 1 CORINTHIANS 1:19-31

The sermon for which I provide a summary-outline below was prepared in somewhat unique circumstances—circumstances that were at once frustrating and challenging. A change in academic policy at the University of Minnesota back in the 1960s allowed doctoral students to replace an academic minor in any one discipline with an equal number of credits in advanced seminars of any discipline provided that those seminars made significant contributions to the student’s primary research. I happened to be one of the first to take advantage of this new arrangement. As a consequence I ended up taking advanced seminars in philosophy, sociology, psychology and political science in addition to seminars in rhetoric/communication (cross-cultural communication). I found it to be at once exhilarating and frustrating to be exposed to so much of the world’s advanced knowledge in these disciplines. It was exhilarating because scholars were constantly undertaking new research, exploring new ideas, and proposing new theories. It was frustrating because these inquiries were almost completely devoid of any attention whatsoever to the

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<sup>18</sup> Carson, “Conclusion,” 193.

<sup>19</sup> Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989.

revealed wisdom and knowledge of God. Paul's words in First Corinthians chapters 1 and 2 came to my mind over and over again.

About that time a major Christian magazine—I believe it was *Christianity Today*—announced a sermon contest. Entries were to be judged mainly on the bases of fidelity to the biblical text and relevance to the contemporary culture. Invited to speak in a local church one Sunday I was impressed to prepare a sermon based on First Corinthians 1:19-31 and then enter it into the contest. Probably like hundreds of other such sermons of the time, it was preached a local congregation (actually, in this case, to several congregations) but was never submitted to the contest. If it has merit, that merit lies in the relevance of a Holy Spirit-inspired first century message not only appropriate to first century Corinth, but to twentieth century Minneapolis-St. Paul as well. It's in the hope that readers will capture or recapture some of that relevance that I recover and review the sermon here.

### **“The Polyhedrous Cross”**

Text: 1 Corinthians 1:19-31.

Introduction: Under the Romans, first century Corinth was a flourishing, cosmopolitan city. It was known for commerce and wealth. It was also known for its logomachies—wordy disputes and disputes about words. And it was also known for its profligacy—“to corinthianise” meant to live an immoral life. Cultural traits such as these had infected the fledgling church. Paul begins a letter designed to counter and correct this state of affairs by insisting on certain fundamentals of the gospel and of God's dealings with mankind. Paul speaks clearly and boldly, “the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” Then he presents five fundamental “antidotes” to Corinthian thinking and lifestyle—antidotes that lend themselves to a five, four, three, two, one numerical arrangement although I adhere to the order of the text.

#### **I. A Threefold Recrimination—vss. 20-21**

From almost the very first it has been man's intention to somehow arrive at truth without divine aid. Satan said, “You will be as gods; your eyes will be opened; and you will know good and evil.” Adam and Eve made the attempt and it failed miserably. That epitomizes humankind's intellectual history—an interminable grasping after truth, not on the basis of God's revelation but on the basis of human speculation. Our culture still grasps for it, but will never come to grips with it until we embrace the Christian gospel.

## **II. A Twofold Predilection—vss. 22-25**

Paul says, “Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom.” History shows this to be the case also. When Jesus presented himself as the promised Messiah to his fellow Jews, their response was “Show us a sign.” When Paul approached the Athenians, they were spending their time in “nothing except telling or hearing something new.” And so it is with people today. People tend to seek out professed providers (whether gurus or drugs) of life with a capital “L” on the one hand, or proposers of new insights and information (whether esoteric or scientific) on the other. But Christ is both the power of God and the wisdom of God. God’s “foolishness” is wiser than men, and his “weakness” is stronger than men.

## **III. A Fivefold Selection—vss. 26-29**

Now the Apostle Paul invites his readers to reconsider their divine calling. God’s way of selecting people who will make up Christ’s church is diametrically different than the way Caesar chooses people who will make up his court. Not exclusively but ordinarily, God chooses that which is foolish (Balaam’s donkey), weak (David’s sling), base (Samson’s jawbone), despised (Gideon’s army), and even “things that are not” (the “army” that routed the Syrians). Though there are good and valid reasons for believing the gospel and trusting Christ, in the final analysis it will not be our knowledge or wisdom that does so, but God’s. Why? To meet human needs and, at the same time, eliminate boasting.

## **IV. A Fourfold Provision—vs. 30**

Count them. As frail, erring humans we know that we have numberless needs. But it seems to take a lifetime to learn which ones are most important. Unless we learn from divine revelation, that is. But God knows and he has made provision for those needs in the person of Christ whom he has made to be the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption of those who believe.

## **V. A Single Intention—vss. 29, 31**

Finally, why has God ordained it to be this way and only this way? For one reason, so that when men and women boast they will boast in the Lord. Reportedly, St. Francis of Assisi was once asked how it was that



he could accomplish so much. He answered, "It must be that the Lord looked down from heaven and said, 'Where can I find the weakest, littlest, meanest man on earth?' Then he saw me and said, 'I've found him. He won't be proud of it. He'll see that I am using him because of his insignificance.' Only when Christ is Lord will God be God. And only when God is God will all be right with the world.

### THE FESTIVAL OF *OBON*—CROSSES IN BUDDHISM AND THE CROSS OF CHRIST

I had been in Japan but a brief two or three weeks when one night I came upon a celebration that featured loud native music and graceful dancing but also considerable merriment and excessive drinking. When I inquired as to the reason for the celebration I was simply told that it was the annual *Obon* festival celebrating the memory of dead family members.

It must have been about a year later when we invited a Japanese evangelist who was very conversant with Japanese religions, Rev. Hashimoto, as speaker in an evangelistic campaign held in our gospel hall in Urawa. I am reasonably sure that it did not occur to me that the campaign had been scheduled for the time of *Obon*. The significance of that timing was not overlooked by Hashimoto *Sensei* however. In any event, an American missionary was destined to learn the real meaning of *Obon* while a Japanese audience was destined to learn the true meaning of Calvary's cross—many of them for the very first time.

In one of his sermons, Hashimoto first dealt with the profound difference between the Buddhist gods and bodhisattvas on the one hand and the God of the Bible on the other; the distinctions between karma in Buddhism and sin in the Bible; God's hatred of, and judgment on, sin; and the significance of Christ's Cross and Resurrection. He then retold the story of Mokuren and the Buddha; the background of *Obon*; and concluded as follows:

My friends, do you know the story behind *Obon*? Many do not so let me tell it to you. After his mother died, one of the Buddha's disciples by the name of Mokuren made an earnest plea to be able to see how his mother was faring in the netherworld. Finally, in answer to his repeated implorations, the Buddha withdrew the veil and allowed Mokuren to see his mother suffering in the agony of being crucified upside down! Mokuren secured a temporary reprieve for his mother after which she was obliged to return to her cross in the netherworld. That's what the word *Obon* really means. It means to be crucified upside down.

My friends, the truth is that on that day almost 2000 years ago on a Cross, outside Jerusalem in Palestine, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, suffered far more than physical pain. Bearing your sin and mine, he also bore the wrath of God the Father against sin and evil, and suffered the separation from the Father that holiness and justice required.

The sad thing about *Obon* is that, after a short time of respite and celebration with dead parents and loved ones, our Buddhist friends must escort them back to their grave where they will hang upside down on a cruel cross for another year. What a cruel thing to do to one's loved ones! But that is what Buddhism teaches and that is what it requires.

Friends, the truth is much different. The Bible teaches us that Jesus Christ was crucified and rose again so that you and your loved ones need never suffer either crucifixion or separation from God—neither in time nor in eternity. That is what we Christians call the “Gospel”—Good News. And that, indeed, is what it is.

## CONCLUSION

We err if we think that it is up to us to make the gospel relevant and effectual by means of human devices of any kind whatsoever. Of course, we must do all that we can to make the gospel interesting and compelling, appealing and persuasive, and—above all—understanding and meaningful. But, inspired and infused by the Holy Spirit, it is the “sheer power of the gospel of Christ crucified” itself that is essential to Great Commission mission. It is the power of God for salvation to everyone that believes. It is to be proclaimed fully and faithfully, passionately and persuasively. It is to be proclaimed to Jews and Gentiles, to Americans and Japanese—to the peoples of the whole world, each in the context of their national boundary and each in the context of the worldview in which they live and move and have their being.

## Lecture 3: Contextualizing the Gravity of Lostness: Preaching & Teaching the Wrath of God and the Judgment of Man



DAVID J. HESSELGRAVE

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth (Rom. 1:18 ESV).*

We have dealt with two Great Commission fundamentals: the glory of God and the power of the gospel. Today we deal with the third fundamental: the lostness of man. In many ways this will prove to be the most difficult of the three fundamentals to contextualize and communicate. Nevertheless, the Great Commission is predicated on human lostness. Dismiss or disregard lostness and the Great Commission evaporates like the morning dew. Apart from human lostness there is little or no reason for you and I, as Christians, being here.

In an effort to absolve our discussions from some of the baggage that attends recent discussions of contextualization I have retreated to the classical teachings of the rhetoricians of ancient Greece and Rome. Living and laboring long centuries before the neologism “contextualization” was born they nevertheless did some seminal thinking concerning the relationship between speakers, speeches and audiences. In fact, they put forward ideas that have furnished grist for the mills of students of speech and communication for two millennia. So, though we have changed the nomenclature to source, message and respondents, we are focused on some of the same basic notions that occupied their attention.

Since in this present lecture I will refer to the well known and fairly recent dialogue involving the liberal David L. Edwards and the evangeli-

cal John R. W. Stott, it might be well to note here at the outset that, though not familiar with the nuances of contemporary communication theory, Stott is an extraordinarily effective speaker. He thinks of what we might term contextualization in terms of “sensitivity”—sensitivity to both the message of lostness and the perceptions and feelings of respondents. That’s a simple way to think of it. But it is possible to be over-sensitive just as it is possible to over-contextualize. And that’s a problem, as we shall see.

Finally, I remind you again that my approach here is as much autobiographical as it is analytical. This in recognition of the astuteness of my audience and as a concession to my age. If I am able to contribute much of anything to your understanding on these subjects it will probably emanate as much from my experience as anything else.

### **A LOST WORLD’S VIEW OF LOSTNESS**

In order to underscore its importance we need to consider the view of the ordinary citizen of almost any of the world’s cultures a prominent place in our thinking every though we need not give it much space here. Very, very few people in the world think of themselves as really lost—their neighbor perhaps but not themselves and certainly not in terms of being hell-bound. Concerning university students in America, D. A. Carson says that they might show mild interest in the incarnation and the resurrection of Jesus, or even in the concept of the Trinity. “But the one topic almost guaranteed to ignite their ire is sin.” Then he goes on to say concerning Paul’s indictment of sinners in Romans 3:10-18: “Even for many Christians, the catena of biblical quotations collected by the apostle Paul sounds a bit over the top.”<sup>1</sup>

I’ll let it go at that. But I want it to make clear the fact that it is precisely that attitude in both the world and, sometimes, the church that occasions most of our problems with respect to communicating lostness and that drives much of the discussion with which the remainder of this paper is occupied.

### **LOSTNESS, WRATH AND JUDGMENT IN THE WORD OF GOD**

If there is no difficulty in ascertaining the world’s attitude on lostness, wrath, and judgment, that is not true when it comes to ascertain-

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<sup>1</sup> D. A. Carson, “Conclusion: Ongoing Imperative for World Mission,” in *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions* (ed. Martin I. Klauber & Scott M. Manetsch; Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2008), 185.

ing God's understanding and attitude concerning lostness, wrath and judgment as revealed in the Bible. God's attitude is abundantly clear. To return to Carson once again, he says, "What we must perceive is that the unfolding of the Bible's entire plotline is bound up with human sin, and God's utterly righteous wrath against it."<sup>2</sup> And then he proceeds as follows:

What is it in Scripture that is repeatedly said to be most offensive to God, to anger God? What is it that characteristically brings down the wrath of God—in many hundreds of passages? It is not rape, or murder, or lying, or theft, even though some passages, in Isaiah and Amos for instance, display God's wrath because of social injustice. No, the thing that is characteristically portrayed as bringing down the wrath of God is idolatry. The human stance that prompts God to send the devastation of the flood, or send His covenant people into exile, is repeated and determined idolatry.

Does not Paul say as much? In his letter to the Romans, he devotes two and a half chapters to demonstrating how all humankind, Jews and Gentiles alike are wrapped up in sin. His exposition ends with the catena of Old Testament quotations...and it begins with the somber words, 'The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of human beings who suppress the truth by their wickedness' (Rom. 1:18)<sup>3</sup>...But there is more. Jesus Christ demands that we think in terms of heaven and hell. Sheep and goats do not end up in the same destination (Matt 25:46). If the judgments of the Old Testament Scriptures seem horrific, they are considerably less than the barrage of pictures that Jesus Himself deploys to describe hell (see also Rev. 14:14-20).<sup>4</sup>

Before we finish I will call upon a number of outstanding evangelical scholars who down through the years have been used of the Lord to inform and establish my own understanding with regard to these matters. But before I do it seems necessary to deal some length with the attitudes and understandings, not only of "many Christians," as Carson says, but of some Christian scholars as well.

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<sup>2</sup> Carson, "Conclusion," 186 (emphasis mine).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 187-88.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 188.

## CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS AND PRACTITIONERS—SOURCES OF TRUTH?

The Bible writers are implacably honest about lostness but as their modern-day counterparts we have serious problems with it. I recall that, in a seminary class on evangelism, we students were required to memorize a large number of Bible verses—Revelation 21:8 among them. I remember students quoting the other verses at various times, but I don't recall any of us quoting Revelation 21:8 outside of class! Similarly, whether in homiletics or another class I'm not now sure, but I recall reading Jonathan Edwards' famous sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" and being informed of its impact when it was first preached. Also of the fact that it was perhaps one of the greatest sermons ever preached in America. But I don't recall anyone ever preaching like that in our seminary chapel.

But that proved to be just the beginning. Down through the years in academia, in churches, on the mission field—and in theological and missiological gatherings—lostness, wrath and judgment have proved to be problematic for most pastors and missionaries whether these topics are related to the love, justice and the sovereignty of God or to the divine disposition of people who haven't heard the gospel.

### ROLAND ALLEN ON A "FULL GOSPEL," "STERN DOCTRINES" AND JUDGMENT

Exactly a century ago the Anglo-Catholic missiologist, Roland Allen, published his now famous book on the missionary strategy of the Apostle Paul in which he severely criticized his contemporaries for not preaching a "full Gospel" "*stern doctrine*," and divine judgment. Allen wrote, "There is a tendency today to avoid . . . stern doctrine,"<sup>5</sup> adding ". . . we have lost two prominent elements of Paul's Gospel: the doctrine of judgment at hand, and the doctrine of the wrath of God."<sup>6</sup> This in turn, he said, leads to a failure to warn those who refuse the gospel of the possibility of imminent judgment and also to the devising of an "easy doctrine of evangelization."<sup>7</sup>

I do not anticipate that many will object when I conclude that, whether or not Allen's criticism of the missionary preaching of his generation was valid with respect to that generation, it certainly seems to be valid with respect to ours. That bothers me greatly. But what bothers me

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<sup>5</sup> Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1961), 70-72.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

even more is that, in reviewing my own preaching and teaching over the years, I discover that I myself have been guilty of avoiding Paul's "stern doctrines" while at the same time encouraging mission teachers, students and practitioners to emulate the Apostle Paul. So, if I am a would-be rectifier of the problem, I am also a self-confessed contributor to it. At the same time, I am afraid that this neglect is not so much idiosyncratic as it is pandemic. Ask almost any church-goer—including evangelical church-goers—how many sermons on, or references to, John 3:36 they have heard during the past year as compared to John 3:16; how many sermons on the wrath of God as compared with sermons on the love of God; how many mentions of hell as compared to mentions of heaven; how many warnings of judgment as compared to promises of blessing. Lamentably, Allen's criticism at this point is almost unquestionably as true of our generation as it evidently was of his.

In stark contrast to this state of affairs, our *heritage* as orthodox Christians, Protestants and evangelical theologians, missiologists, preachers and missionaries includes a great biblical heritage on the holiness and wrath of God and the lostness and judgment of man.

### NELS FERRE AND CLARK PINNOCK—A LIBERAL AND AN OPEN THEIST ON HELL

I have no reason to treat these particular theologians at this point other than the fact that they vetted their views and feelings in situations that at the time were exceedingly troubling both to me and to many of their hearers. I should not have been caught off guard (but I was) when first staking out a new "parish" in the vicinity of Doshisha University—a Congregational school in Kyoto, Japan. Doshisha had been largely taken over by Higher Criticism and Universalism some years before the turn of the twentieth century. I was reminded of what I would be up against, when a rather large congregation of Japanese and internationals responded approvingly to the prominent American theologian, Nels Ferre, when he preached on the "Christian view" of hell and judgment. In his sermon at a Sunday afternoon service for internationals Ferre likened Jesus' words on hell to a loving mother's warning to her mischievous child, "Now listen to me. You just better be a good boy and do as I say or goblins will get you and who can tell what they will do to you!" "That's what a loving, caring Jesus does," said Ferre. "Jesus' horrific descriptions of hell and judgment are not to be taken literally. They are nothing more or less than warnings—though they *are* warnings—to be obedient, loving children of the Heavenly Father."

More startling to me was the reaction of my one-time colleague and professed evangelical, Clark Pinnock, at an annual conference of the

Evangelical Theological Society in San Diego many years ago. I now realize that he was probably in process of developing his Open Theism position at the time, but I knew nothing of it at the time. At any rate, as stated in a paper dismissive of evangelical understandings of divine justice and human judgment, Pinnock's position had been rather roundly criticized by three respondents, myself included. When the time came for his rejoinder, Pinnock turned toward his critics and with flushed face almost shouted, "You seem to be comfortable with the idea that a loving God would send some of his creatures to hell. If so, perhaps we worship different Gods!" Pinnock's remark was undoubtedly engendered by the frustration of the moment, but not entirely so. And since that time he has avowedly joined the ranks of those theologians who are willing to sacrifice something of the omniscience and omnipotence of God to ill-conceived notions of the nature of his love and justice.

#### **DAVID EDWARDS AND JOHN STOTT—A LIBERAL- EVANGELICAL DIALOGUE ON ESSENTIALS**

In a fairly recent dialogue with John Stott, the Anglican liberal, David Edwards, suggests that the language of the Lausanne Covenant—"eternal separation from God"—though still misguided, is preferable to the traditional wording "everlasting punishment." The traditional wording, he goes on to say, ". . . may conjure up the unchristian picture of God as the Eternal Torturer—as in the notorious sermon on 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God' preached by Jonathan Edwards in 1741."<sup>8</sup> To his credit, Edwards does proceed to examine various relevant texts in the New Testament. But in the end, his bias toward the love of God and a type of universalism leads him to conclude that the lostness of everlasting punishment is not only decidedly "unchristian," it is absolutely unconscionable.

Stott responds by explaining his (tentative) espousal of "conditional mortality"—the notion that ". . . nobody survives death except those to whom God gives life. They are therefore immortal by grace, not by nature."<sup>9</sup> Then, in a kindly manner characteristic of Stott, he concludes,

I am hesitant to have written these things, partly because I have great respect for longstanding tradition which claims to be a true interpretation of Scripture, and do not lightly set it aside, and partly because the unity of the world-wide Evangelical constituency has always meant much to me. But the issue is too im-

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<sup>8</sup> David L Edwards & John Stott, *Evangelical Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988). 291-92.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 315-16.



portant to suppress, and I am grateful to you for challenging me to declare my present mind. I do not dogmatise [sic.] about the position to which I have come. I hold it tentatively. But I do plead for frank dialogue among Evangelicals on the basis of Scripture. I also believe that the ultimate annihilation of the wicked should at least be accepted as a legitimate, biblically founded alternative to their eternal conscious torment.<sup>10</sup>

Even before the Edwards/Stott book was published, Dean Kenneth Kantzer, was taken by surprise when first informed of Stott's embracement of conditional immortality. Now, as many will know and I have noted here, John Stott was an extremely sensitive and kindly brother in Christ. So perhaps Kantzer should not have been surprised when Stott explained that he had been reluctant to speak on the subject in the United States in deference to American evangelical audiences.

#### **DONALD A. MCGAVRAN AND THE FORMATION OF THE EVANGELICAL MISSIOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

Finally, it might be worth mentioning Donald McGavran in this regard. McGavran's background had led what many perceived to be a theological "softness" in his lectures and writings on Church Growth. However, in the late 1980s, when McGavran had grown weary of discussions with missiologists who did not share even his most basic understanding of "Great Commission mission," he took a different view. He urged the formation of a new missiological society where everyone would be in basic agreement on fundamental issues such as we are discussing here. Standing outside his Pasadena home he spoke to the following effect:

Dr. Hesselgrave, we desperately need a missiological society in which all participants agree on the essentials. Unless we basically agree on what it means to be lost, for example, how is it possible to agree on what is involved in fulfilling Great Commission mission and evangelizing the world?

How indeed? And by this time most of my colleagues will be aware of the fact that it was conversations and correspondence with Donald McGavran on such subjects that ultimately resulted in the formation of the Evangelical Theological Society.

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<sup>10</sup> David L. Edwards with a response from John Stott, *Evangelical Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 319-20.

I do not cite any of these experiences with colleagues in order to embarrass anyone—or, at this point, even to take issue with them though I certainly do take issue with what I perceive to be sub-orthodox views on these subjects. I simply want to point out that, more often than not—and to a degree greater than is the case with most other theological/missiological matters—lostness, wrath and judgment occasion emotional as well as intellectual responses. And that not only among worldlings and liberals but among evangelicals as well—both leaders and laypersons. Theologians often relate these matters to considerations of the justice and the sovereignty of God. Pastors and evangelists to Bible preaching and Christian witness. Missionaries to strategies for reaching the unreached and also the fate of those who have not heard the gospel. All alike are prone to contextualize what the prophets and apostles, and Christ himself, had to say about lostness and judgment not just in ways designed to satisfy the church and the world, but also in ways designed to satisfy their own understandings and emotions. And that’s a problem.

### THE EVANGELICAL HERITAGE—PREACHING LOSTNESS AND PASSING THE BATON

“Evangelicalism” has been defined in various ways—sometimes in experiential and existential terms such having to do with evangelistic undertakings, concern for souls, and so on. As I noted early on in these lectures, I believe Douglas Sweeney to be more helpful when he defines evangelicalism basically in terms of a *belief system* that results in a *behavioral pattern*:

I prefer to describe evangelicalism with more specificity as a movement that is based on classical Christian orthodoxy, shaped by a Reformational understanding of the gospel, and distinguished from other such movements in the history of the church by a set of beliefs and behaviors forged in the fires of the eighteenth-century revivals—the so-called ‘Great Awakening’. . . – beliefs and behaviors that had mainly to do with the spread of the gospel abroad.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Douglas A. Sweeney, “Introduction” in *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions* (ed. Martin I. Klauber & Scott M. Manetsch; Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2008), 2.

LEARNING FROM FELLOW AMERICANS

Before concluding I want to pass on the kind of teachers and teaching on these difficult subjects that have informed and molded my own thinking. Noted here are just a few that I have had the privilege of knowing, hearing and reading down through many years.

1. **William Evans.** A Presbyterian, prolific writer; and professor at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, William Evans was also a peerless preacher. He memorized the entire New Testament and was able to quote any reference flawlessly and on a moment's notice. I heard him preach a series of messages at the First Evangelical Church in Chicago in the 1940s and was motivated to buy several of his books in spite of my very meager resources as a student. It may be of special interest that Evans published one of his early books, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*, in 1912—the same year that Allen published his *Missionary Methods*.<sup>12</sup> It is from that book that I draw several examples of Evan's position on our present concerns.

\*“The Cross shows how much God loves holiness. The Cross stands for God's holiness even more than His love.”<sup>13</sup>

\*The righteousness and justice of God are shown in two ways: first in punishing the wicked or retributive justice; second in rewarding the righteous or remunerative justice.<sup>14</sup>

\*In Romans 8:7 Paul says that the carnal mind is enmity with God. Reconciliation in its active sense is the removal of that enmity. In its passive sense it may indicate a change of attitude on the part of man toward God.<sup>15</sup>

\*No interpretation holding to the annihilation theory can be maintained by sound exegesis.<sup>16</sup>

2. **Billy Graham.** When I first came to know Billy Graham in the 1940s and 50s he spoke more freely, frequently and forcefully concerning judgment and hell than has been the case in more recent days. In 1949 before he became a Christian the famous track star and war prisoner, Louie Zamperini, was infuriated when he heard Graham preach the sermon “The Only Sermon Jesus Ever Wrote” only to deeply regret it

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<sup>12</sup>William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1912).

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 42.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 72.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 260.

and turn to Christ for salvation shortly thereafter. In his sermon Graham had said,

Darkness doesn't hide the eyes of God. God takes down your life from the time you were born to the time you die. And when you stand before God on the great judgment day, you're going to say, 'Lord, I wasn't such a bad fellow' and they are going to pull down the screen and they are going to shoot the moving picture of your life from the cradle to the grave, and you are going to hear every thought that was going through your mind . . . And your own words, and your own thoughts, and your own deeds, are going to condemn you as you stand before God on that day. And God is going to say, "Depart from me."<sup>17</sup>

In one of the sermons included in a 1994 anthology of Graham's sermons he took special notice of the fact that the concept of hell is not exclusive to the Christian faith. He explained that the ancient Babylonians believed in a "Land of No-Return." The Hebrews wrote about Sheol, or the place of corruption. The Greeks spoke of the "Unseen Land." Classical Buddhism recognizes seven "hot hells." The Hindu *Rig Veda* speaks of the deep abyss reserved for false men and faithless women. Islam recognizes seven hells. Graham then proceeded to catalogue a long list of biblical "descriptors of hell."

- \*Revelation 20:15—the Lake of Fire.
- \*Psalm 11:16—a horrible tempest.
- \*Psalm 18:5—a place of sorrows.
- \*Matthew 13:42—a place of wailing.
- \*Matthew 8:12—a place of weeping.
- \*Matthew 13:41-42—a furnace of fire.
- \*Luke 16:23—a place of torment.
- \*Revelation 20:11-12—a place of filthiness.
- \*Revelation 16:11—a place of cursing.
- \*Matthew 8:12—a place of outer darkness.
- \*Revelation 14:11—a place of unrest.
- \*Luke 16:27—a place where people pray.
- \*Matthew 25:26—a place of everlasting punishment.
- \*Matthew 25:41—a place prepared for the devil and his angels.
- \*Luke 16:2—a place where one begs for a drop of water.
- \*Isaiah 33:11—a place where one's breath is flame.

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<sup>17</sup> Laura Hillenbrand, *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption* (New York: Random House), 373.

\*Luke 16:2—a place where one is tormented with fire.

\*Revelation 21:8—a place where one is tormented with brimstone.

\*Luke 16:25—a place of memory.<sup>18</sup>

As I say, these examples are taken from sermons some of the earlier sermons of the famous evangelist. But I would argue that they are all the more representative and significant because they are sermons preached when Graham was in his prime.

3. **Carl F. H. Henry.** My late colleague on the faculty of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Carl F. H. Henry, was well known as one of the premier theologians of the twentieth century. He was also known for advocating a comprehensive Christian world view inclusive of social and political dimensions. Perhaps somewhat less known was his profound interest in world mission and evangelism—an interest fueled in part by the fact that his wife Helga is the daughter of pioneer Baptist missionaries to Gabon, but also by his dedication to a biblical theology of mission.

Two somewhat extended quotations from the voluminous works of Henry reflect his commitment to Allen's "full gospel" in the one case, and his "stern doctrines" in the other. It is, I think, of special interest that the first quotation is on a topic of such importance to Henry that he addressed it at the annual dinner of the Evangelical Theological Society (1969) and also assigned a title that is reminiscent of Allen's impatience with the theology of some of his contemporaries. The title is "Justification by Ignorance: a Neo-Protestant Motif." Henry said,

the lifeline of the Protestant Reformation was its rediscovery of the Scriptures—truth that God offers to penitent believers, hopelessly guilty in their strivings to achieve salvation by works, the benefits of Jesus Christ's meditation [sic., "mediation" is intended] on the Cross. God acquits sinners, solely on the ground of a righteousness which He himself provides, a righteousness made known by intelligible Divine revelation and embodied in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, righteousness available to sinful men by faith alone.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *The Faithful Christian: An Anthology of Bill Graham* (comp. William Griffin & Ruth Graham Dienert; New York: McCracken Press, 1994), 183-84.

<sup>19</sup> "Justification by Ignorance: a Neo-Protestant Motif?" An address by Dr. Carl F. H. Henry to the annual dinner meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society on Monday night, 29 December 1969, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Later published in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 13 (1970): 3-13, quotation from p. 3.

As for the second quotation that follows, it is excerpted from Henry's classic five-volume tome on revelation and, I think, representative of the forthrightness with which he handles "stern doctrines" which, though unpopular, are nevertheless biblical. He says,

"There are scholars who consider the eternal punishment of the wicked to be inconsistent with the nature of God. These critics tend to subordinate to divine love all the biblical passages about God's wrath, and ignore the fact that Jesus said even more about the pangs of hell than about the bliss of heaven, and moreover makes their duration coextensive and unending."<sup>20</sup>

4. **R. C. Sproul.** Finally, I make mention of the founding pastor of St. Mark's Church in Sanford, Florida. "R.C.," as he is sometimes referred to, has long had a reputation for being uniquely gifted as a Christian apologist and Bible expositor. I had known Sproul from a distance for many years, but shortly after he started St. Mark's while I was on a writing sabbatical in Sanford, it was my privilege to sit under his ministry on a number of occasions. As a result I took a special interest in his writings and recalled several relevant portions from one of them when restudying Allen's book.

For example, when writing on the essentials of the Christian faith, Sproul speaks concerning the holiness of God and notes that the biblical word "holy" has two distinct meanings. The primary meaning is "apartness" or "otherness." It points to the profound difference between God and his creatures. The secondary meaning has to do with his pure and righteous actions. God always does what is right; never what is wrong.<sup>21</sup> Against that backdrop Sproul's comments on punishment and hell become especially meaningful and even arresting. He writes:

"Perhaps the most frightening aspect of hell is its eternity. People can endure the greatest agony if they know it will ultimately stop. In hell there is no such hope. The Bible clearly teaches that the punishment is eternal. The same word is used for both eternal life and eternal death."<sup>22</sup>

"Punishment implies pain. Mere annihilation, which some have lobbied for, involves no pain. Jonathan Edwards, in preaching on

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<sup>20</sup> Carl F. H. Henry, "God Who Speaks and Shows: Fifteen Theses," *God, Revelation and Authority* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1979), pt 3, bk 4, p. 597.

<sup>21</sup> R. C. Sproul, *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1998), 47.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 286.

Revelation 6:15-16 said, 'Wicked men will hereafter earnestly wish to be turned to nothing and forever cease to be that they may escape the wrath of God.'<sup>23</sup>

"Hell, then, is an eternity before the righteous, ever-burning wrath of God, a suffering torment from which there is no escape and no relief. *Understanding this is crucial to our drive to appreciate the work of Christ and to preach his gospel.*"<sup>24</sup>

### LEARNING FROM A GIFTED JAPANESE EVANGELIST

I have echoed the importance of learning ways of communicating biblical truth to respondents of another culture by learning from effective teachers and preachers native to that culture. And in previous lectures I have provided some examples of this. Now I offer yet one more.

Early on in church planting in Urawa, Japan I was blessed to have the services of a number of Japanese pastors, teachers and evangelists. One such was Rev. Hashimoto, an expert in Japanese religions. One Sunday he spoke from Luke 16:19-31. Good. I had been a pastor in the States and had not gotten around to dealing with that passage in five years. Given its nature I probably would not have gotten around to deal with that passage in Japan for, perhaps, three or four terms or more! So I was anxious to know how Hashimoto *Sensei* would deal with this difficult passage? What would he say? Well, as I recall, he first spoke about Luke and his Gospel; about Jesus' knowledge of these matters as the Son of God; and about parables and why this might be something more than a parable.

But it was when he got to the text itself that the message began to grip his audience. In order to understand why, I suppose that at the least one would have to know something about the Japanese myth, Buddhist karma and hells, local notions and circumstances of wealth and poverty, and ancestor reverence as well as the array and range of Japanese emotions that accompany these matters. But perhaps even the their importance will be sufficient for my present purpose. At any rate, summarizing Hashimoto's sermon on Luke 16:19-31, he said something like the following:

My dear friends, can't you imagine this state of affairs? For long months and quite frequently the rich man probably hurriedly and

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. (emphasis mine).

disgustedly passed by the wretched and starving beggar Lazarus as he went out and in through the huge gate that closed his stately home off from the gaze of ordinary people. To discourage him from coming, the rich man showed nothing but disdain for Lazarus. Dogs licked Lazarus's sores, but the rich man not only refused to help, he often motioned him to get out of the way.

Eventually, both men died and went to Hades, the place of the dead. Now this is especially important for reasons you need to understand. They both went to the same place, but the Lord Jesus says that they were separated by an uncrossable gulf. Lazarus was at rest alongside Abraham, the great man of faith in the Old Testament. But the rich man was in a place of flames.

In thirst and torment, the rich man, recognizing Lazarus, called out to him for to bring even one drop of water and put in his tongue. Abraham responded that neither of them could go from one side to the other. The gulf between them was impassable. It was impossible for Lazarus to take even a drop of water to him or help him in any way.

In desperation the rich man—now himself a beggar—urged Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to warn his five brothers to believe the gospel and be saved so as not to come to the place of flame and torment. Abraham replied, 'Let them listen to what Moses and the Prophets have to say in the Bible.' The poor rich man replied, 'No, but if someone returns from the dead they will repent.' 'No,' said Abraham, 'If they won't hear Moses and the Prophets, they won't be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead.'

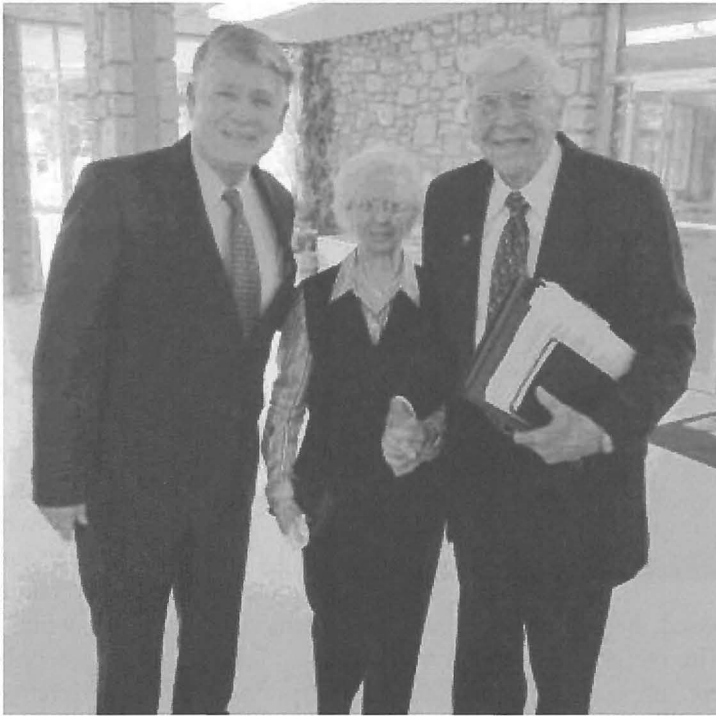
Dear friends, let me tell you what the Lord Jesus is telling us Japanese in this text. He is telling us exactly what Christian pastors and missionaries have been saying. Namely, that whether American or Japanese, whether rich or poor, all ultimately go to either heaven or hell depending on whether or not they repent of their sin, believe the gospel, and live according to it.

He is also saying that decision must be made during this life. After death it will be too late. And, finally, he is saying that, if it were possible for them to return and talk to you, your Japanese ancestors would plead with you to follow Christ and be saved. They can't come to you, but the Lord Jesus tells this story because he does not want you to be lost. In fact, he not only warns you, he himself died for your sins, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven and lives forevermore to be your Savior and Lord.



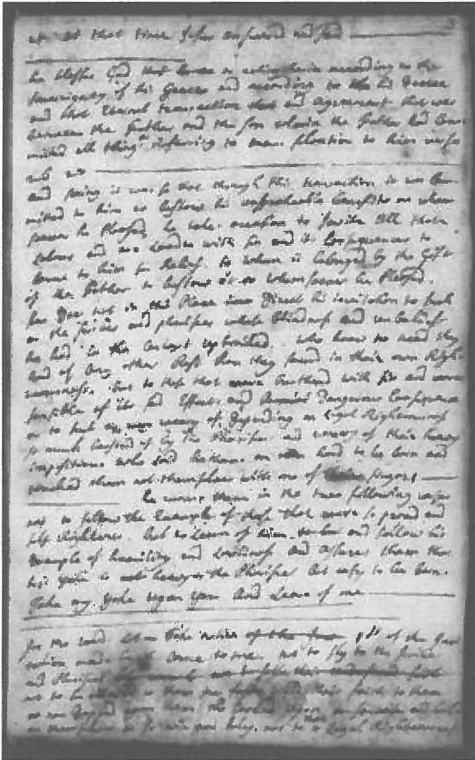
## CONCLUSION

My conclusion is as short as it is simple. Neither you nor I nor any Christian minister or missionary who would be faithful has a choice. The Bible is so clear and lostness is of such gravity that we must teach and preach it with passion and purpose. The gravity of lostness can be proclaimed in the manner and style of Jonathan Edwards. It can also be proclaimed in the manner and style of Hashimoto *Sensei*. *But to be faithful to Great Commission fundamentals, it must be proclaimed.*



**L-R: Dr. Robin Hadaway, Mrs. Gertrude Hesselgrave,  
Dr. David Hesselgrave**

# THEME CLASSIC: Jonathan Edwards on "What it is to Come to Christ" (Matt 11:28) (A Previously Unpublished Sermon)



Edited for Publication by:

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**Editor's Introduction:** In the summer of 1726, Jonathan Edwards started to compose a sermon on Romans 12:1, but for whatever reason, he only wrote the first page. More than a quarter of a century

passed, before he used that same sermon notebook in which to write the present sermon on Matthew 11:28. What is transcribed here, appearing in print for the very first time, is a relatively short (for Edwards) sermon, though one that has an unusually short (again for him) Application. This previously unpublished sermon has been transcribed by the present writer, direct from the MSS held at the Beinecke Rare Book and MS Library at Yale University. Edwards had no systematic use of punctuation and so most has been added, otherwise no editorial changes have been made to the sermon, except for the insertion of a small number of missing words for the sense of the text, as indicated by the use of square brackets. I have also given the full form of some abbreviated words. As indicated in Edwards' own notes, this was a

sermon he preached at the Stockbridge Mission after his dismissal from the Church in Northampton.

### **What It Is To Come To Christ**

**Stockbridge Indians, August 1752**

**Matthew 11:28, 'Come unto me all ye that labour'.**

The internal motive to Christ's coming into the world, and those labors and sorrows, the equal of which never heard upon earth before, was his pity and compassion. He saw us in great misery, and it moved the eternal Son of God to pity. Amongst all the creatures which God has made, Christ had a peculiar favour and benevolence towards mankind. He especially rejoiced in the habitable parts of this earth and his delight was with the sons of men, Proverbs 8:31. When he saw us therefore brought exceeding low it moved his pity and his bowels yearned towards us.

He came therefore, that he might deliver us and he earnestly calls after us and tells us that there is a deliverance for us, proclaims the good news, and urges us by all means to accept of it and to come to him, and he will save us, offering us of his ability and readiness to do it. Such proclamations we frequently have from Christ Jesus. And one of the most pathetic and moving examples we have in our text, which words seem to be thus occasioned. Christ as we have account in the context [had] been upbraiding those parts of the land wherein he had been principally conversant, and had been blessed with the greatest advantages for saving knowledge, that they still were ignorant through their willful and obstinate rejecting the clear light offered them. Not that those things were hidden from all, but from the Scribes and Pharisees and those that were in greatest esteem for wisdom and strictness of life amongst the Jews. Which Christ makes an occasion of thanksgiving, as being agreeable to his designs of grace and mercy, that the wisdom of the wise should be turned into foolishness, and that those that were wise in their own eyes and self-sufficient, should be left in darkness and that they should be revealed to the humble, lowly, and poor in spirit, as v.25, At that time Jesus answered and said, 'Come unto me all ye that labor'.

He blesses God, as acting herein according to the sovereignty of his grace and according to his decrees and that eternal transaction and agreement that was between the Father and Son, wherein the Father had committed all things as referring to man's salvation to him, verses 26 and 27. And seeing it was so, that through this transaction it was committed to him to bestow his unspeakable benefits on whomsoever he pleased, he takes occasion to invite all that labour and are laden with sin and its consequences, to come to him for relief, to whom it belonged by the gift of the Father, to bestow it on whomsoever he pleased. He does not in this

place direct his invitation to such as the Scribes and Pharisees, whose blindness and unbelief he had in the context upbraided, who knew no need they had of any other rest than they found in their own righteousness, but to those that were burthened with sin, and were sensible of its sad effects and dangerous consequences, or to such as were weary of depending on legal righteousness, so much boasted of by the Pharisees, and weary of their heavy impositions, who laid burthens on men hard to be borne, and touched them not themselves with one of their fingers.

He warns them in the two following verses, not to follow the example of those that were so proud and self-righteous, but to learn of him and follow his example of humility and lowliness, and assures them that his yoke is not heavy as the Pharisees', but easy to be borne, Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me.

In the words let us take notice, first, of the invitation made by Christ, Come to Me. Not to fly to the Scribes and Pharisees, not to be attracted to them nor yield their faith to them, nor depend upon them, though looked upon by themselves as so wise and holy, nor to that legal righteousness, so much extolled and gloried in by them, But believe in me, trust in me and obey me and take my yoke upon you.

2. The persons invited, All the weary and heavy laden, the miserable, for Christ came to save from misery, and those that are sensible of their sin and misery, for such only accept of his salvation, those that are weary of their bondage to sin, being heavy-laden with an uneasy conscience, awakened by the law and burthened with the yoke of Jewish ceremonies, which they nor their fathers, were able to bear, to take Christ's easy yoke upon them instead of it. But the invitation is universal, ALL ye weary and heavy-laden with sin or its effects of every sort and degree, for the Gospel of God is not confined in its offers, or the Gospel Kingdom to the Jews, or any other nation or set of men whatsoever.

3. The argument used and motive presented, And I will give you rest. You are weary and burthened, 'tis relief and rest you want, come to Me and I will give it you.

**Doctrine. That Christ gives rest to all such as are spiritually weary and burthened, that come to him for it.**

I use the same expression as in the text, of coming to Christ, as being very expressive of that act of the soul, or of the man, intended by it, which we shall endeavor to explain in the explication of the doctrine, wherein we shall:

- I. Show who are intended by the spiritually weary and burthened.**  
**II. Show what is meant by coming to his rest, and**  
**III. That Christ will give rest unto such.**

**I. Who are intended by the spiritually weary and burthened**

First. Those that are burdened with a sense of guilt and fear of wrath. 'Tis a dreadful condition that those are in, that are held under the guilt of sin, that lie under an obligation to suffer the punishment of all the sin that ever they have been guilty of. A man had better have a viper cleaving to his heart, than have the guilt of sin lying upon his soul. While a man lives under the guilt of sin, he hangs over the pit of hell. He is as it were bound by a chain that Satan has hold of at one end. He has the thunder of God's wrath impending over him, and heaven's cannon are leveled against him.

But yet there are many that are in such a condition that are not sensible of their misery. They are in such a dead sleep, that they are resting quiet and secure in it. 'Tis not very burdensome to them to be thus.

But there are others that God is pleased in some measure to be waking out of their sleep, and to be making sensible what a condition they are in, and upon these their guilt lies as a heavy load, day and night. 'Tis a burden that they can't get rid of. They can't lay it aside to rest. It continually oppresses them. They go about from day to day in pain. It is a continual labour of heart to support itself under this burden.

The awakened sinner has a terrifying sense of God's wrath upon his heart. He sees the storm that threatens him, and he hears the rumbling of the thunder that is ready to break upon his head, and it is a dreadful sound in his ears. He has it impressed upon his mind, that the great God is angry with him and is his enemy, that his wrath burns against him, and that God has made ready his arrow upon the string against him. And it abides upon him lying down and rising up. He goes about with a sense of God's anger from day to day. He is afraid of meeting with wrath wherever he goes. He has no peace in his mind, his mind is tossed to and fro, as a vessel in a storm. He goes as a man that travels, having a scorching heat perpetually beating upon his head, and he can find no shade to rest himself.

He is ready to cry out, How shall I dwell with consuming fire? How shall I dwell with everlasting burnings? What shall I do to bear the anger of Almighty God to all eternity? He is in a distressed condition. Terrors take hold upon him. He is a poor, frightened, trembling, helpless creature. He knows not which way to turn, nor what to do to escape eternal damnation.

He remembers such and such sins he has been guilty of, and the reflection upon them terrifies and affrights him. He has a sense of God's anger against him for it. Those sins lie as a heavy and intolerable weight upon his mind.

2. Those that are weary with fruitless endeavors to find rest in other things. While the soul is thus burdened with a sense of guilt and a fear of wrath, it is restless and uneasy and is seeking rest. It wanders about from mountain to hill, sometimes hopes to find rest in this thing, sometimes in that. They are striving to lay some tie upon God. They can't bear to see themselves to be the objects of wrath, and have it remain wholly as uncertainty whether ever they shall escape. Therefore they are endeavoring to bring God under some obligation to show them mercy, and they take refuge in what they have done. They think how much better they have been than many others that God has shown mercy to. They think how much pains they have taken for it, and are ready sometimes to say, Surely God will have some respect to the pains I have taken. They think how many prayers they have made, how many tears they have shed, and they hope that God will have some respect to that and not cast them off, notwithstanding all. They think how careful they have been to avoid all ways of sin, and how strict in duty, and they think God would deal hardly by them, to have no regard to it. And they are sometimes striving to make their hearts better, that they be the better fitted to come to Christ and that God may be the more ready to have pity upon them. And they are sometimes striving to work up their hearts into a believing frame. They are sometimes ready to trust in ministers and in the prayers of good people for them. Thus they weary themselves. They wander about, sometimes taking rest in one thing and sometimes in another, still striving to get something to depend upon for escaping of eternal damnation, which they are so terribly afraid [of], but they find all to be fruitless and vain, and they are in as much danger and distress as ever they were, the dreadful sound still follows them. None of their refuges prove sufficient to give rest to their souls. Thus they are weary with wandering to and fro, and they are weary with striving to procure rest for themselves.

## **II. Inquire. What it is to come to Christ for rest. Here are these three things:**

First. The soul is made sensible that there is rest to be had in Christ. The soul thus burdened and weary, is very sensible of its need of rest, and it has been seeking of rest in other things, and thought to have found rest in them. He hoped to find rest sometimes in this thing, and sometimes in that, but at last he is very sensible that no rest is to be found in them. But

he now sees where rest is to be had. He is convinced that he may have rest in Christ.

He was burdened with a sense of his guilt. He sees that in Christ he shall be free from guilt, that if he be in him, he shall be delivered from that burden. He was burdened with fear of wrath, but he sees that in Christ he shall be safe from that wrath. Christ has made satisfaction to offended justice, and his satisfaction is sufficient. He sees a way how the wrong done to God's majesty may be made up, so that he may be saved, and that he not be injured, and sees in Christ enough to satisfy the cravings, and to supply the needs of his soul.

Second. He chooses and desires rest in Christ. He chooses Christ's rest, that rest that Christ purchased for him and that he offers to him, which is a holy and heavenly rest, a bearing Christ's yoke and doing his work. He chooses rest in Christ's way above all other ways that he can think of. He chooses then safety and rest in Christ's righteousness, and in the grace of God in him, rather than in his own righteousness. He delights in that way that gives so much glory to free grace. He chooses his rest should be attributed to Christ, that all the glory of it should be given to him.

Third. The soul applies to Christ for rest. It seeks it of him. His application is to him and his expectation from him. He commits himself to Christ, that he may save him and give him peace. He looks to him as they that looked to the brazen serpent in the wilderness, and were healed.

### **III. Christ will surely give rest to all weary and burdened souls that thus come to him.**

First. If they come to him, he'll take away that which was the foundation of their weariness, and will secure them from it. He undertakes to take the guilt of such upon himself that he will be responsible for them, that their debt shall be put to his account and that he will secure them from the wrath which they fear. This is the work and business which he has undertaken. He engaged to do it before the foundation of the world. Even from all eternity he has undertaken to be the Refuge and Savior of those that are afraid of God's wrath and come to him. And Christ has faithfully promised it to men, he has plighted his faith for their security if they put their trust in him. He hath thus done by his own free and voluntary act.

If sinners come to Christ they have done that whereby they have exposed themselves to God's wrath and to the stroke of justice. It is not their concern how they shall satisfy or how they will answer for what they have done, Christ looks upon it as his concern, he'll look to that. Let there be never so much wrath deserved, if they are in Christ they are as

safe as if they never had deserved any, because Christ has undertaken to stand in their stead, let there be more or less.

There need be no fear whether his suretyship will be accepted of the Father upon their account for he is chosen and appointed of the Father to this very work, 'tis the Father that sent him into the world, Christ died and suffered wrath in obedience to the Father. And there need be no doubt of the sufficiency of what Christ has done, for he has fulfilled the law. The law is as much fulfilled as if they themselves had personally obeyed, or had personally suffered the curse of the law. And then God's honor won't suffer at all by their escaping punishment and being made happy. For what Christ has suffered has repaired God's honor, and what he has done has done much more honor to God, than ever our sins dishonored him.

They need not doubt of finding acceptance with the Father through the Son, seeing that Christ is so dear to God, a Person that is intimately near to him, and in whom he is infinitely delighted.

2. Christ will give sensible peace and rest to their minds in a sense of the removal of their guilt and their safety from punishment. There shall be more or less of a sense of this here in this world. Christ gives peace of conscience to believers, though it may be much interrupted in this present state, as faith itself is. But where there are exercises of faith there will be more or less of this peace. And generally Christ gives to believers manifestations of pardon and justification that are exceeding refreshing, and very much quiet and compose the mind in a sweet rest and calm. This is that peace that Christ gives, John 14:27, Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid. This is the peace of God that passeth all understanding, Philippians 4:7. And if their peace be much interrupted in this world, 'tis ever more through want of faith, 'tis because their faith is weak and interrupted, 'tis because they don't come to Christ so often and trust in him so fully and so constantly as they ought to do. And however this peace may be disturbed with doubts and fears in this world, yet hereafter it will be perfect and undisturbed forever. This everlasting rest will Jesus, the true Joshua, give to all those that come to him for rest, Hebrews 4:8,9.

### **Application.**

The Improvement I shall make of this, is to invite those that are weary and burdened to come to Christ. You are sensible that you are in a doleful condition, that it is dismal to go about having God's wrath impending over your head not knowing how soon it will fall upon you, hanging over

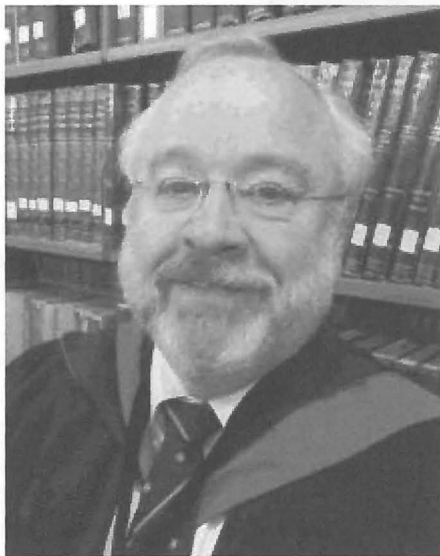


the pit by a slender thread not knowing every moment but that you may drop in.

It is doleful, if we consider the turmoil and uneasiness that such a condition is attended [with] or may justly be attended with [in] this life, and you have some experience of it. You find nothing but wearisome days and wearisome nights. Your heart is filled with fears and you have little or no comfort in the world. Your burden is so great that you are ready to cry out under it. And how needless it is, that you should continue in such a condition, when Christ offers you his peace and rest freely.

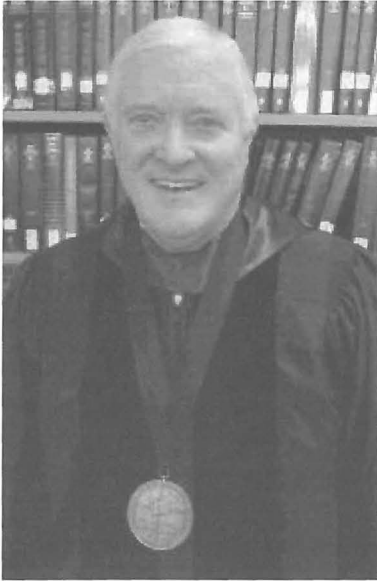
How happy would your condition be to what it now is, if your heart were but persuaded to close with Jesus Christ. Then you would be free from guilt and out of all danger. Whatever storms were without, you might hear the rush of the rushing of the wind, and the roaring of the thunder, while you are quiet and unmolested in a safe shelter.

O! be persuaded therefore to come to Christ, that sufficient, that blessed and excellent Savior that labored and was heavy-laden for our sakes under the heavy wrath of God, so that we who had committed the sin might have safety, ease and rest forever.



**Professor Michael D. McMullen**

## Anabaptism and James Arminius: A Study in Soteriological Kinship and Its Implications<sup>1</sup>



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As research progresses many links are being discovered between English General Baptists as they emerged in the seventeenth century, and Continental Anabaptism, particularly the Mennonites. The factuality of relationships of John Smyth, Thomas Helwys and others with the Dutch Mennonites are incontestable. Irvin Horst has done much spade-work to establish the presence and identity of Anabaptists in England during the Reformation era on the other side of the English Channel.<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless many scholars and particularly British scholars contend that the rise of the English Baptists was essentially independent from any Anabaptist influence. If anything, the theology of the English General Baptists—the most probable link to Anabaptists by either of the two early branches—was molded not by the European Radical Reformation but

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on research conducted by Dr. Sutton while studying with William R. Estep, noted Baptist historian of the Reformation and Anabaptist movements.

<sup>2</sup> Tom Nettles, "Smyth and Helwys: The Key to Anabaptist—Baptist Relations," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 19 (Fall 1976) :101-104; W. R. Estep, "On the Origin of the English Baptists," *Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX, 1979* (mimeographed); Irvin B. Horst, *The Radical Brethren* (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1972).

rather by the Magisterial Reform referring to the Dutch theologian, James Arminius. Much evidence exists to support the contention that the English General Baptists were Arminian with respect to their theology.

However, little or no work has been done to examine the influence of the Anabaptists on Arminius. Could it be that his theology or at least soteriology was in fact similar if not identical to that of the normative Anabaptists? The purpose of this paper is to examine the possibilities of an affirmative answer to that question, while yet realizing that this is in actuality only a preliminary study of further research.

The methodology of the paper will be, first, to establish the fact that General Baptists have been historically and consistently labeled Arminian in their theology; and to ascertain what part of their theology was Arminian. Second, shifting focus to the Netherlands, the Dutch Reformation's Sacramentist, Anabaptist and Reformed phases will be summarized in order to establish the context within which the events herein discussed transpired. Next, the paper will examine possible lines of transmission and interaction of James Arminius with the Anabaptists; did he have contact with them? Was there any means by which he could have become familiar with their theology? Section four will seek to sketch Arminius' theology as it was presented, opposed, supported and adhered to, by participants in the last phase of Dutch Reformation. The final section will endeavor to compare Arminius' major soteriological doctrines with those of normative Anabaptist writers, particularly Hubmaier, Marpeck, Menno and de Ries.

The conclusion will attempt to assess the evidence and render a tentative verdict on the possibility of Anabaptist influence on the rise of English General Baptists by way of James Arminius.

## I: THE GENERAL BAPTISTS AND ARMINIANISM

Much ink has been spilled in the academic war being waged to determine the origin of the English Baptists. Some contend that English Baptists are of Anabaptist sources while others opt for an indigenous heritage. Representing the latter, Kliever wrote, "the essential theological tradition as well as the distinctive features of early General Baptists are accounted for by their English Puritan Separatist background."<sup>3</sup> Concerning the Anabaptists, B. R. White wrote,

Although there were certainly radical sectaries in England spo-

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<sup>3</sup> Lonnie Kliever, "General Baptist Origins: the Question of Anabaptist Influence." *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 36 (Oct 1962): 321.

radically even during the reign of Elizabeth I, there seems to be no evidence extant of any direct influence they may have exerted over either individual Separatists or their teaching.<sup>4</sup>

White concluded, with qualifications, that:

It may, therefore, be fairly claimed that, when a plausible source of Separatist views is available in Elizabethan Puritanism and its natural developments, the onus of proof lies upon those who would affirm that the European Anabaptists had any measurable influence upon the shaping of English Separatism.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast to White's assurance that the rise of English Baptists can be traced from indigenous movements in Great Britain, others suggest that the Anabaptists, indeed, were influential. Ernest Payne wrote, "some Anabaptist influence, direct and indirect, almost certainly went into the making of the earlier Baptist communities."<sup>6</sup> Horst continued, "one may not claim that Anabaptism was the exclusive source of these insights (leading to the rise of the General Baptists), but evidence is overwhelming that it was a major influence."<sup>7</sup>

Although discounting the influence of European Anabaptists upon English Separation broadly, and English General Baptists specifically, White accepts without reservation that John Smyth was influenced by the "Dutch moderate Calvinist theologian James Arminius." "The Controversy over Arminius and his views was raging in the Netherlands at this very time, and no one in Amsterdam who had a theological interest at all could fail to be aware of the issues involved."<sup>8</sup> Many historians have concluded that English General Baptist theological distinctives originated in Arminius. Interestingly, Anabaptism and Arminianism are similar in some respects. Underwood wrote that the Anabaptist movement anticipated Arminius by about a century with respect to its reaction against Calvinism.<sup>9</sup> Speaking of Henry Hart, an English Anabaptist (referred to

<sup>4</sup> B.R. White, *The English Separatist Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 162.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 164

<sup>6</sup> Ernest A. Payne, cited in R. T. Kendall, "An Investigation into the Theological Controversies that Separated the General Baptists from the Particular Baptists," *Baptist Reformation Review* 8.2 (1979): 8.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in William R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1975), 208.

<sup>8</sup> White, 139.

<sup>9</sup> A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: The Baptist Union, 1947, 1970), 22.

as such by the Reformers of his day), Estep suggested that "he was clearly Arminian before Arminius." Not discounting the continually growing evidence of Anabaptist influence upon the emerging English Baptists, many historians point to the Arminian label applied to the General Baptists.<sup>10</sup>

Needless to say, of all the possible labels of identity "Arminian" is the one which stuck. Most Baptist histories utilize this descriptive adjective when referring to the English General Baptists. For example, Underwood wrote that "John Smyth adopted Arminian opinions," and refers to the General Baptists as the "Arminian Baptists."<sup>11</sup> Torbet classified the General Baptists as "those holding to the Arminian view of general or unlimited atonement."<sup>12</sup> What is positively known, wrote Kendall, is the fact that historians have called General Baptists also Arminian Baptists.<sup>13</sup> Many early records bear out this conclusion. By surveying records and observations published in the Baptist Quarterly the plethora of references equating General Baptists and Arminian Baptists can be seen.

Joshua Thomas (of Leominster) maintained that "a confession of faith was needed...to make it clear whether we were...Calvinist or Arminian." Wheeler Robinson reflecting on English Baptist history wrote, "Baptist thought was vigorous enough to generate two branches, General and Particular, Arminian and Calvinist." In an article on "Baptists in East Kent" information is given concerning the organization of a gathered church in February 1645-46. Considering that same church, records read that "in 1654 the errors of Arminius were troubling the district." Concerning General Baptists in Scotland, Hannen records that a Baptist, Mr. Browne, in Cuper debated the Presbytery's representative, a Mr. James Wood. In the course of debate concerning the fall, Woods said to Browne, "this position was that of Dr. Arminius." In 1685, Thomas Grantham is noted as holding to "Arminian views." Jewson wrote, "He seems to have settled at Norwich about 1685, and besides forming the church here he organized General Baptist Churches at Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> L. B. Horst, *The Radical Brethren* (Nieuwkoop: B. DeGraff, 1972); 134, Wm. Estep, Class Lecture Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Feb 20, 1980.

<sup>11</sup> Underwood, *History*, 40, 72, 131.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Torbet, *A History of the Baptists* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1978), 20.

<sup>13</sup> Kendall, "Investigation," 9. One notable exception is Robert Baker, *The Southern Baptist Convention and its People* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1974).

<sup>14</sup> Gwingli Jenkins, "The Baptist and the New Testament," *Baptist Quarterly* 7 (1934-35); 60; A.A. Alnwick, "Wesley and Ourselves," *Baptist Quarterly* 9 (1938-39) :480, "Baptists in East Kent," *Baptist Quarterly* 2 (1924-25): 91; R.B.

Another article records the statement that “one line of cleavage made Baptists either Calvinistic or Arminian.” It continued, “the Arminian Baptists under William Bound were too fond of acting on the defensive, lacked breadth of outlook. “Nevertheless, “a Radnor woman in 1672 was sorely tempted by Satan to be rebaptised and join the Arminians.” Concerning Baptist life early in the eighteenth century, another entry records, “with 1706, the General Baptist Church at Staplehurst and Smarden had defined its position, orthodox and Arminian.”<sup>15</sup> These references provide sufficient evidence upon which to draw two conclusions. First, historians have considered General Baptist to be Arminian; and second, English Baptists have come to that same conclusion. But the question remains, “Arminian in what respect?” What was uniquely Arminian in the life of the General Baptists? Arminius was an active and faithful pastor-teacher in the state church. Arminius was semi-Erastian in his understanding of church-state relations. Neither General Baptists nor Particular Baptists, both adhering to Separatist sentiments, would opt for a church controlled by the state. Arminius was basically Presbyterian in his understanding of church polity. This was a far cry from the congregational polity practiced by English Baptists.

Arminius was also an advocate of toleration. With respect to toleration or the lack of it in the Dutch Reformation two sides emerged. Both wanted to present a united front against the onslaught of the Catholic counter-reformation. However, the means were different. One side, which would be Arminius’ position, advocated tolerance both as its conviction and as the key to unity against Catholicism. The other side, comprised of hyper-Calvinists, asserted doctrinal conformity as the means for achieving unity. The issue for Arminius was summed up by Burgomaster Hooft, “It is inconsistent to complain of intolerance under Popish government and then to practice the same intolerance.”<sup>16</sup>

By virtue of English Baptist identity as a Separatist movement, they stand in favor of toleration in terms of how Arminius understood it. However both General and Particular Baptists held to this idea so the Arminian understanding of toleration is not the distinguishing mark of Arminian Baptists.

If General Baptists were not uniquely Arminian in their concepts of

Hannen, “Cuper, Fife, 1652, 1659,” *Baptist Quarterly* 10 (1940-41): 46; C.B Jewson, “The Old General Baptist Church at Norwich,” *Baptist Quarterly* 9 (1938-39): 430.

<sup>15</sup> “Wales Under the Indulgence, 1672-75,” *Baptist Quarterly* 2 (1924-25): 281; “Baptists in the Weald,” *Baptist Quarterly* 2 (1924-25): 378.

<sup>16</sup> Gerardt Brandt, *Historie der Reformatie en andre Kerkelyke Geschiedenissen in en ontrent de Nederlanden* (Amsterdam: Jan Rieuwertsz. Hendrick en Dirk Boom, 1671-1704), 1:817.

ecclesiology, church-state relations, church polity and toleration, in what respect were they uniquely Arminian? Abundant evidence concludes that English General Baptists were uniquely Arminian only in their soteriology. Note that the soteriological issue was the primary but not exclusive factor contribution to the polarities in the Dutch Reformation.

Arminius' soteriology bears an amazing resemblance to that of the normative Anabaptists. Before surveying Arminius' interaction with the Dutch Anabaptists and comparing his soteriology with that of some of the more prolific Anabaptist leaders, an overview of the Dutch Reformation in order to provide the context of this study should prove helpful.

## II: OVERVIEW OF THE DUTCH REFORMATION

The Dutch Reformation came in three phases which somewhat overlapped. Phase one was dominated by the Sacramentists (1500-1530). Next, the Anabaptist rose in prominence (1530-1566). And finally, with the influx of Calvinists from the south came the dominance of the Dutch Reformed Church (1566-1609).<sup>17</sup>

The Sacramentists or Sacramentarians were so-called because they believed that the Lord's Supper was a "Sacrament."<sup>18</sup> Sacramentarianism was a loose designation for a host of individuals who opposed abuses in the church. "The Sacramentists" wrote Williams, "originally preferred for themselves the designation 'Evangelicals' (evangelischen), analogous to, although probably not dependent upon, Evangelism in the Romance lands." Modern scholarship has grouped them with the Biblical humanists.<sup>19</sup>

Sacramentarianism found various expressions in different classes. One was the "chambers of rhetoric" (rederijkerskamers) which were organized by the burghers for festive celebrations of local saints and major events of the liturgical year. Williams suggested that many Sacramentarians, and later, Anabaptists were in some stage of their careers rederijkers.<sup>20</sup>

Summarizing the Sacramentarian movement Bangs wrote:

Some of them had heard of Luther; others simply objected to what they saw around them. There was Wouter, in Utrecht, and John Sartorius, Cornelius Hoen, John Pistorius, and William

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<sup>17</sup> G. H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1975), 764.

<sup>18</sup> Carl Bangs, *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1971), 20, 21.

<sup>19</sup> Williams, *Radical*, 29.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

Gnapheus, and they had followers, who suffered with them, for it was dangerous business. Pistorius taught that the decrees and canons of the church are not to be taken lightly; they are to be honored 'so far as they agree with the word of God.' Arminius was in this sturdy tradition. Hinne Rode was one of them, who taught Zwingli to say 'this signifies.' When a Sacramentist disciple, the widow Weynken Claesdochter, was offered the oil of unction before her execution, her refusal was curt: 'Oil is good for salad or for oiling your shoes.'<sup>21</sup>

The Sacramentists seem to have been nurtured on what Bangs calls "the old Dutch biblical piety."<sup>22</sup>

In the 1530s the Sacramentarian movement gave way to the rise of Anabaptism. The first Anabaptist leader in the Netherlands was Melchoir Hofmann. Having been an ardent supporter of Luther and a zealous evangelist, he nevertheless parted ways with Luther feeling that he did not go far enough in his return to Scriptures and break with tradition. Only two months after his own baptism Hofmann went to Emden and experienced immediate success as an Anabaptist evangelist. Writing two decades after the event, Obbe Philips wrote:

Among these, Reformers and Anabaptist leaders whom he had named Melchoir Hofmann stood out. He came from upper Germany to Emden to baptize around three hundred persons publicly in the church at Emden, both burgher and peasant, lord and servant.<sup>23</sup>

Eventually, because of his eschatological misunderstanding Hofmann was imprisoned at Strasburg destined never to depart alive. In time "the faithful in North Germany and Holland were caught up in the fanaticism at Munster."<sup>24</sup> The travesty and tragedy of Munster need not be recounted here.

Not all Anabaptists, or more properly participants in the Radical Reformation, were taken in by the Munster fiasco. Two brothers, Obbe and Dirk Philips, were leaders of the non-violent, biblical Anabaptists who were similar to the Swiss Brethren. From their midst and ministry a young priest, Menno Simons, was converted to Anabaptist principles.

Having been unconverted at the time he entered the priesthood,

<sup>21</sup> Bangs, *Arminius*, 21.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* See also Cornelius Krahn, *Dutch Anabaptism* (The Hague: Martinus Nyhoff, 1968), 44-79, for an overview of the Sacramentarian Movement.

<sup>23</sup> Cited in Estep, *Story*, 109.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.



Menno later wrote that he was plagued by doubts, and eventually turned to the Scriptures to have them resolved. Menno's writings abound with Scripture. Having developed a reputation as a biblical preacher Menno was still disturbed because his life did not back up that which he preached. In his slow transition to Anabaptist principles he first became an evangelical humanist.<sup>25</sup>

His conversion was precipitated by exposure to Anabaptist preachers who had tremendous zeal but were ignorant. Nonetheless, their lives put him to shame. His agony became intolerable when he heard of the execution of 300 Anabaptists in April 1535, one of whom was his brother.<sup>26</sup> He later wrote of his conversion experience:

My heart trembled within me. I prayed to God with sighs and tears that He would give to me, a sorrowing sinner, the gift of His grace, create within me a clean heart, and graciously through the merits of the crimson blood of Christ forgive my unclean walk and frivolous easy life and bestow upon me wisdom, Spirit, courage, and a manly spirit so that I might preach his exalted and adorable name and holy Word in purity, and make known His truth to His glory.<sup>27</sup>

From his conversion in January 1536, until he joined the Anabaptists was approximately nine months.<sup>28</sup>

Menno's ministry as an Anabaptist was not comfortable; persecution abounded. Working to build up the faithful, he visited the scattered Anabaptist groups of northern Europe and inspired them with his night-time preaching. He was also a voluminous writer. His most notable work was the *Foundation of Christian Doctrine* (1540). In it he renounced Munster and delineated his doctrine. Menno held, among other things, to a Hofmannite Christology, absolute pacifism and a use of the ban. The latter eventually caused problems.<sup>29</sup>

After Menno's death on January 31, 1561, the leadership role of the "Mennonites" (named such so as to avoid the title Anabaptist which was still attached to Munster) fell on Dirk Phillips. Lacking Menno's leadership talents the movement soon fragmented. The polarities now ranged from the strict Frisians to the liberal Waterlanders (Doopsgezinden) who separated in 1555. Two notable events followed. First, the various Men-

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 115-16.

<sup>26</sup> Estep, *Story*, 117-18.

<sup>27</sup> Menno Simons, *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1956), 671.

<sup>28</sup> Estep, *Story*, 120.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 121-25.

nonite groups formed a loose connectionalism in 1568. And second, Hans de Ries, Jacob Scheedemaker and a few other ministers drew up the first Mennonite Confession of Faith in 1577.<sup>30</sup>

The third stage of the Dutch Reformation witnessed the rise and eventual dominance of the Dutch Reformed Church. Bangs pointed out that the earliest Dutch Reformed leaders did not seem to be Calvinists at all, instead they appeared to be indigenous congregations of individuals nurtured on biblical piety. They were not seized by dogmatic insights but rather, they pressed toward a purified faith according to the Scripture.<sup>31</sup> This indigenous movement, said Bangs, was sustained by such writings as Veluanus' *Layman's Guide* and Bullinger's *Housebook*.

As Calvinist clergy and people fled northward, from the attack by Spain and the Catholics, the Dutch Reformation became much more complicated. These Calvinists brought with them their talents, energy, money and theology which was precise and intolerant. Then, as the Remonstrant historian Gerardt Brandt commented, the term "Reform" came to have two meanings. It meant one thing to the old Hollanders, yet something quite different to the new preachers.<sup>32</sup>

In the later 1500s Calvinism began to make heavy inroads into the Netherlands. Its appearance in organized form can hardly be said to antedate the year 1544. Usually its introduction has been traced to influences which spread from Geneva through France to the southern provinces where the French language was widely spoken. Here the first Calvinist churches were organized. Yet, its coming was much more complex.<sup>33</sup>

DeJong traced its infiltration along three avenues. First, in the writings of Calvin, Zwingli, Oecolampadius and Bullinger. Second, many leaders from the Netherlands found themselves exiles from time to time. Some went to Geneva, others fled to places where Reformed churches in exile were organized, i.e. Emden and Heidelberg after 1550. A third avenue was found in the vigorous labors of those who returned to the southern provinces to organize and lead Reformed congregations and then fled North due to Spanish persecution, i.e. Plancius.<sup>34</sup>

In the course of time, the Netherlands, while yet at war with Spain (the Dutch Reformation was intricately entwined with the Dutch struggle for political independence), prospered under the political leadership of John van Oldenbarnevelt, and the military leadership of William of Or-

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 126-27.

<sup>31</sup> Bangs, *Arminius*, 21.

<sup>32</sup> Brandt cited in Bangs, *Arminius*, 22.

<sup>33</sup> Peter DeJong, "The Rise of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands," in *Crisis in the Reformed Churches* (ed. P. DeJong; Grand Rapids, MI: Reformed Fellowship, 1968), 9.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

ange and later his son, Maurice. With the war, the center of commerce shifted to Amsterdam. The "Alteration" as the official clergy and monastics depart Amsterdam was called, occurred in 1578. The Alteration saw the Roman catholic clergy and monastics depart Amsterdam in early May of 1578, with Reformed church services beginning on May 11, 1578. This was a victory for the Reformers of 1566, who had first petitioned the Spanish regent, Margaret of Parma, requesting the withdrawal of the Inquisition and the lifting of placards or decrees against heretics.<sup>35</sup>

The immediate result of the Alteration saw several changes. First was a revival of trade. Coupled with this came the beginning of rapid population growth. Many were refugees from the south, a key factor in the religious turmoil to come. The Alteration brought new regimes in both city and church.

In the course of history, a polarity developed in the Dutch Reformed Church. The antagonists were Arminius and his disciples, and the "Orthodox" Calvinists. It culminated ten years after Arminius' death. On April 24, 1619, the Synod of Dort (Dordrecht) sat for the 154<sup>th</sup> and the last time. Ostensibly summoned to resolve differences between Dutch Remonstrants (Arminians) and Contra-Remonstrants within a context of Calvinist theology, in reality it pronounced predetermined decrees on unconditioned election, limited atonement, man's total depravity, the irresistibility of grace and the perseverance of the elect.

The result of the Synod of Dort was that Oldenbarnevelt was beheaded and Remonstrants were denounced as heretics and banished. Some two hundred Remonstrant ministers were imprisoned. As Peter DeJong, a Reformed historian summarized, "the Synod of Dort marks the close of the first period in the history of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands." Interestingly enough N. van der Zijpp recorded that after his death many of Arminius' followers accepted the Mennonite Confession of Hans de Ries. Many Arminius scholars, particularly Carl Bangs, feel than Arminius' theological distinctives were derived from the Sacramentists. Bangs stated that "it is reasonable to conclude that Arminius was no Anabaptist and that he learned none of his theology from them." Nonetheless, Arminius' soteriology bears an amazing resemblance to that of the normative Anabaptists. The remainder of this monograph will focus on two aspects of Arminius' exposure to Anabaptists. First, his interaction with Anabaptists will be briefly surveyed and he had numerous contacts with them. And second, a comparison between Arminius' soteriology with that of some more notable Anabaptist leaders will con-

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<sup>35</sup> William the Silent as he was known was assassinated in 1584 at Delft. W. Stephenson, *The Story of the Reformation* (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1959), 115; Bangs, *Arminius*, 104.

clude this work.<sup>36</sup>

### III. INTERACTION BETWEEN ARMINIUS & THE ANABAPTISTS

Before examining the similarities between Anabaptist and Arminian soteriology, and evidence for the possible influence by the former upon the latter, the nature and extent of Arminius' contact with Anabaptism needs to be examined. What constituted Arminius' exposure to the Anabaptist movement?

Because of the untimely death of his father (1559), Arminius grew up under the watchcare of a parish priest, Aemilius, who was known for his Protestant sympathies.<sup>37</sup> In 1576, Arminius studied under Coolhaes at Leiden. Although theological issues were not a cause of dissention at that time in Holland, Coolhaes advocated, as his own, a policy of toleration. He was especially non-dogmatic, observed Bangs, on the doctrine of predestination. Coolhaes, who sided with Coornhert in support of broad toleration, suggested that "Lutherans and Mennonites" be permitted peaceful co-existence in Holland.<sup>38</sup>

During his educational years Arminius under the influence of Aemilius, Coolhaes and others, developed a high tolerance level for those of other persuasions, those with whom he did not necessarily agree. From 1582 until 1586, Arminius matriculated at Geneva where he studied under Beza and other professors as well. He also studied for a while at Basel having been suspended from Geneva temporarily for advocating the philosophical method of Petrus Ramus. During his educational years we may assume that due to his own inquisitive mind (he was an outstanding student), his tolerance for those of different theological convictions, and the prevalence of Mennonites in the Netherlands, that at least he had some exposure to them although concrete evidence is lacking.

Arminius returned to Amsterdam in 1587, to assume pastoral duties. The Merchants Guild of Amsterdam, composed of wealthy business men and town officials, had underwritten the expense of his education. Arminius had contracted with them that on completion he would return to Amsterdam and assume responsibilities as one of their ministers. Amsterdam, like Arminius, had an affinity for, and history of, toleration.

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<sup>36</sup> Robert Roberts, "John Hale and the Synod of Dort," in *Councils and Assemblies* (ed. G. J. Cummings and D. Baker; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 277; DeJong, 24; *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, s. v. "Arminius, Jacobus," by D. van der Zijpp; Bangs, 171.

<sup>37</sup> Bangs, *Arminius*, 34.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

Paraphrasing a report from the 1530s in the *Ook Dat* was Amsterdam, Bangs wrote: "There were numerous instances in which they looked the other way in order not to see Sacramentarian and Anabaptist activities that were forbidden by placards from higher authorities. When the first Anabaptists had been taken away from Amsterdam and condemned and executed in the Hague, the magistrate privately resolved to hinder a repetition of the event."<sup>39</sup>

When Arminius came to Amsterdam, the Mennonites were plentiful. Two of the town's Burgomasters had Mennonites in their immediate family. One was Cornelis Hooft, who became a strong supporter of Arminius. Hooft's wife, Anna Blaeu, was an Anabaptist and their children were not baptized as infants. Wilhem Baerdesen, one of the burgomasters granting Arminius funds from the Merchants Guild, had a wife and a sister who were Anabaptist.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, Laurens Jacobsz Reael, whose daughter (Lijsbet) Arminius married in 1590, had like many other town leaders been a member of the Chambers of Rhetoric. Research is discovering the contribution that this group made to the rise of tism.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, those who supported Arminius were sympathetic with, if not supporters of, the Mennonites.

In his pastoral duties Arminius was assigned to remonstrate periodically with those who had fallen into disfavor with the Reformed Church. One such person was a woman communicant, Mayken Bresmans, who was suspected of having "gone over to the Mennonites." A week later, September 29, 1588, the consistory recorded Arminius report that "...the call had been made, that the woman had just given birth to a child on September 21, so that they had not examined her about her faith, that she said she was not in contact with the Anabaptist at the moment but was sympathetic with them, that she was at rest in her soul, and that she kindly requested the two visitors to stay out of her house."<sup>42</sup> Another incident similar to this one was recorded in February 1596. Arminius reported that he had had a talk with "two Anabaptists, Paulus, a carpenter and his wife. They persisted in their point of view," he said.<sup>43</sup>

Another interesting occasion concerns Arminius' interaction with Dirk V. Coonhert, the "Libertine" as he was called. Arminius was assigned to respond to his attacks on Calvin's (Beza's?) Doctrines of Pre-

<sup>39</sup> R. B. Evenhuis, *Ook Dat Was Amsterdam* (2 vols.; Amsterdam: W. ten Have, 1965, 1967), 23-25, cited in Bangs, *Arminius*, 88-89.

<sup>40</sup> Bangs, *Arminius*, 123.

<sup>41</sup> Leonard Verduin, "The Chambers of Rhetoric and Anabaptist origins in the Low Countries," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 34 (July 1960): 192-96.

<sup>42</sup> *Protocollen der Kerkeraad Amsterdam* 1.420, cited in Bangs, *Arminius*, 125.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.187, cited in Bangs, *Arminius*, 154.

destination, Justification and the punishment of heretics by death.<sup>44</sup> Because of the intervention of Lydius, Arminius was dismissed from his assignment. "Later writers," said Bangs, "often carelessly conflate these stories, sometimes to assert that Arminius was trying to refute Coornhert and went over to Coornhert's humanism."<sup>45</sup> Nonetheless, later writings of Arminius would confirm the similarity between Coornhert and Arminius particularly in opposition to hyper-Calvinism.

The point of interest in the aforementioned encounter is the fact that Arminius did know and interact with Coornhert. Why? Because Coornhert, although never severing official ties with the Roman Church, nevertheless "had considerable influence on the Dutch Mennonites especially on the Waterlander branch" and "was a close friend of Hans de Ries."<sup>46</sup> All this transpired in the last few years of the 1580s.

In May 1593, Arminius was questioned by the Amsterdam consistory concerning his public exposition of Romans nine which did not reflect the supralapsarian theory of Beza. The primary critique was expressed in that. "Martinists (Lutherns), Anabaptists (Mennonites) and even libertines (humanists of the style of Coornhert) gloried in his discourses."<sup>47</sup> Integral to his pastoral duties, Arminius, found himself remonstrating periodically with the Anabaptists in their homes urging them to return to the Reformed Church. Bangs deduced that evidently the Mennonites "were having considerable success in drawing off members of the Reformed churches, and action against them was deemed necessary."<sup>48</sup>

At the Synod of North Holland which met in June 1599, the group voted to collect arguments against the Anabaptists and then publish them for the instruction of the weak. Collaborating with the Synod of South Holland, the two Synods together agreed to assign Arminius the task to "confute them from Scriptures."<sup>49</sup>

Arminius reluctantly accepted and requested that any Dutch minister with Anabaptist tracts to please send them to Amsterdam where he could read, evaluate and refute them. The next year, 1601, Arminius had not written his refutation. However, he did offer a progress report: "he had studied all the Anabaptist books he could find and had abstracted the

<sup>44</sup> W. R. Bagnall, "The Life of Arminius," in James Arminius, *The Writings of James Arminius* (3 vols.; trans. James Nichols & W.R. Bagnall; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker [repr.] 1977), 1.12-13.

<sup>45</sup> Bangs, 139.

<sup>46</sup> *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Coornhert, Dirk V." by N. von der Zijpp.

<sup>47</sup> *Protocollen*, 2.110 cited in Bangs, *Arminius*, 148.

<sup>48</sup> Bangs, *Arminius*, 167.

<sup>49</sup> Gerard Brandt, *The History of the Reformation and other Ecclesiastical Transactions In and About the Low Countries* (4 vols.; London: T. Wood, 1720): 2.4.

most important doctrinal positions, and he requested the Brethren share with him any more such books which he might not have seen."<sup>50</sup> In 1602, he reported to the North Holland synod that he had begun the work but was experiencing difficulty because of the "great many articles of faith in which many different things were being taught."<sup>51</sup> For the next four years Arminius made little noticeable progress. Although pushed by the Synods, Arminius never wrote the full refutation which he had been commissioned to write, and in 1606, he was granted a dismissal from the assignment.

But the question remains, "why did he not complete the assignment?" Arminius himself gave some reasons. Brandt records that some of the "clergy...were not well satisfied with him; and they suspected him particularly upon the point of predestination. He likewise doubted whether this burden was laid upon him with good intent."<sup>52</sup> Bangs records other reasons offered by Arminius. That he had too much work to do in preparing his lectures (in 1603 he moved from Amsterdam to Leiden to teach theology) was the excuse heard most often. Nonetheless, Arminius did not want to write his refutation although he had initially accepted the assignment. Could it be that he found too much in Anabaptist writings with which he was in sympathy?

Bangs wrote that Arminius declined not because he was reluctant to pursue heretics, because he had done so on a number of occasions. Neither was it because he had adopted Anabaptist views of the church and sacraments. Arminius was thoroughly Reformed in his ecclesiology. "The reason," suggests Bangs, "lies elsewhere."<sup>53</sup>

In the controversy with the Anabaptists, the Reformed church had two points of contention. The first issue was the nature of the church and sacraments. The other was soteriology with its disagreements over predestination, and the nature and extent of grace and free will. Bangs observed that there were, "Anabaptist writings from the time on these subjects which show that Arminius would have been reluctant to make a blanket condemnation of all they were teaching."<sup>54</sup>

The purpose of the material which has just been briefly presented is to establish two facts. First, Arminius had numerous contacts with the Anabaptists both in interaction with them personally and later in studying "all the Anabaptist literature available in the Netherlands." Second, hav-

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<sup>50</sup> *Acta der Provinciale en Particuliere Synoden* (8 vols.; ed. J. Reitsma and S. D. von Veen; Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1892-99), 1.289-90, cited in Bangs, *Arminius*, 167.

<sup>51</sup> Bangs, *Arminius*, 167.

<sup>52</sup> Brandt, *History*, 2.4-5.

<sup>53</sup> Bangs, *Arminius*, 169.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

ing been assigned the responsibility of “thoroughly refuting the Anabaptists,” Arminius never completed his tasks. On hearing rumors that Arminius had completed the assignment and written a refutation of the Anabaptists, and that this document had recently been located, this writer (being unable to locate any information on the subject), called Dr. Bangs to verify the rumor. Dr. Bangs recounted that a document has been located in which Arminius did refute the Anabaptists, however, the refutation dealt with periphery matters and had no mention whatsoever of soteriology.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, Arminius did not “thoroughly refute” the Anabaptists and the obvious reason for this is the similarity of thought with respect to soteriology.

In the remaining two sections Arminius' main thoughts on soteriology will be viewed and summarized from this historical context. After the summary of his thoughts, the final section will compare Arminius' doctrine of salvation to representative Anabaptist soteriological writings.

#### **IV: ARMINIUS, SOTERIOLOGY IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Before comparing Arminius' teachings on soteriology with those of prominent Anabaptist leaders, attention first needs to be directed to Arminius' own teachings. What did he believe? The most efficient method of presenting Arminius' soteriology will be to examine it in its historical context. Therefore, this section will proceed with a tri-focal chronological approach. First, we will examine Arminius' doctrine and the context from which it was articulated during his pastoral years in Amsterdam (1587-1603). Second, it will do the same thing for his professorial years in Leiden (1603-1609). It will conclude by presenting the summary of his soteriology as expressed by his disciples, the “Remonstrants,” at the Synod of Dort (1618-19).

##### **The Pastoral Years at Amsterdam (1587-1603)**

Arminius' antagonist in Amsterdam was Petrus Plancius who was not a mild Calvinist but the first of a new breed of rigid “high Calvinists.” Plancius was the first minister to propagate and emphasize the doctrines of predestination. J. Keuning, his biographer, says, “until Plancius went north, the preaching there was more Bible than dogma, more piety, than theology, with no trace of the doctrine of predestination to be found.”<sup>56</sup> Needless to say, it was just a matter of time until he and Arminius clashed.

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<sup>55</sup> Telephone interview with Carl Bangs, St. Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, MO (28 March 1980).

<sup>56</sup> Cited in Bangs, *Arminius*, 141.



On November 6, 1588, Arminius began preaching from Romans and Malachi addressing early issues of grace and predestination. It was following his public exposition of Romans seven that the first round of strife was to raise its ugly head.<sup>57</sup>

The basis of the conflict was over Arminius' interpretation of Romans 7:14, "I am carnal, sold under sin." Does the Apostle, as Arminius puts it, "treat about a man who is still unregenerate or about one who is already regenerate through the spirit of Christ?" The Calvinist interpretation ascribed Paul's words about difficulty of following the law of God to the man to whom Christian salvation had come; this is a difficulty that would always be with the Christian. Arminius however, felt that this contradicted Romans 6:14, "ye are not under law, but under grace." Arminius concluded that Paul must be speaking of unregenerate man because "the regenerate obtain the forgiveness of sins through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ and the power of his Spirit."<sup>58</sup> Arminius was unwilling to apply the words, "I am carnal, sold under sin," to the life of a believer. In Arminius' words, "He who approves not of that which he does, nor does that which he would is the slave of another, that is, of sin. . . But the man about whom the apostle is treating approves not of that which he does, nor does what he would, but he does that which he hates. Therefore, the man who is in the place of the subject of discussion is the slave of another, that is, of sin; and therefore the same man is unregenerate and not placed under grace."<sup>59</sup>

This interpretation of Scripture precipitated the first round of theological conflict. Plancius accused Arminius of heresy. The unregenerate man, asserted Plancius, could not have as much godliness as is described in this section. Plancius accused Arminius of being Pelagian and Socinian. As a result of the accusations, the issue was brought up before the consistory and then the town council. The meeting before the magistrates was held on February 11, 1592. Arminius acknowledged that his exposition of Romans seven differed from some of the Reformed, but he denied that he was outside what was permitted by the Confession and the Catechism.<sup>60</sup> He had supposed that he could exercise the liberty enjoyed by all Christian teachers of expounding Scripture according to the dictates of conscience.

The outcome of the meeting saw Plancius implicitly rebuked for only

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<sup>57</sup> For Arminius' development of Romans 7 see Arminius, *Writings*, 2.195-243.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.233.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.253.

<sup>60</sup> Morley Rattenbury, "The Historical Background and Life of Arminius," *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* 185 (October 1960): 245. See Arminius *Writings*, 2.388-403 for his refutation of this accusation.

he had made “declamatory statements.” Arminius was to exercise care in the utterance of “new doctrines,” but was not condemned. Why? It affirmed that there might well be doctrinal matters that were not yet settled in the Reformed church and which should be proper matters for discussion in a town council. Thus the oligarchy stood firm (1) in its support of toleration, (2) its support of its adopted son Arminius, and (3) in support of its own role as the guardian of the peace of the church. Bangs observes that before the burgomasters “Arminius was surrounded by friends. When the case was taken to the Town Hall, Brer Rabbit was in the briar patch.”<sup>61</sup>

For the time being there was peace in the church. However, doctrinal controversy revived early in 1593, as Arminius preached on Romans nine. Pieter Dirksen and Burgomaster Claes Oetgens joined Plancius in complaining of Arminius’ exegesis and exposition of Scripture.

By now it was apparent that there were two parties in the city. One was a high Calvinist party with Plancius its theological leader and Oetgens its political leader. The other was gathered around Jan Egbertsz Bisschop, a prominent Amsterdam merchant, and looked to Arminius for its theological leadership.<sup>62</sup>

The issue over Romans nine was to be the wedge between the warring factions and the primary theological catalyst toward the polarity in the Dutch Reformed church. Romans nine dealt with election and concepts of predestination. The high Calvinists, Plancius, et. al., clung to the Bezan interpretation of Romans nine through eleven, “supralapsarianism,” which taught a limited atonement, irresistible grace and unconditional election of the saved and reprobation for the damned.

A precedent for this issue can be found in the case of Snecanus who asserted that “the doctrine of conditional predestination is not only conformable to the Word of God but cannot be charged with novelty.” Beza spoke of this view as absurd;<sup>63</sup> he had built upon Romans nine a doctrine of double predestination. In his Introduction to the Ninth Chapter of Romans, Snecanus presented arguments very similar to Arminius.<sup>64</sup>

Arminius put his analysis of Romans nine (his sermons are no longer extant) in a letter to Snecanus, writing of their “mutual agreement”<sup>65</sup> upon the interpretation of it. What were the major emphases of Arminius’ interpretation?

First, Arminius asserts that the interpretation of Beza is wrong because he asks the wrong question and is looking for an answer about

<sup>61</sup> Bangs, *Arminius*, 145.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 193-94.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Arminius, *Writings* 3.527. The entire letter is contained in 527-65.

which Paul is not dealing. The false question is, "Will the Word of God fail even if most of the Jews are rejected?" The corresponding answer is, "God determined that only some of the Jews were to be partakers." Therefore, Beza's supralapsarianism. The problem with this is the question is inadequate. The correct question is, "Does not the word of God become of none effect if those Jews who seek righteousness not of faith but of the law are rejected by God?" The answer is, "God, in His word and in the declaration of His promise, signified that he considered in the relation of children only those Jews who should seek righteousness and salvation by faith, but in relation of foreigners those who should seek the same by the law." Arminius grounds his interpretation in Romans 4:9-10 and Galatians 3-4.<sup>66</sup>

Next, Arminius examines Paul's use of types and antitypes. Confusion arises over Isaac and Ishmael, and Esau and Jacob when they are taken as examples in themselves of God's purpose rather than as types of the children of the flesh and children of the promise. The crux of Arminius' argument is found here. He asserts a predestination of classes, those who seek righteousness by works and those who seek it by faith.<sup>67</sup> Arminius also criticizes Beza in respect to predestination saying, "an act which is inevitable on account of the determination of any decrees does not deserve the name of sin," only those who sin voluntarily and of their own choice can be held blameworthy.<sup>68</sup>

Arminius also took issue with Beza on the concept of orders of decrees with respect to the word translated "lump." Beza in his supralapsarian interpretation asserts that this is the aggregate of fallen man.<sup>69</sup>

This is a summation of Arminius' arguments for Romans nine. In it is contained the theology which polarizes the Reformed church. Here, the issue is doctrinal and particularly election. Beza suggests a double-predestination while Arminius teaches a predestination of classes, i.e., those in Christ are saved. These treatises on Romans seven and nine, plus his critique of Perkins and his correspondence with Franciscus Junius (1597), comprise the extant writings of Arminius from his Amsterdam Pastorate. Later his sentiments crystallize.

In summary Arminius wrote a poem to Snecanus stating his feelings on the theological issues:

If any man will show to me,  
That I with Paul do not agree

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 3. 529-33.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 3.533-44.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 3.548.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 3.558.

with readiness I will abstain  
 From my own sense, and his retain:  
 But if, still further, one will show  
 That I've dealt faith a deadly blow  
 With deepest grief my fault I'll own,  
 And try my error to atone.<sup>70</sup>

### **Professorial Years at Leiden (1603-1609)**

During his years in Amsterdam Arminius made his views known through both preaching and correspondence. When Franciscus Junius died of the plague in 1602, Arminius was proposed as his successor in the chair of theology at Leiden. However, vigorous opposition came from the supralapsarian clergy. He received the appointment nonetheless, a revealing commentary on the still-fluid theological situation in the Dutch churches in 1603. At the appointment of Arminius, theologico-political forces which had been coexisting somewhat peacefully since the beginnings of the Dutch Reformation came into conflict. Leiden became a center of contention with Arminius the spokesman for the “toleration” party and Franciscus Gomarus the leader and spokesman for the “supralapsarian” faction.

The issues surfacing in open conflict were a continuation of those which Arminius had earlier addressed. They crystallized in controversy over the doctrine of predestination with accompanying debate over grace and free will, and over the nature of the church. Would it be tolerant and open, subject to magisterial control, or intolerant “high” Calvinistic and doctrinally rigid? The latter issue would surface in debate over the proposed national synod. Dogmatic theology and the politics of church and state were intertwined in the six years of Arminius’ life as a professor at Leiden.

It might be wise at this point to dispel a misconception. Often times Calvin and Arminius are put in tension as having mutually exclusive systems of thought. What was Arminius’ attitude toward Calvin and his writings? The answer is found in a letter to Sebastian Egbertsz, “...after the reading of the Scripture... I recommend that the Commentaries of Calvin be read. For I affirm that in the interpretation of Scripture Calvin is incomparable..., so much so that I concede to him a certain spirit of prophecy in which he stands distinguished about others, above most, yea, above all.” However, Arminius is not as enthusiastic over Calvin’s Insti-

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<sup>70</sup> Arminius, *Writings* (3 vols.; trans. James Nichols & William Nichols; London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green; vols. 1 & 2, 1825-28; Thomas Baker, vol. 3, 1875), 3.519. Note that the American edition, 3.565 translates the poem in a prose format.

tutes. "His Institutes...I give out to be read after the Catechism, as a more extended explanation. But here I add—with discrimination, as the writings of all men ought to be read."<sup>71</sup>

Likewise, Arminius verbalizes his loyalty to the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. What Arminius dissented with was the "supralapsarian" interpretation of Scripture, not so much Calvin or even Creeds.

What events contributed to the ever widening polarities; what issues were at stake? The key issue at stake was the issue of predestination as taught by Beza, his followers, Plancius, Gomarus and the multitude of other "high Calvinists." Was it true to Scripture? Arminius thought not.

At Leiden, Arminius immediately set about to teach theology including predestination as he viewed it from his indigenous Dutch Reformed background. In his public disputation given for his Doctorate on July 10, 1603, Arminius said, "...though the understanding of God be certain and infallible, it does not impose of necessity in things, nay rather it establishes in them a contingency."<sup>72</sup> Translated, this means that the fall was not decreed but based upon man's choice, a position contrary to Beza.

In another disputation (15), on February 7, 1604, Arminius speaking on "Divine Predestination" says, One caution ought to be strictly observed, that nothing be taught concerning (predestination) beyond what the Scriptures say, that it be propounded in the manner which the Scriptures have adopted, and that it be referred to the same end as that which the Scriptures proposed when they delivered it.<sup>73</sup> By this, Arminius is implying that those teaching "Supralapsarian Predestination" are going beyond Scripture into speculation. Later, on May 29, 1604, Arminius again pressed hard that the "first sin was contingent and not necessary,"<sup>74</sup> further exposing his polarity with supralapsarianism.

On October 31, 1604, the theological battle at Leiden began in earnest. Gomarus initiated it by holding a public disputation out of turn and not a part of the established schedule. He excused his speaking out of turn because error was abroad (speaking of Arminius). At the disputation he expounded Beza's predestination theories.<sup>75</sup>

In his public disputations, Arminius challenged many of Gomarus' and Beza's theories. Arminius taught that predestination was "the decree of the good pleasure of God in Christ, by which he resolved from all

<sup>71</sup> James Arminius, "Letter to Sebastian Egbertsz" (3 May 1607), in Casper Brandt, *The Life of James Arminius, D.D.* (trans. John Guthrie, Nashville, TN: E. Stevenson and F. A. Owen, 1857), 299-301.

<sup>72</sup> Arminius, *Writings*, American ed., 1.447.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.569.

<sup>74</sup> Brandt, *Life*, 195-97.

<sup>75</sup> Bangs, *Arminius*, 263-64.

eternity, to justify, adopt and endow with everlasting life, ...believers on whom he had decreed to bestow faith."<sup>76</sup>In this definition believers are the elect, therefore, faith precedes election.

When accused of teaching "free will," a Pelagian concept, Arminius responded (speaking of man as a sinner):"In this state, the free will of man towards the true good is not only wounded, maimed, infirm, bent, and weakened; but it is also imprisoned, destroyed, and lost. And its powers are not only debilitated and useless unless they be assisted by grace, but it has not powers whatsoever except such as are excited by divine grace. For Christ said, 'without me ye can do nothing.'"<sup>77</sup>Arminius later says "free will is unable to begin or to perfect any true and spiritual good without grace."<sup>78</sup> [The regenerate] are "made capable in Christ, cooperating now with God...this cooperation whatever it may be of knowledge, holiness, and power, is all begotten within him by the Holy Spirit."<sup>79</sup>

Arminius does not deny predestination; however, he defines it differently from Beza developing his own Biblical theology. Of fundamental importance is the fact that for Arminius the doctrine of sin and inability, in which he agrees with Calvin, is explicitly presupposed as the problem to which predestination is the answer. This disagrees with Beza and his followers who made the decree of election refer to man as yet uncreated. Beza's position makes it necessary that there be sin in order that God may carry out his prior decree-which is to make God the author of sin.<sup>80</sup>

As theological tensions increased, complicated by political issues, Arminius was asked to state his theological position before the State of Holland. On October 8, 1608, he delivered his understanding of predestination and other theological points of conflict. After a scathing attack on supralapsarianism, Arminius delineated his understanding of predestination. For Arminius," the first decree of God concerning the salvation of sinful men, is that by which he decreed to appoint His Son, Jesus Christ, for a Mediator, Redeemer, Savior, Priest and King, who might destroy sin by his own death, might by his obedience obtain the salvation which has been lost, and might communicate by his own virtue."<sup>81</sup>

The second decree extends election to those who repent and believe in Christ, i.e., the church. The third decree is the administration of "sufficient and efficient means" necessary for the repentance and faith by

<sup>76</sup> Arminius, *Writings*, American ed., 1.565.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.526.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Carl Bangs, "Arminius and the Dutch Reformation," *Church History* 30 (June 1961): 166.

<sup>81</sup> Arminius, *Writings*, American ed., 1.247.

which one is in Christ. The result is that Christ is the elect One that all are elect who are in Christ, and that no one is in Christ except by faith. Election in its primary sense therefore refers to Christ. In its legitimate extension it includes believers. The fourth and final decree specifies particular persons, sinful men whom God elects and saves because of their foreknown repentance and faith.<sup>82</sup>

Arminius asserted that God's predestination is "in Christ." By affirming a Christological understanding of predestination, Arminius departed in a number of particulars from high Calvinist Reformed theology.<sup>83</sup> Here are a few of the major departures. First, predestination does not determine who shall believe, only that those in Christ, believers, are elect. Secondly, salvation being in Christ, it is not dependent on free will, but free will is active in salvation. Thirdly, the will can resist grace. Fourth, the resistibility of grace leads to the possibility of falling from grace. The possibility that a believer may cease believing is at least an open question. Fifth, all this implies a general atonement.<sup>84</sup> Arminius' view definitely is different from a supralapsarian understanding of predestination. The question arises, why is the predestination issue so important?

Why the rage over predestination? It was not merely a disagreement in the realm of ideas, neither was it just an historical accident. The issue over predestination has its roots in the polarity in Dutch religious and national life going back to the refugee flights in 1566. Polarity existed in Arminius' Amsterdam days. In the seventeenth century the polarity was taking new forms and intensities.<sup>85</sup> With the Catholic counter-Reformation, Cardinal Bellarmine attacked the Reformed doctrine of predestination. "Here he found the soft underbelly of the Protestant enemy, and his jabs hit home." When someone else, especially a Reformed professor of theology took his own jabs at the underbelly, it was regarded as a defection to the Catholic church. This charge was made of Arminius. All of this served to make predestination a touchy issue, for it seemed to strike at the very foundation of both the Reformed religion and the national struggle for independence. In the socio-economic matrix these ideas stood for political realities which further complicated and polarized the two sides.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Bangs, "Dutch Reformation," 167-68.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>84</sup> Adopted from Ibid., 169-70.

<sup>85</sup> Bangs, *Arminius*, 273.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

**The Five Articles of the Remonstrants (1610)**

In 1618, the Synod of Dort met and condemned the teachings of Remonstrants, the disciples of Arminius. After comparing the writings of Arminius with the “Five Articles,” this writer concludes that they are an accurate reflection and summation of Arminius’ soteriological doctrines. The following are the “Five Articles” of the Remonstrants,” which were published in 1610 and signed by forty-four Remonstrant clergymen:

I. That God, by an eternal and unchangeable purpose in Jesus Christ his Son, before the foundations of the world were laid, determined to save, out of the human race which had fallen into sin, in Christ, for Christ’s sake and through Christ, those who through the grace of the Holy Spirit shall believe on the same his Son and shall through the same grace persevere in this same faith and obedience of faith even to the end; and on the other hand to leave under sin and wrath the contumacious and unbelieving and to condemn them as aliens from Christ, according to the word of the Gospel in John 3:36, and other passages of scripture.

II. That, accordingly, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, died for all men and for every man, so that he has obtained for all, by his death on the cross, reconciliation and remission of sins; yet so that no one is partaker of this remission except the believers (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2).

III. That man has not saving grace of himself, nor the working of his own free-will, inasmuch as in his state of apostasy and sin he can for himself and by himself think nothing that is good—nothing, that is, truly good, such as saving faith is, above all else. But that it is necessary that by God, in Christ and through his Holy Spirit he be born again and renewed in understanding, affections and will and in all his faculties, that he may be able to understand, think, will and perform what is truly good, according to the Word of God (John 15:5).

IV. That this grace of God is the beginning, the progress and the end of all good; so that even the regenerate man can neither think will nor effect any good, nor withstand any temptation to evil, without grace precedent (or prevenient), awakening, following and cooperating. So that all good deeds and all movements towards good that can be conceived in thought must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ. But with respect to the mode of oper-



ation, grace is not irresistible; for it is written of many that they resisted the Holy Spirit (Acts 7 and elsewhere *passim*).

V. That those who are grafted into Christ by a true faith, and have thereby been made partakers of his life-giving Spirit, are abundantly endowed with power to strive against Satan, sin, the world and their own flesh, and to win the victory; always, be it understood, with the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit, with Jesus Christ assisting them in all temptations, through his Spirit; stretching out his hand to them and (provided only that they are themselves prepared for the fight, that they entreat his aid and do not fail to help themselves) propping and upholding them so that by no guile or violence of Satan can they be led astray or plucked from Christ's hands (John 10:28). But for the question whether they are not able through sloth or negligence to forsake the beginning of their life in Christ, to embrace again this present world, to depart from the holy doctrine once delivered to them, to lose their good conscience and to neglect grace--this must be the subject of more exact inquiry in the Holy Scriptures, before we can teach it with full confidence of our mind.<sup>87</sup>

The final section will consist of a comparison between representative Anabaptist writers and the soteriological writings of Arminius.

#### **V: A COMPARISON OF SOTERIOLOGICAL THOUGHT: ARMINIUS AND THE ANABAPTISTS**

This section constitutes the heart of the paper and upon these comparisons the argument will stand or fall. Thus far we have concluded that General Baptists were definitely known as Arminian in their theology which historians have assumed originated with James Arminius. From that assumption the paper digressed surveying the three phases of the Dutch Reformation: the Sacramentist, Anabaptist and Dutch Reformed stages. Following that survey, the paper moved specifically to documented accounts of Arminius' interaction with the Anabaptists and their writings in the Netherlands. The next link in the chain presented Arminius' soteriology as it was manifested in the tensions of the Dutch Reformation. The final section will briefly compare the soteriological thought of representative Anabaptist leaders and Arminius.

Before comparisons can be made, the issue must be resolved, "who

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<sup>87</sup> See, e.g., *Documents of the Christian Church* (2d ed.; Henry Bettenson; London: Oxford University Press, 1978), 268-69.

are the representative Anabaptists who may have influenced Arminius?" It has been established that Arminius had numerous contacts with the Mennonites, but he also read all the available Anabaptist works at hand. Based on the overt similarities, if Arminius were affected by any Anabaptist it would have to have been the group which is referred to as the "Normative Anabaptists" or, in line with Williams' typology, the "Evangelical Anabaptists."

The "Evangelical Anabaptists" consisted of the Swiss Brethren, Hubmaier and the South German Anabaptists represented by Marpeck in the first generation. The second generation produced Hofmann, Menno, Hutter, Riedemann and many others. In order to be selective but also representative, this comparison will examine briefly the soteriology primarily of Hubmaier, Marpeck, Menno and Hans de Ries comparing similarities between them and Arminius.

The methodology of the research for this section was to take the "five points of Arminianism" as a touchstone and examine writings of, and about, the above mentioned Anabaptists in order to establish the existence or absence of doctrinal parallels. The significant components of Arminius' soteriology were a belief in General Atonement, necessity of regeneration (grace?) in order to respond to God, resistible grace and the possibility of losing one's salvation. Note that the five points of Calvinism were not the true antitheses of the "Remonstrance." How were these seen in representative Anabaptists?

### **Balthasar Hubmaier**

"Balthasar Hubmaier," wrote Estep, "provided the guidelines for the sixteenth century Anabaptist view of salvation." The single most important theologian of Anabaptism during its formative stages, Hubmaier "holds the key which unlocks the whole of (normative) Anabaptist soteriology." Although Hubmaier was a sound biblical theologian, he was not a systematic theologian, primarily due to the fact that he was martyred only four years after becoming an Anabaptist.<sup>88</sup>

How did Hubmaier view the atonement? In his "On the Christian Baptism of Believers" Hubmaier wrote, "He (Christ) shed his blood and imparted it from the cross to all who believe on him, for the washing away of their sins."<sup>89</sup> The revelation of God in Christ contended Hubmaier clearly indicates that God wills that all men be saved. "Christ showed us this very plainly when he said (John 3:16): God so loved the

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<sup>88</sup> William Estep, "The Anabaptist View of Salvation," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 20 (Spring 1978): 32, 34-35, 49.

<sup>89</sup> Balthasar Hubmaier, "On the Christian Baptism of Believers" (1525) in *Anabaptist Beginnings* (ed. W. R. Estep; Nieuwkoop: B. DeGraff, 1976), 97.

world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him should not perish but have eternal life.”<sup>90</sup>

Estep translated a passage from the Hubmaier *Schriften* edited by Westin and Bergsten. In it Hubmaier wrote:

Only a foolish king could place a goal before his subjects and then say, “Now run that you may get there” when he already knows beforehand that they are bound in iron and that they cannot run. It was certainly a cunning God who invites all men to the supper, and really offers his mercy to everyone, if he after all did not wish the invited to come. It was a false God who should say in words, “Come here” and yet in secret in his heart should think, “Sit yonder.” It would be an unfaithful God who should publicly offer grace to man, and should clothe him in new raiment, yet in secret take it away from him and prepare hell for him.<sup>91</sup>

Although Hubmaier believed in a general atonement he also believed that a man must be regenerated before he could respond to God. In essence, God had to make the first move. Hubmaier wrote, “Only when He gives us grace can we do His will so that we, in as much as he gives us grace, might fulfill his will.” He continued, “For if he does not give us grace we are already lost.” Again Hubmaier wrote, “To unbelievers, these promises (in the Word) are the letter that kills but to believers, spirit and life that God alone gives to whom He will.”<sup>92</sup> This regeneration, wherein God makes the first move, is kin to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit for Hubmaier. Hubmaier stated that the “Baptism of the Spirit makes possible the New Birth.”<sup>93</sup> For Hubmaier, regeneration is grace extended, but the New Birth comes as a result of the sinner placing faith in the finished work of Christ.

The New Birth is the heart of Hubmaier’s doctrine of salvation. It comes to man through the Word and the Holy Spirit. Through the Gospel, said Hubmaier, God has taken the initiative toward man’s salvation.

Although Hubmaier stressed that God makes the first move to quicken man, he did not believe in “irresistible grace.” He contended that man had a measure of free-will. Hubmaier believed that man had the capacity to desire and will the good, but not to practice it without grace.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Estep, “Salvation,” 45.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>92</sup> Hubmaier, “Baptism,” 98, 69.

<sup>93</sup> Estep, “Salvation,” 45.

<sup>94</sup> Torsten Bergsten, *Balthasar Hubmaier Anabaptist Theologian and Martyr*, (trans. W. R. Estep; Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1978), 354.

Hubmaier wrote,

God gives power and capacity to all men in so far as they themselves desire it (Jn. 1:12, Deut. 30:19). Free choice is restored to them to come, and a new birth, a new beginning of the creaturely, as man had been originally in paradise, save for the flesh. But whatever man will not... these he (God) will leave outside.<sup>95</sup>

Again, Hubmaier wrote, "If I will I can be saved, by the grace of God. If I will not, I shall be damned and that by my own fault, from obstinacy and self-will." In essence, wrote Hubmaier, God desires to save all men except for those "who by their own choice refuse to be saved."<sup>96</sup> Hubmaier believed that without freedom it would be pointless to make a moral demand upon man.<sup>97</sup>

In these contentions Hubmaier was similar to Hans Denck who is considered more of a "spiritualist." Denck wrote with respect to the extent of the atonement that, "the suffering of Christ has done enough for sins of all men, even if no one were saved."<sup>98</sup>

Although Hubmaier did not write on the possibility of losing one's salvation, Denck did. He wrote, "Indeed for whom God has received in faith, he can and wills to reject again in case the person does not remain in faith."<sup>99</sup>

Keep in mind that the fifth article of the Remonstrants does not fully affirm that man can be saved and lost; it only maintains that the concept of the perseverance of the saints is not sufficiently and clearly delineated in Scripture.

As the reader can readily see, there is a similarity broadly between concepts of soteriology in Hubmaier and Arminius. What of other Anabaptists?

### **Pilgrim Marpeck**

Pilgrim Marpeck, the prolific South German Anabaptist, too, held similar concepts of soteriology. Concerning the extent of the atonement he wrote,

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<sup>95</sup> Balthasar Hubmaier, "On Free Will," in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers* (ed. G. H. Williams; Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1957), 129.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 127, 132-33.

<sup>97</sup> Bergsten, 358

<sup>98</sup> Hans Denck, "Rechenschaft," in Estep, *Beginnings*, 134.

<sup>99</sup> Hans Denck, "Whether God is the Cause of Evil," in Williams, *Spiritual*, 105.

For it is the will of God that recollection, testimony, and proclamation should always be made to the followers, apostate, erring and ignorant, ever to those who know, in order that no one may be lost, that everyone may improve, and that all men may become well, be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. Just as Christ is not the atonement for the sins of a part or a half but of the whole world.<sup>100</sup>

Again, he wrote, “this Christ and Son of God demands neither time, place, or person, but whosoever will may come and drink” (Jn 7:37).<sup>101</sup>

In “A Clear Refutation,” Marpeck addressed those who insisted on a limited atonement suggesting that they have rejected God’s revelation in Christ:

I would very much like to know where such prophets place Christ’s words, ‘whoso wills,’ He does not say ‘whoever waits until I will.’ I would like to know whether they have the power to confine this revealed will of Christ, and whether this word of Christ has ever been revoked, or is it still valid...?

Marpeck continued, “those who accuse the gracious Christ (as if he were an angry Christ, as if one had to hope and wait until He again conciliated the Father) accuses Him of not having done enough for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).<sup>102</sup> Marpeck, like Hubmaier insists that God’s offer of “whosoever will” be taken at face value as representative of God’s offer of general atonement.

This is not to say that all men will respond to God’s offer. Marpeck wrote concerning the fact that God must make the initial move toward man. He wrote, “Down with the spirits who say that one is able to believe in the Son of God, His human voice and speech, teaching and works without being drawn by the Father” (1 John 6:44). He continued, “I defy those false teachers who teach that a really good work of faith can occur apart from the working of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>103</sup> For Marpeck, the extent of the atonement is to all men; however, man must first be approached by God in the person of the Holy Spirit in order to be reconciled to God.

Now with respect to this, Marpeck asserts that grace is not irresistible. He wrote, “Just so, today, the world does not want it (salvation

<sup>100</sup> Pilgrim Marpeck, *The Writings of Pilgrim Marpeck* (trans. & ed. W. Klassen & W. Klassen; Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1967), 58.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 105-06.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 76-77.

through the Holy Spirit) choosing to follow instead the wisdom of the serpent.” Concerning them he said, “Neither God nor Christ can be blamed for this action, only men themselves are to blame.” Speaking about all mankind, Marpeck said, “God desires that they would all know Him (Heb. 8, Joel 2) and desires that all be healed (1 Tim.2). His will and desires are clear. But where man is not willing, God cannot and will not.”<sup>104</sup>

The most succinct statement on resistible grace is in article twenty-eight of his “Confession of Faith.” There is no coercion, but a free (freewilliger) spirit, in Christ Jesus our Lord. He who does not want, may remain outside. He who is willing, may come and drink freely.<sup>105</sup>

Only a few references in Marpeck’s writings intimate the idea of losing one’s salvation. In “A Clear Refutation” he wrote, “the true believers will not leave Christ and all his teachings for Christ does not lose anyone except the children of perdition, and that is only one out of twelve” (John 17:12). He exhorted fellow Christians, “may the Lord give grace that we may remain with our Christ until the end.” Again he wrote, “whoever does not hold Him will not be held by Him.”<sup>106</sup> In Marpeck, too, we find the possibility of losing one’s salvation. But what do the Anabaptists in the Netherlands and more specifically Menno Simons, and later Hans de Ries teach with respect to soteriology?

### **Menno Simons**

Menno, like Hubmaier and Marpeck, held to the concept of general atonement. In his “Mediation on the Twenty-fifth Psalm” he wrote, “yea, through His blood on the cross He reconciled all upon earth and heaven above.” Menno continued, “He (Jesus) proclaimed salvation to all who are heavy laden and with faithful hearts come to Him. He invites all the thirsty to the waters of life; all our sins He bore upon the cross in His own body, and our guilt He blotted out with his blood.”<sup>107</sup>

In conjunction with Menno’s concept of general atonement is his rejection of the doctrine of reprobation (that God elects some to eternal damnation). Concerning reprobation, Menno wrote,

Zwingli formerly taught that when a thief stole, or a murderer killed, God’s will compelled them to it, and that their punishment was also brought about by the will of God; a position

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 61-62.

<sup>105</sup> Estep, *Beginnings*, 168.

<sup>106</sup> Marpeck, 62, 85, 106.

<sup>107</sup> Menno Simons, *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons* (trans. Leonard Verduin; ed. J. C. Wenger; Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1956), 79.

God, and man created with sufficient freedom to remain morally and ethically responsible for his behavior, and therefore of his destiny. They recognize some election, but very clearly asserted that it was not 'irresistible,' to use a term that came into common use at a later period in Dutch history. The proffered grace is conditional because it depends upon the belief and obedience of the individual.<sup>113</sup>

With respect to the perseverance of the saints, Menno echoes a warning similar to passages found in Hebrews: "The Scriptures admonish the truly regenerated and resurrected ones that they should take heed to their calling and continue perfect in a new, godly walk." For Menno, it is the Christian's responsibility to maintain the saving relationship he has with God. He continued, "For if they have been made partakers of Christ, they should hold to this beginning unto the end, lest they once more depart from the living God through the deceitfulness of sin and an evil heart of unbelief."<sup>114</sup>

Although having some disagreements in details with Anabaptist theologians previously mentioned, i.e., the Person of Christ and celestial flesh, on major tenets of soteriology Menno is in harmony with them.

Thus far, the Anabaptist theologians have been surveyed. Evidence to support the existence of major common categories of soteriology has been presented. In turning attention to the final representative Anabaptist, the methodology will be altered from macroscopic to microscopic. The final selection will compare Arminius' teachings and Hans de Ries' "Confessions" of 1577, 1578 and 1580.

### **Hans de Ries & Waterlandian Confessions of Faith 1577, 1578, 1580**

Hans de Ries, a leader among the Waterland Mennonites penned several "Confessions of Faith." The first major confession which will be compared with Arminius' thoughts, was prepared in 1577; a second was penned in 1580; also a brief confessional statement, known as the "Middleburg Confession" was prepared in 1578 while de Ries was in prison. Cornelius Dyck, a Mennonite historian wrote that the Waterlanders believed that no statements of faith should be binding upon others, since they are the words of men, not the Word of God. Their function lay in clarifying issues, in facilitating understanding, and thus promoting uni-

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<sup>113</sup> William E. Keeney, *The Development of Dutch Anabaptist Thought and Practice From 1539-1564* (Nieuwkoop: B. DeGraaf, 1968), 72.

<sup>114</sup> Menno Simons, 59.

which, in my opinion is an abomination of abominations.<sup>108</sup>

In his “Meditations” Menno asked, “Shall I say that thou has ordained the wicked to wickedness, as some have said?” He responded with Paul’s declarative, “God forbid.” Rather, he contended, “I know, O Lord, that thou art the eternally Good, and that nothing wicked can be found in thee.” Menno here inferred that for God to destine a man to reprobation is to make God the author of sin. Menno concluded, “Thou desirest not that any should remain lost, but that they might repent, come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved.”<sup>109</sup>

Menno made it abundantly clear that for anyone to come to Christ, God through his grace must first draw the sinner to himself. Menno views saving faith as a gift from God. Menno wrote:

There is none that can glory in himself touching this faith, for it is the gift of God. Happy is he to whom God gives this gift, for it is more precious than gold, silver or precious stones. Nothing can be compared with it. He that receives it receives Christ Jesus, forgiveness of sins, a new mind, and eternal life.<sup>110</sup>

In several passages Menno emphasizes God’s Sovereignty based upon His Word. He wrote, “all that He wills comes to pass, and what he promises must be fulfilled, and not otherwise than he has promised.”<sup>111</sup> Menno said this in respect to the “whosoever” passages of Scripture. Note the similarity among Hubmaier, Marpeck and Menno in their understanding that God’s revealed will is an open invitation to sinners. Menno wrote in his “Meditations,” “although I resisted in former times thy precious Word and thy holy will with all my powers...; nevertheless thy fatherly grace did not forsake me.” He evidently felt that in his own life that he had previously resisted God’s grace. Resisting God’s grace for Menno was basically synonymous with unbelief.

Concerning resistible grace, Menno wrote, “I have read recently that . . . there is one good work which saves us; namely faith, and but one sin that will damn us, namely unbelief.” He concluded, “I will let this pass without finding fault.”<sup>112</sup> Keeney wrote:

Menno and Dirk (Philips) were somewhat contradictory when they attempted to recognize the paradox of a fully sovereign

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 760.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 325.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 69, 399.



ty.”<sup>115</sup> As one reads de Ries’ Confessions it is interesting to note the theological conservatism contained therein. Waterlanders, known as “liberals,” were labeled such because of their policy of toleration to “offending” members.

The 1577 Confession stated in Article VI, that “God had known from all eternity all things that happen, have happened, and will happen good and bad. Nevertheless this foreknowledge compels no one to sin.”<sup>116</sup> In this Article, Arminius’ teaching on “Foreknowledge” is anticipated. Both refused to acknowledge the validity of reprobation.

In the fifth article, de Ries wrote, “it is His (God’s) desire that no one should be lost, but much more that all should be saved and live.”<sup>117</sup> This is a plain statement of general atonement.

A short “Confession” prepared at Middleburg sheds light on de Ries’ understanding of the Fall. He contended that although the image of God in man was marred in the fall, that “virtue” still remained in man by the grace of God. Therefore, wrote de Ries, “all men by grace (have) sufficient godliness remaining in them (so) that they are without excuse.” The consequence of this stated, “even more, man can thereby accept or reject the goodness of God offered by through diverse means as the way of life—he can open or close his heart—but not by himself, for of ourselves we can do nothing good without the help of God.”<sup>118</sup> Note here that man is responsible for accepting or rejecting the gospel, while the ones responding affirmatively have done so only by God’s grace.

In the Waterland Confession, 1580, de Ries was explicit in his teaching on decrees which were emerging as major tenets in the hyper-Calvinist doctrine of election. De Ries wrote, “He (God) did not, therefore, predestinate, ordain or create anyone of them that he should be condemned: nor did he wish nor decree that they should sin or live in sins that he subject them to condemnation.” He continued, “Perdition has its rise out of man but not at all out of the good Creator.”<sup>119</sup>

In viewing the similarity between Arminius and De Ries with respect to specifics in soteriology it is little wonder that Arminius was reluctant to make a blanket condemnation of the whole Anabaptist movement. The plain fact is that Arminius’ soteriology reflects the major tenets of the

<sup>115</sup> Cornelius J. Dyck “The First Waterlandian Confession of Faith,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 36 (1962): 6.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> Cornelius J. Dyck, “The Middleburg Confession of Hans de Ries, 1587,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 36 (1962): 151.

<sup>119</sup> Hans de Ries, “The Waterland Confession,” in William Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (rev. ed.; Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, revised ed. 1974), 47.

normative Anabaptists. Being sympathetic to the Anabaptist point of view it is little wonder that Anabaptists were commonly in attendance on his preaching.<sup>120</sup> Why not? With respect to the major doctrines as expressed in the Remonstrance of 1610, the Anabaptists in soteriology believed essentially the same as Arminius.

## CONCLUSION

But what does all this mean? The argument of the paper is simple. First, the General Baptists held to and espoused Arminian soteriology. They were even called Arminian Baptists. Next, in an effort to understand the workings of the Dutch Reformation, we overviewed the three principal phases: Sacramentist, Anabaptist and Dutch Reformed. Emphasis was given to the relation of the latter movements to the former.

Moving from general to specific, the paper next documented Arminius' extensive interaction with the Anabaptists. That he was familiar with their doctrines, particularly their soteriology, is pretty well substantiated because of his assignment to "refute" the Anabaptists and avowed to have read all the Anabaptist literature available.

Following an examination of his relation with the Anabaptists, Arminius' soteriological doctrines were viewed as they were hammered out on the anvil of the Dutch Reformation. The paper concluded by presenting the parallels between Arminius' soteriology and that of Normative Anabaptists.

The conclusion of this writer is that the soteriological doctrines are roughly equivalent. I agree, with one exception, with Harold S. Bender's observation that, "Mennonites (and their precursors) have been historically Arminian in their theology whether they distinctly espoused the Arminian viewpoint or not."<sup>121</sup> The exception is Bender's logic. He might as well have stated that Augustine espoused Calvinistic doctrine. His order is reversed. The Mennonites and the Normative Anabaptists did not espouse Arminian soteriology, Arminius espoused Anabaptist soteriology. After all, the last Anabaptist document referred to was penned in 1580, when Arminius was at the ripe old age of nineteen and still in school.

Therefore, if Arminius held to Anabaptist soteriology, and the General Baptists advocated Arminian soteriology, logic has it that the General Baptists advocated Anabaptist soteriology through an Arminian filter, so that English General Baptists after all have true Anabaptist roots.

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<sup>120</sup> Bangs, *Arminius*, 170.

<sup>121</sup> *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Arminianism," by Harold S. Bender.

## A Medieval Gospel Presentation or A Manual of Church Order?



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The following text is from the bound manuscript of an Albigenian Bible dating from 1230 to 1330 A.D. Because the movable type was not invented until 1455 A.D., this text was handwritten by a scribe. It was bound to the back of a Bible in the same hand, with the title “Waldensian Bible” on the cover. The manuscript is currently housed at the library of the City of Lyons, France, as manuscript PS 36. A facsimile of the text was published in 1887 and disseminated to a number of libraries.<sup>1</sup> The library of Washington University in St. Louis owns one of these copies.

Jean Duvernoy, late French Medievalist, in 2001 published an online transcription of the text of the gospel presentation in the Occitan language.<sup>2</sup> The Occitan language is a dead language from a region in Southern France. In his introduction, Duvernoy explained the provenance of this interesting text, and referred to the publication of a facsimile of this text, along with the French translation of the gospel presentations at the end of the Bible by L. Clédet in 1887. The following text is titled “Ritual Occitan,” and is actually the second gospel presentation in the text. It is

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<sup>1</sup>L. Clédet, “Rituel Provençal,” in L. Clédet, *Le Nouveau Testament traduit au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle en langue provençale suivi d’un rituel cathar* [The New Testament translated in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century in the Provençal language followed by a Cathar ritual] (Paris: Leroux, 1887; Geneva: Slatkine, 1968), ix-xxvi. Translation mine.

<sup>2</sup>Jean Duvernoy, “Rituel Occitan”; available at: [http://jean.duvernoy.free.fr/text/pdf/cledat\\_rituel.pdf](http://jean.duvernoy.free.fr/text/pdf/cledat_rituel.pdf); accessed 22 Aug 2012.

designated for someone who is “out in the field.” In other words, it was a gospel presentation or follow-up tool for someone who was not a part of an organized nighttime clandestine meeting in which people were converted into the underground Waldensian-Albigensian fellowships during the 14th Century. This time period followed the Albigensian crusades, when it was illegal to be non-Catholic the region of Southern France.

What is particularly fascinating in this gospel presentation is the use of the Great Commission passages in Matthew and Mark. These passages were discussed by the so-called Anabaptists two centuries later. Further, it emphasized the baptism in the Holy Spirit by placing a Bible on the head of the person receiving the baptism.<sup>3</sup> This text also taught a successionism of the laying on of hands for Spirit baptism. Spirit baptism appeared to be a concept lost to Medieval theologians who considered the Holy Spirit to be resident in the seven Sacraments of the Church of Rome. By the way, according to the 1250 A.D. writing of the Inquisitor Reinerius Saccho, in his time there existed sixteen (16) denominations of Cathars existed in Southern France, Northern Italy, Northern Spain, and into the Bulgaria.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>It appears that the usage of the “book on the head” parallels Rome’s ordination of a Bishop, going back to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century (DS326). Some differences are: (1) in the case of Rome the book consists of the Gospels; in the case of the Cathars it consisted of a New Testament; (2) in the case of Rome the ritual is to ordain a Bishop; in the case of the Cathars it was for the Spirit baptism of a layman.

<sup>4</sup>“Behold the Cathar Churches.- All the Churches of the Cathars are sixteen. Please do not reproach me, reader, for calling them Churches, but reproach them, for this is what they call them: The Church of the Albanists or of Desenzano; The Church of Concorrezo; The Church of Bagnolais or of Bagnolo; The Church of Vincence or of la Marche; The Florentine Church; The Church of Val de Spolète; The Church of France; The Toulouse Church; The Carcassone Church; The Albigensian Church; The Church of Slavonia; The Church of the Latins of Constantinople; The Church of the Greeks [ibidem]; The Philadelphia Church in Romania; The Church of Bulgaria; The Church of Dragovisia. And they all have their origin in the last two.” (Brother Raynier of the Order of Preachers, “The Cathars and the Poor of Lyons”; translated into French by Jean Duvernoy; available at: [http://jean.duvernoy.free.fr/text/pdf/raynier\\_sacconi.pdf](http://jean.duvernoy.free.fr/text/pdf/raynier_sacconi.pdf); accessed 22 Aug 2012; Internet). Further, the perceptive reader will note that four of these named churches (France, Toulouse, Carcassone, and Albigensian) represent bishops anointed by the Bulgarian Bishop Nicetas in 1167 in Saint Felix, France (See Monique Zerner, *L’histoire de catharisme en discussion* (Nice 2001) and Jean Odol, “L’acte de naissance des évêchés Cathares: La charte de Niquinta, Saint-Félix, 1167” [the birthing act (or articles of incorporation) of the cathar bishoprics: the chart of Niquinta, Saint Felix, 1167], by Jean Odol; from: <http://www.couleur-lauragais.fr/pages/journaux/2005/cl69/histoire.html>; accessed 21 Sept 2007; Internet).

## SECOND GOSPEL PRESENTATION

If he is to be consoled in a field, may he make amends [*melioramentum*], and may he take the book from the hand of the elder. The elder must admonish and preach with appropriate testimonies, and with such words that are convenient to a consolment [*consolamentum*].<sup>5</sup> And may he say as such:

“Peter, you want to receive the spiritual baptism, by which is given the Holy Spirit in the church of God, with the holy preaching [*oraison*],<sup>6</sup> with the laying on of hands of ‘good men.’ Of this baptism our Lord Jesus-Christ says, in the gospel of Saint Matthew (28:19, 20),<sup>7</sup> to his disciples: ‘Go and instruct all the nations, and baptize them in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy spirit. And teach them to keep all the things which I commanded you. And behold that I am with you for ever until the consummation of the age.’ And in the gospel of Saint Mark (16:15), he says: ‘Go unto all the world, preach the gospel to every creature. And he that believes and is baptized will be saved, but he that does not believe will be condemned.’ And in the gospel of Saint John (3:5) he says to Nicodemus: ‘In truth, in truth I tell you that no man will enter the kingdom of God if he has not been regenerated by water and the Holy spirit.’ And John the Baptist spoke of this baptism when he said (John 1:26-27; Matt 3:2): ‘It is true that I baptize with water; but he who is to come after me is stronger than I: I am not worthy to tie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy spirit and with fire.’ And Jesus-Christ says in the Acts of the Apostles (1:5): ‘For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized by the Holy Spirit.’ This Holy baptism by the laying on of hands was instituted by Jesus-Christ, according to the report of Saint Luke,

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<sup>5</sup>The word “consolamentum” is regularly used in inquisition records to describe the ritual that the Cathars did to people. Sometimes in these inquisition records it was used in a series of questions as such: “Did you see the heretics? Did you hear them preach? Did you worship them? Did you receive the consolment from them?”

<sup>6</sup>The Occitan word “oraison” is used in several ways in this text. In the Latin, *oratione* is translated “prayer.” However, in this text it is used for preaching, as sometimes is used “kerygma” for the message of the Gospel. But it is also used of a single verse, as well as the words of a person. I have translated it preaching throughout, and will mark the word with an asterisk to help the reader understand this complexity.

<sup>7</sup>Note: all references in the text are from Clédât’s 1887 translation; the numbering of verses has been modernized.

and he says that his friends would do it, as was reported by Saint Mark (16:18): 'They will lay their hands on the sick, and the sick shall be healed.' And Ananias (Acts 9:17-18) did this baptism to Saint Paul when he was converted. And later Paul and Barnabas did it in many places. And Saint Peter and Saint John did it upon the Samaritans. For Saint Luke says so much in the Acts of the Apostles (8:14-17): 'The apostles who were in Jerusalem having heard that those in Samaria had received the Word of God, sent unto them Peter and John. Whom having arrived prayed for them so that they received the Holy spirit, for he had not yet descended upon any of them. So they laid their hands upon them, and they receive the Holy spirit.' This Holy baptism by which the Holy spirit is given, the church of God has kept it up until now, and it has come from 'good men' to 'good men' up until now, and it will be so until the end of the world. And you must hear that the power is given to the church of God to bind and unbind, and to forgive sins and hold them, as Jesus says in the gospel of Saint John (20:21-23): 'As the father has sent me, I send you also. When he had said these things, he blew and told them: Receive the Holy spirit; those unto whom you forgive the sins, they will be forgiven them, and those of whom you retain them, they will be retained.' And in the gospel of Saint Matthew, he said to Simon Peter (16:18, 19): 'I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the doors of hell will have no strength against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And something that you bind on earth, it shall be bound in the heavens, and something that you unbind on earth, it shall be unbound in the heavens.' And in another place (Matt 18:18-20) he says to his disciples: 'In truth I tell you that something that you bind on earth, it shall be bound in the heavens, and something that you unbind on earth, it shall be unbound in the heavens. And again in truth I tell you: if two or three persons gather on earth, all things, whatever they ask, will be accorded them by my father who is in heaven. For there where two or three persons are gathered in my name, I am there in their midst.' And in another place (Matt 10:8), he says: 'Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, chase [out] demons.' And in the gospel of Saint John (14:12), he says: 'He who believes in me will do the works that I do.' And in the gospel of Saint Mark (16:17-18), he says: 'But those who believe, these signs will follow them: in my name they will chase [out] demons, and they will speak in new languages, they will remove serpents, and if they drink something deadly, it will do no ill to them. They will lay their

hands on the sick and they will be healed.’ And in the gospel of Saint Luke (10:19), he says: ‘Behold I have given you the power to walk on serpents and scorpions, and on all the forces of the enemy, and nothing will harm you.’

“If you want to receive this power and this strength, you must hold all the commandments of Christ in the new testament according to your power. And know that he has commanded that man does not commit adultery, neither homicide, neither lies, that he swear no oath, that he does not take nor steal, nor that he does to others that which he does not want done to himself, and that man forgives whoever has done him wrong, and that he loves his enemies, and that he prays for those who slander him and for his accusers and that he blesses them, and if he is struck on one cheek, that he extend [to him] the other one, and if someone takes his shirt [Occ. *la gonella*; Fr. *la 'gonelle'*], that he allow [him] his coat, and that he does not judge nor condemn, and many other commandments that are commanded by the lord to his church. For Saint John says in the epistle (1 John 2:15-17): ‘O my very dear [ones], may you not love the world, nor the things that are in the world, the love of the father is not in it. For all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of live, which is not from the father, but from the world; and the world will pass, likewise its lusts, but who does the will of God dwells eternally.’ And Christ says to the nations (John 7:7): ‘The world cannot hate you, but it hates me, because I bear witness of it, that its works are bad.’ And in the book of Solomon (Eccl 1:14), it is written: ‘I saw the things that are done under the sun, and behold all are vanity and torment of spirit.’ And Jude brother of James says for our instruction in the epistle (v. 23): ‘Hate this soiled garment which is fleshly.’ And by these testimonies and by many others, you must keep the commandments of God, and hate the world. And if you do well up until the end, we are assured that your soul will have eternal life.”

And may he say, “I have this desire, pray God that he gives me the strength for it.” And may one of the “good men” make amends, with the believer, to the elder, and may he say: “*Parcite nobis* [spare us].<sup>8</sup> For all the sins that I may have done or said or thought or worked, I ask forgiveness of God, and of the church and to you all.” And may the Christians say: “By God and by us

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<sup>8</sup>*Parcite Nobis* seems to refer to a prayer: “*Benedicite parcite nobis, Amen. Fiat nobis secundum verbum tuum. Pater et Filius et Esperitus Sanctus parcat vobis omnia peccata vestra. Adoremus Patrem et Filium et Esperitum sanctum [III vegadas].*”

and by the church may they be forgiven you, and we pray God that he may forgive you them.” And then they must console him. And may the elder take the book and place it on his head, and the other “good men” each with his right hand, and may they say the “*parcias*” and three *adoremus*, and then:

“And then they must console him. And may the elder take the book and place it upon his head, and the other ‘good men’ each with his right hand, and may they say the *parcias* and three *adoremus*, and then: ‘[in Latin] *Pater Sanctu, suscipe servum tuum in tua justitia, et mitte gratiam tuam et spiritum sanctum tuum super eum.*’ And may they pray with the preaching\*, and the one who guides the holy service must say in a quiet voice the ‘*sixaine*’;<sup>9</sup> and when the ‘*sixaine*’ is said, he should say three *Adoremus*, with the preaching\* out loud, and then ‘the Gospel’ [a Latin version of John 1:1-5, 10-17]. And when the Gospel is said, they must say three *Adoremus* and the ‘*gratia*’ and the ‘*parcias.*’

“And then they must make peace between themselves [to hug] and with the book. And if there are believers, they must also make peace, and may the believers, if there are any, make peace with the book between them. And then may they pray God with ‘Double’ and with ‘*veniae*’, and they will have delivered him [the preaching].”<sup>10</sup>

## ANALYSIS

Several issues surface when this gospel presentation is compared to contemporary gospel presentations, such as the “Roman Road.” This fact causes me to believe that it is more than a mere gospel presentation. Rather it appears to be a type of church manual, explaining how leaders in the church are chosen and ordained. Further it provides the reader with a Central Interpretive Motif for the New Testament.

The flow of the gospel plan begins abruptly with spiritual baptism. This emphasis embodies the main theme throughout the text. The heart of the “consolement” resides in spiritual baptism. A secondary theme is that of the spiritual authority and succession of the “good men” who can bestow this spiritual baptism:

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<sup>9</sup>“Sixaine” or “sizain” is likely a reference to a poem with six lines (*Dictionnaire Larousse*). This may, for example, refer to the six blessings of Number 6:24-26: “The LORD bless you, and keep you; The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.”

<sup>10</sup>Translation mine.



“This Holy baptism by which the Holy Spirit is given, the church of God has kept it up until now, and it has come from ‘good men’ to ‘good men’ up until now, and it will be so until the end of the world.”

In speaking of the authority of these “good men,” Pentecostal verses and phenomena are ascribed to them, including the healing of the sick, the forgiving of sin, and the casting out of demons.

The citations of texts of Scripture in canonical order are as follows: Eccl 1:14; Matt 3:2; 10:8; 16:18-19; 18:18-20; 28:19-20; Mark 16:15, 17-18, 18; Luke 10:19; John 1:26-27; 3:5; 7:7; 14:12; 20:21-23; Acts 1:5; 8:14-17; 9:17-18; 1 John 2:15-17; Jude 23. These citations of Scripture are unusual, in that no text from the Apostle Paul is used. Verses such as Romans 3:23; 6:23; and 10:9-10 were not found. Although John was cited, verses like John 1:12; 3:3, 7, 16; and 5:24 were not. Therefore, Paul’s emphasis on sin and justification by faith are absent. Also absent were John’s emphasis on the love of God and the person of Christ. The emphasis was rather on the invisible power of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual authority of the “good men” to pass on Spirit baptism.

If the entire text is considered to be a follow-up text, rather than a gospel presentation, then it appears to seek to fulfill the command of Matthew 28:20, “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” In that case, it is understandable why some passages from the Pauline gospel are absent, as it would be part of a simple manual of church order at the end of this Waldensian Bible.

As far as sanctification, verses are cited to promote holiness of life. There was a major section of the paragraph on sanctification that borrowed the commands of Christ in Matthew 5. These passages were not cited in our text by Clédât, although they fit the conjecture that this is more of a follow-up text, rather than a pure presentation of the simple gospel. Towards the end of that paragraph 1 John 2:15-17 was used to encourage abstaining from sin. Jude 23 added a strong admonition to live a life free from sin, hating the world and its values. If one were to live separated from the world, then he would be assured eternal life.

Lastly, the gospel presentation or manual for church discipline became more ritualistic in describing the ritual for receiving Spirit baptism. This ritual took the following pattern:

- Verbal consent to accept Spirit baptism;
- Verbal confession of sin before all the Christians united there;
- The Bible was placed on the head, along with a number of recited prayers;

- The Christians hugged the new convert as they accepted him into their fellowship; and
- They closed in prayer.

So there we find a simple gospel presentation or church manual, 13<sup>th</sup> Century-style. Complete with Holy Spirit baptism and an invitation ritual for receiving this Spirit baptism. Perhaps the emphasis of this presentation is not too far removed from what may be found in contemporary Pentecostal churches today!

## Sorting out the Jameses, Part I: Getting Clear on James the Son of Zebedee and James the Brother of Jesus and their Respective Iconographies.



**Fig.1:** James son of Zebedee as a pilgrim, with a scallop-shell on his hat, his pilgrim staff and his water bottle (*Saint James as a Pilgrim*, Limestone, Lorraine, France (early 1500s) Spencer Art Museum, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS.

Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,  
My staff of faith to walk upon,  
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,  
My bottle of salvation,  
My gown of glory, hope's true  
gage;  
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage.

(Sir Walter Raleigh, "The Passionate Man's Pilgrimage," ll. 1-6)<sup>1</sup>

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On a number of occasions in recent months I have encountered instances where scholars are talking about James the brother of Jesus, but then illustrate what they say with pictures of James son of Zebedee. In view of this I thought it might be time to offer a few words aimed at helping New Testament scholars and other interested readers to clearly distinguish between these two Jameses in the New Testament and in each of their

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<sup>1</sup> On the theme of pilgrimage in literature, see Philip Edwards, *Pilgrimage and Literary Tradition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

distinctive iconographies. I begin by discussing James son of Zebedee, since his New Testament identity is least problematic, and since it is most often pictures of him that scholars and other writers tend to reproduce when they are actually talking about that other James, James the brother of Jesus.

### **JAMES SON OF ZEBEDEE (JAMES THE GREAT)**

The name James in the English New Testament translates *Iakobos*. Thus, although it is not evident in English, James bore the same name as the great patriarch Jacob, whose twelve sons in turn fathered the twelve tribes of Israel. James had a brother named John and a father named Zebedee (Mark 1:20, Matt 4:21, 20:20). His mother's name appears to have been named Salome. We suspect this because the woman Mark calls Salome (Mark 15:40), Matthew, in his parallel passage, calls "the mother of the sons of Zebedee" (Matt 27:56). Zebedee and his sons ran a fishing business in partnership with Simon Peter (Luke 5:10) and his brother Andrew (Mark 1:16, Matt 4:18). Several reasons suggest this was a fairly prosperous, substantial business. In the first place, they were able to hire additional help with the business. When James and John followed Jesus, "they left their father Zebedee in the boat," says Mark, "*with the hired men*" (Mark 1:20). Secondly, although it says that these disciples "left everything" to followed Jesus (Luke 5:11, cf. Mark 1:18, Matt 4:20), we find that throughout Jesus' ministry he had access to a boat to preach from when the crowding on shore became too great (Mark 3:9), and to make frequent trips back and forth across the sea of Galilee (Mark 3:9, 4:36, 5:2, 6:32, 8:10, John 6:22). The gospel of John implies that the disciples still have access to a boat even after Jesus' resurrection (John 21:3). In one case it is noted that Jesus and his disciples were using only one boat, and one large enough to hold the twelve along with Jesus himself (John 6:19-22, cf. Mark 4:36). Where then did this boat come from? A likely possibility is that it belonged to the joint fishing business of Peter, Andrew and the Zebedees. If that fishing business was successful enough to spare four of its principle partners *and* a boat for substantial periods of time and still thrive, supposing it did thrive, it is reasonable to assume it was a stable and prosperous business.

Another indicator along these same lines is the fact that James' and John's mother was among the women who followed Jesus and provided for his needs, presumably including material support, out of their own means (Matt 27:55-56, cf. Luke 8:1-3). It was while she was on the road with Jesus, on the way up to Jerusalem, that she made her appeal that her sons sit on his right and left in the kingdom (Matt 20:21). She was there at the cross when Jesus died as well (Matt 27:56) and she became one of

the witnesses to the empty tomb on the morning of the resurrection (Mark 16:1).

If the assumption that the anonymous author of the Gospel of John, who conceals his identity by calling himself “the disciple Jesus loved,” the “other disciple,” and so on, is in fact John son of Zebedee, as many scholars believe, then we know further that two sons of the same fishing business, John son of Zebedee and Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, had both been followers of John the Baptist before going on to follow Jesus (John 1:35-42). This again might seem to imply that the two-family business could afford to carry on without them for some extended periods of time.

If the author of the forth Gospel is John son of Zebedee, the family of Zebedee may also have been well connected. Thus we are told that the “disciple Jesus loved,” John, was personally known to the High Priest, Caiaphas, at the time of Jesus’ arrest, while his business partner, Simon Peter, was not (John 18:15-16). The question we cannot answer is how this distinction between John and Peter came about, i.e., how it happened that one Galilean fisherman moved in such exalted circles, while another, a partner in the same fishing business, did not. One possible answer given the evidence we have might be that Zebedee’s wife Salome herself came from a family with prominent connections. But that, of course, is just speculation.

James son of Zebedee, who to a great extent stands in the shadow of his better known brother John, was put to death during Passover by Herod Agrippa I sometime between 41 and 44 AD (Acts 12:2).<sup>2</sup> His brother outlived him by more than half a century.<sup>3</sup>

## THE ICONOGRAPHY OF JAMES ZEBEDEE

In iconographical terms, James son of Zebedee is usually referred to as James “the Great.” Although he is never called that in the Bible the title distinguishes him from another figure called James “the Less” in Mark 15:40. When speaking of their respective depictions in art the two are usually referred to contrastively as James the Less/Lesser and Great/Greater, James the Younger and Elder, and James (or Jacob) Minor and Major. Historically James the Less and James the brother of Jesus have also been confused with one another, a point we will take up in a separate article. In the Western Church the iconography of James Zebe-

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<sup>2</sup> See the discussion of chronology in Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (rev. ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 370-71.

<sup>3</sup> Jerome (*Lives of Illustrious Men* 9) says that John continued “until the time of the emperor Trajan” (Emperor 98 – 117), and that he died “in the sixty eighth year after our Lord’s passion” (ET: *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 3:365).

dee is completely dominated by imagery related to the famous pilgrim road known as the *Camino de Santiago*, the Way of Saint James, which terminates on its western end in Northwest Spain at the famous shrine of Santiago de Compostela, where the bones of James son of Zebedee have, since the ninth century, been believed to reside.<sup>4</sup>

During the Middle Ages, Santiago de Compostela, Rome, and Jerusalem represented the three most important pilgrimage destinations, with Rome as the symbolic center of the great pilgrim road, and Jerusalem and Santiago de Compostela its eastern and western termination points. The tales about how the bones of James son of Zebedee came to be in northern Spain are late and dubious.

When we read in Acts 12:2 that Herod “killed James the brother of John with the sword,” it might lead us to expect to find James Zebedee being depicted holding a sword, since martyrs are usually portrayed with the instruments of their deaths. Instead we see him with a pilgrim’s hat and staff, looking as though he is on the move, the ideal pilgrim coming back from viewing his own bones in Spain. The tell-tale sign indicating that he is not just any pilgrim on his way to just any one of the many pilgrim destinations—Walsingham, Rome, Canterbury, Jerusalem — but a



**Fig.2: *Saint James as a Pilgrim*, Limestone, Lorraine, France (early 1500s) Spencer Art Museum, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS**

<sup>4</sup> Javier Gómez-Montero, “Santiago de Compostela or the Obsession with Identity,” in *Iberian Cities* (ed. Joan Ramon Resina; Gómez-Montero’s essay trans. Julia Krüger; New York: Routledge, 2001), 19. Rodney Stark gives the date of the alleged discovery as 835 (*God’s Battalions: The Case for the Crusades* [New York: HarperOne, 2009], 45).

Compostela pilgrim, is his scalloped shell pilgrim badge, or *concha venera*, which is shown attached to his hat, staff, cloak, or satchel.<sup>5</sup> If you are wondering whether a picture or sculpture labeled St. James, is supposed to represent James son of Zebedee look for the scalloped shell. In a very high percentages of cases (especially in the Roman Catholic West) if it is James the Great (Zebedee) it will have the shell. Examples are numerous. We will look start here with a statue called *Saint James as a Pilgrim* (Fig. 2), a detail of which was already shown on the title page of this article. The accompanying description in the Spencer Museum at the University of Kansas says the following:

In the Spencer's sculpture, we see Saint James dressed not as a first-century disciple, but as a medieval pilgrim like those on the road to visit his shrine. He wears a loose robe and sandals and carries a walking stick and pilgrim's canteen. On his head he wears a floppy hat, on which are pictured staffs like the one he carries, and cockle shells. The cockle shell was the particular symbol of Santiago de Compostela....

The scalloped shell continues to be the symbol of James son of Zebedee even into the Protestant Reformation. So, for example, in Cornelis Boel's front-piece for the first-edition 1611 King James Bible, James son of Zebedee is shown with the traditional Compostela pilgrim's staff and hat with scalloped shell. Another example comes from the front-piece of the 1605 edition of the Geneva Bible where we see the scalloped shell attached to his cloak (Fig. 3 for both)



**Fig 3: James wearing Compostela pilgrim's badge (*concha venera*), Left: from the front-piece from the 1611 KJV (on his hat), and Right: from the front-piece of a 1605 Geneva Bible (on his shoulder).**

<sup>5</sup> William Melczer, *The Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago de Compostela: First English Translation, with Introduction, Commentaries, and Notes* (New York: Italica, 1993), 58.

Quite often we encounter portrayals of James son of Zebedee with the scallop shell but with the hat thrown back off the head, as in the following example by Carlo Crivelli, or gone altogether, as in the following example by Antonio Veneziano (both Fig. 5).<sup>6</sup>



**Fig. 5: Left: Carlo Crivelli, *James the Greater*, from the Polyptych of Monte San Martino (c. 1480) // Right: Antonio Veneziano, *James the Greater* (c. 1384), Gemäldegalerie, Berlin**

### **JAMES THE JUST, BROTHER OF JESUS (JAMES THE LESS)**

The other major James in Christian art is James the brother of Jesus, who is usually called “the Less,” due to his being confused with the James the Less in Mark 15:40, as was said before. As in our previous discussion, we will begin by reviewing the biblical data on the brother of Jesus. In the Gospel of Mark we discover that Jesus has both brothers and sisters.

<sup>6</sup> On the Isle of May, Fife, a pilgrim was even found buried with a Compostela shell wedged in his mouth. (Peter Yeoman, *Pilgrimage in Medieval Scotland* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1999), 63.



We learn this from a comment made by people from his hometown of Nazareth during one of his visits there: “Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?” (Mark 6:3, cf. Matt 13:55-56).

The Gospel further accounts agree that prior to his death and resurrection, Jesus’ brothers (and even apparently at times, his mother) did not believe in him (John 7:3-5, and Mark 3:21). This unbelief on the part of his brothers may account for the fact that Jesus had no family member into whose care he could entrust his mother at the time of his death and so entrusted her to “the disciple Jesus loved,” that is to say, John son of Zebedee. On the other hand that may have been due to the fact that John was the only disciple present at the cross and therefore also the only one available for Jesus to entrust his mother to.

After the resurrection and ascension, however, of Jesus we find that Jesus’ mother and brothers have joined the twelve as apparent disciples (Acts 1:14). That a number of Jesus’ brothers did become his active followers is proven by the fact that the Apostle Paul alludes to them when discussing their practice of taking their wives along with them when traveling in the performance of their ministries (1 Cor 9:5).

James the brother of Jesus very quickly became a prominent leader in the early Church, indeed *the* prominent leader in Jerusalem (Acts 21:18), leading Early Christian tradition to list James as the first bishop of Jerusalem.<sup>7</sup> It is he we find presiding over the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:13). How then did James come to believe in the reality of his brother Jesus’ Messiahship? Part of the answer, according to the Apostle Paul, is that the risen Jesus himself appeared to James (Cor 15:7). Paul knew James, having met him possibly as early as three years after his own conversion on the Damascus road (Gal 1:18-19). It is James the brother of Jesus who is credited with the authorship of the New Testament Epistle of James, and it is he who is associated with the controversial James son of Joseph brother of Jesus ossuary that surfaced in late 2002.<sup>8</sup>

The first century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus reports the death of James as taking place between the procuratorships of Festus and Albinus, that is to say in 62 AD:

Ananas [the Younger, the High Priest], who, thinking that a favorable opportunity now presented itself—Festus being dead [cf.

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<sup>7</sup> Fragment of the *Hypotyposes* of Clement of Alexandria (d. ca. 215) preserved in Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 2.1.3.

<sup>8</sup> For an extensive discussion of issues relating to James the brother of Jesus, including the James Ossuary, see John Painter, *Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2004).

Acts 24:27] and Albinus still on the road—summoned the judicial court of the Sanhedrin, brought before it the brother of Jesus who was called Christ—James was his name—with some others, and after accusing them of transgressing the law, delivered them over to be stoned to death.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to this reference in the extant copies of Josephus's *Antiquities*, the early Christian writers Origen of Alexandria and Eusebius of Caesarea also cite another passage about James, which they attribute to Josephus but that does not appear in any currently extant version of Josephus' works. In that passage Josephus attributes the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple to the murder of Jesus' brother James. "These things happened to the Jews," Eusebius quotes Josephus as saying, "as retribution for James the Just, who was a brother of Jesus who was called Christ, for the Jews killed him despite his great righteousness."<sup>10</sup>

Clement of Alexandria (active late 2<sup>nd</sup>/early 3<sup>rd</sup> cent.) tells a different story. According to Clement, James the brother of Jesus, was not stoned but "thrown from the pinnacle of the temple and beaten to death with a fuller's club [ὕπο γναφέως ξυλω]."<sup>11</sup> Another author, Hegesippus, though earlier than Clement, nevertheless combines the traditions concerning James's death related by Josephus and Clement by saying that the Lord's brother was thrown down, then stoned, then finished off by a fuller with his club, immediately after which Vespasian began to besiege them.<sup>12</sup>

Eusebius judged most accurate the account of Hegesippus,<sup>13</sup> but in view of its patchwork character, it could just as well be the least accurate. Most likely it is Josephus, who writes as a contemporary of the event, who gives us the most accurate account. Had historical accuracy, then, been determinative in selecting the symbolic item by which James the Less would be recognized in iconography, he would have been holding a stone. Instead it was Clement's account that won out, so that artistic

<sup>9</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.9.1 (200) [ET: Henry St. John Thackeray].

<sup>10</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.20 [ET: Paul L. Maier]. Also Origen, *Contra Celsus* 1.4 and *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17.

<sup>11</sup> Fragment of the *Hypotyposes* of Clement of Alexandria preserved in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.1.4 [ET: Paul L. Maier].

<sup>12</sup> Fragment from the fifth book of the *Hypomnemata* (Memoirs) of Hegesippus (d. ca. 180?) in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.16-18 (cf. 2.23.11). Eusebius says that Hegesippus lived "immediately after the apostles," (2.23.3). There is a chronological problem with Hegessippus's linking the death of James directly with the siege by Vespasian. James died in 62 but Vespasian did not embark on his effort to suppress the Jewish revolt until 66.

<sup>13</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.3.

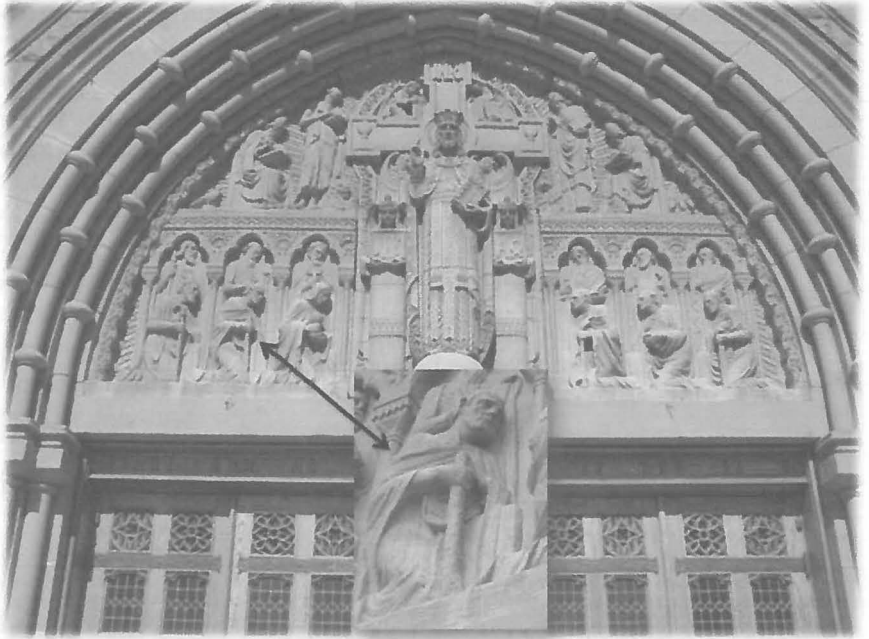
representations of James the Less in the Western Church usually show him holding the fuller's club allegedly used in beating him to death.

Our first example of this iconography comes from the Italian sculptor Andrea Bregno, part of an altar that originally stood in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Rome. It dates to around 1475/1477, and now resides in the Nelson-Atkins Museum here in Kansas City (Fig. 6).

An example of James with his fuller's club is also seen in Francis Aretz's 1917 *Tympanum* above the main doors of the Cathedral of the Madeleine in Salt Lake City, where the length of the bat has been shortened to accommodate the figure's kneeling position (Fig. 7).



**Fig. 6: Andrea Bregno, *Saint James the Less* (1475/1477), Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, MO.**



**Fig. 7:** Francis Aretz, *Tympanum* with Christ, surrounded by the four doctors of the Church (Jerome, Ambrose, Gregory and Augustine), the symbolism of the four evangelists and the twelve Apostles (1917) the Cathedral of the Madeleine, Salt Lake City.

**Fig. 8:** KJV Front Rowland Lockey (?) and Christopher Switzer, James the Less from 1611 KJV front-piece, by engravers Rowland Lockey (?) and Christopher Switzer.



This symbolism, again, appeared in the Churches of the Reformation as well, as we can see in this image from the New Testament front-piece of the 1611 original edition of the King James Bible (Fig. 8). Earlier we pointed out how James the Greater, the son of Zebedee, had appeared in his Compostela pilgrim garb in Cornelis

Boel's familiar 1611 King James Old Testament front-piece. James the Less also appears there with his traditional fuller's club as well right next to James the Greater at the top right (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9: Cornelis Boel, 1611 KJV Old Testament front piece.

The reader should note that in each of these cases James the Less is depicted as one of the twelve apostles, perpetuating the confusion between James the brother of Jesus, and the Apostle James son of Alphaeus, an issue we hope to discuss in a future article.

A variation on the fuller's club motif that should be discussed for the benefit of anyone trying to identify James the Less in paintings and sculptures from German speaking areas. The first example of this motif I ever encountered, was this typically Styrian sculpture of James the Less from the castle-like Church of Saint Nicholas, in Judenburg, Austria (Fig. 10). When I first visited this church in 2006 and was noting down the features of the various apostolic sculptures, I didn't know what to make of what James the Less was holding, and noted down only that it looked like a "bow like for a cello." What was the story here? Unfortunately, even the priest of the Judenburg church could provide no explanation.

As it turns out, what James is holding here is a hatter's bow, used in the production of felt for hats. Presumably it seemed to hatters that since they as well as fullers worked with cloth, the patronage of Saint James the Less could be claimed by them as well.



**Fig. 10: James the Less (Jacobus Minor), St. Nicholas Church, Judenburg, Austria.**

Depictions of James being beat to death with the hatter's bow sometimes show the bow as strung other times not, as can be seen for example in successive editions of the *Nuremburg Chronicle* (Fig. 11).<sup>14</sup>



Fig. 11: James the Less being martyred with a hatter's bow in successive editions of the *Nuremburg Chronicle*. Unstrung on the left (1493), strung on the right (1496).



Fig. 12: Hatter's bow in use, from Richard P. Bedford, *St. James the Less: A Study in Christian Iconography* (London: Bernhard Quaritch, 1911), 22.

<sup>14</sup> For one of the fullest (indeed perhaps one of the only) discussions of the feature of the hatter's bow, see Richard P. Bedford, *St. James the Less: A Study in Christian Iconography* (London: Bernhard Quaritch, 1911), 21-34.

## TALKING ABOUT JAMES THE LESS WHILE SHOWING PICTURES OF JAMES THE GREAT

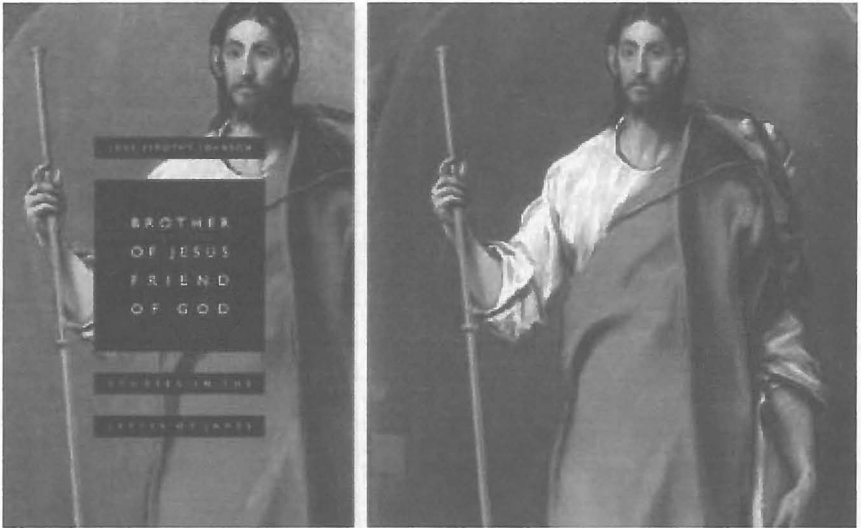


Fig. 13: R: Luke Timothy Johnson, *Brother of Jesus Friend of God: Studies in the Letter of James* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK, 2004) / L: *St. James the Great as a Pilgrim* (1597-1603) Toledo, Santa Cruz Museum.

We may now examine a few examples of places where discussions of James the Less (the brother of Jesus) are wrongly illustrated with artistic depictions of James the Great (the son of Zebedee). Our first example comes from Luke Timothy Johnson, R.W. Woodruff Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Emory University's Chandler School of Theology. In 2004 Johnson published a book on James the Less entitled *Brother of Jesus Friend of God: Studies in the Letter of James*. It was published by the venerable Christian firm, William B. Eerdmans of Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K. On the cover we find a painting by the celebrated El Greco of James the son of Zebedee in his traditional Compostela pilgrim garb, but the picture itself has been cropped in such a way as to conceal that this was in fact the case. Furthermore, when the picture is identified on the back cover of the book, it is only described as a "detail of Saint James by El Greco," rather than by its more common name: "St. James the Great as a Pilgrim." As we compare the cover art detail with a larger one from the original El Greco painting, we see that what was cropped out was the characteristic pil-



grim's hat upon to which we see attached not one but three scalloped shells (Fig. 13).<sup>15</sup>

### JAMES TABOR AND THE BROTHER OF JESUS



Fig. 14: Anonymous, *Christ between Saint Peter and Saint James Major*, Italian (late 13<sup>th</sup> cent.) National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.

Now we come to our second example. In a recent blog posting entitled “Jesus, his brother James, and Peter: A Picture Worth A Thousand Words,” James D. Tabor, Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, again wrongly identifies a depiction of James son of Zebedee as James the brother of Jesus (Fig. 14). He then attempts substantive commentary based upon his misidentification. Let us begin with what Tabor said about the picture and then examine the picture itself:

This painting with Jesus in the center, flanked by Peter and James the brother of Jesus, seems to say it all. Notice how James is almost a “twin” of Jesus, both in expression, hair style, clothing, and general demeanor, whereas Peter is clearly “odd man out” in terms of the way he is portrayed. He even seems to be scowling over at James, perhaps jealous of his status and closeness to Jesus.... One has to wonder what this unknown artist

<sup>15</sup> Email requesting comment from Luke Timothy Johnson have remained unanswered.

knew or thought he knew about the complexities of early Christian leadership and any possible rivalry between Peter who is associated more with Rome and the West, and James the Brother of Jesus who receives great emphasis in the East....<sup>16</sup>

Several things that Tabor says about this painting are true. Whether intentional or not the apostolic figures in the side panels clearly do appear more interested in one another than in the figure of Christ in the central panel. Furthermore it may even seem that one or both of them are regarding the other with a jaundiced eye. What Tabor says about some of the other details of this triptych become more conspicuously true when viewing the original in color. The similarity of clothing between the figures of Jesus and James is indeed striking. Their clothes are the same color (maroon garments with blue cloaks), but so is their hair (light brown). In



**Fig. 15: James the Brother of Jesus (Adelphotheos)**

contrast Peter wears a green garment with a yellow-orange cloak. Peter's hair is gray. In this regard, however, the choice of these details on the part of the artist has more to do with iconographical convention than individual creative choice. In the triptych the artist largely follows the conventions of Eastern Orthodox iconography, and these dictate at least some of the details Tabor mentions. The *Hermeneia* (or "Painter's Manual") of Dionysius of Fourna (1670 - after 1744), lays out the norms for the depictions of Peter and James Zebedee along much the same lines as we find them depicted in Figure 14. Dionysius says that Peter is to be painted as old and with rounded beard, just as we find him here.<sup>17</sup> In contrast, James son of Zebedee is to be portrayed as a young

man with a nascent beard.<sup>18</sup> The reason Zebedee's son is represented as a young man is that he was one of the first Christian martyrs (Acts 12:2).

<sup>16</sup> James Tabor, "A Picture Worth a Thousand Words," ([jamestabor.com](http://jamestabor.com), 4 Sept 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Dionysius Fourna, *Hermeneia* ("Painters' Manual"). Edition used here: *Manuel d'iconographie chrétienne, grecque et latine* (intro. and notes, M. Didron; trans. Dr. Paul Durand; New York: Burt Franklin, 1845), 299.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 300. James son of Alpheus is to be painted as young as well, but with a pointed beard. (*Ibid.*, 309, 317).

In contrast, according to Dionysius, James the brother of Jesus is endowed with a special title, *Adelphotheos* (brother of God), and is to be depicted as old with curly hair and a great beard.<sup>19</sup> In the East it was also traditional to present James the brother of Jesus dressed as a bishop, indicating his traditional role as first bishop of Jerusalem (Fig. 15). To return then to the James of the triptych, on the basis of what has just been said we can confidently identify him as James son of Zebedee *not* James the brother of Jesus.

This should not surprise us, since, as the title of the triptych Tabor discusses as given by the National Gallery indicates, the figure being depicted is not James the brother of Jesus but James the son of Zebedee.



And even granting that his image is closer to Eastern than Western models, so that the figure is not holding a pilgrim's staff or wearing a pilgrim's hat. Nevertheless the artist leaves us in no doubt as to the figure's intended identity by including the most important symbol for identifying James son of Zebedee, namely the scalloped shell, which we can clearly see pinned to his cloak (Fig 16).

Fig. 16: Scallop shell on the cloak of James the Great.

Apparently Tabor was not the first to confuse the James of this triptych with the brother of Jesus. The cover of Jeffery J. Bütz's book, *The Brother of Jesus and the Lost Teachings of Christianity* (2005), had as its cover art a picture based on the National Gallery triptych, again, with the scallop shell clearly visible on the shoulder of the figure on the right (Fig. 17). The back cover of Bütz's book however, unlike that of Luke Timothy Johnson, correctly identifies the figure of Saint James Major, but apparently without understanding the significance of the word *Major*,

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 309, 317.

as an indicator that is James son of Zebedee in the picture not James the brother of Jesus, i.e., James *Minor*.

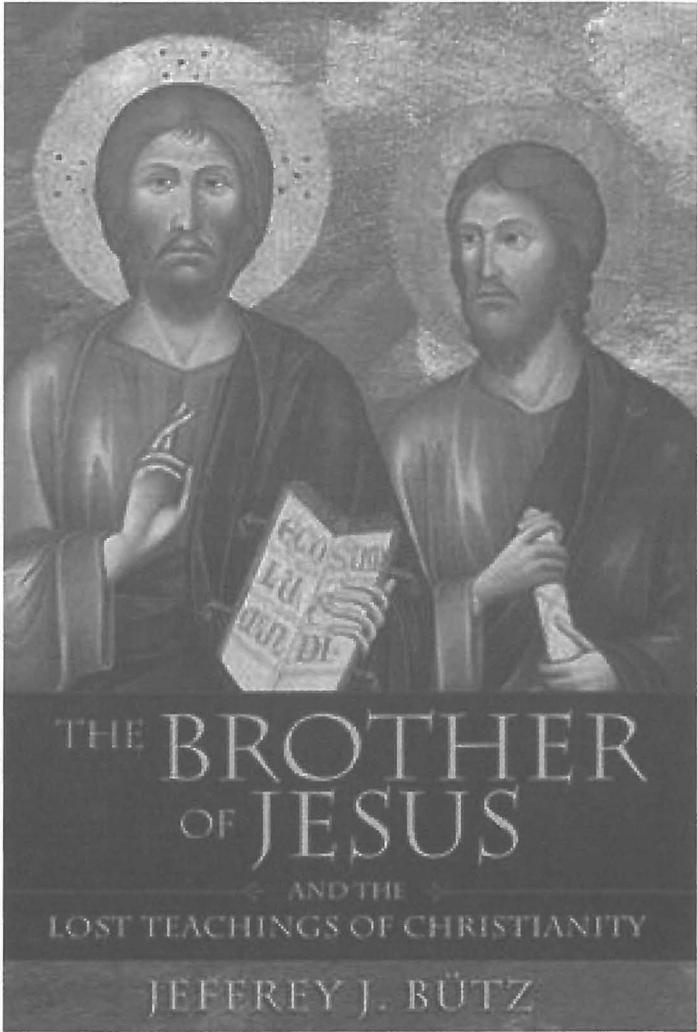


Fig. 17

*A Theological Introduction to the Pentateuch: Interpreting the Torah as Christian Scripture.* Edited by Richard S. Briggs and Joel N. Lohr. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012. 210 pp. \$22.99, paperback. ISBN: 978-0801039126.

Most studies on the Pentateuch are centered around the ever-shifting J,E,D, and P, which tends to lose sight of the theological message of the final form of the text. In contrast to this (though not departing from it completely), *A Theological Introduction to the Pentateuch: Interpreting the Torah as Christian Scripture* provides a fresh reading of the Pentateuch as a theological work. Editors Richard S. Briggs (Director of Biblical Studies and Hermeneutics at St. John's College) and Joel N. Lohr (Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University) note that their intent is to approach the text with both imagination and seriousness, with concerns "both theologically orthodox and robustly critical" (p. 4). Using critical, historical, and literary methodologies, the approach that the book seeks to utilize has as its ultimate goal the type of theological concerns that the reader would bring to the text, as well as those concerns which are held within the text itself.

In many ways, *A Theological Introduction* is an homage to Walter Moberly, and the book's methodology is built upon Moberly's in several ways (helpfully pointed out in the Appendix, which also briefly discusses several of the scholar's works on the Pentateuch). Following Moberly's example, each chapter focuses on the biblical text, especially the literary dimensions of it—most particularly in the selection of a key text to "work out larger hermeneutical issues and theological conclusions" (p. 178). Additionally, each chapter provides an outline of the book, its place in the larger canon (both Old Testament and New), and a discussion of theological themes.

Richard S. Briggs writes the chapter on Genesis. He chooses the story of the Tower of Babel as his exemplary text, and begins with a "surface level," literary reading. Briggs suggests that in the Babel story the themes of punishment and blessing come together to form a theological whole. He argues that the scattering of the nations and the confusing of the tongues should be read as a form of blessing in which "a blocking of one kind of human activity [is done] in order to channel it (via the scattering) into another. In this sense, grace operates in the creating of a life and context within which human endeavor can flourish toward God" (p. 49). This is an interesting notion, but a difficult one to fully embrace in light of the negative way in which Genesis portrays the events, and the poor showing that the "nations" have, especially in the rest of the Pentateuch.

Jo Bailey Wells, who writes the chapter on Exodus, focuses on two theological aspects of the book: holiness and priesthood. The text Wells chooses is Exodus 19:1-8 (focusing especially on verses 5-6). Wells concludes that the phrases "kingdom of priests," and "a holy nation" serve as climaxes to the speech and demonstrate the nature of the relationship that the nation of Israel was to have. According to Wells, each term "expands and intensifies" the one before it. As a result, the text insists that the nation (as a whole, not as individuals) is endowed with a special call to holiness, belonging to Yahweh and relating to the rest of the world in a unique way.

Joel N. Lohr tackles the chapter on Leviticus, which is particularly enjoyable because he addresses the bias Protestant readers have had against the book for a long time. He highlights several helpful themes, particularly those of corporate responsibility and death/life. Lohr argues (correctly) that the emphasis of Leviticus is on corporate life, not the individual, and that concerns of holiness in the book are those of holiness of the people as a whole. Lohr selects Leviticus 16 (the Day of Atonement) as his exemplar text. After examining several key issues (e.g. the scapegoat), he helpfully discusses how Christian theology of substitutionary atonement owes much to this chapter. He even goes so far as to suggest that Christians "recover the purgation ritual today" (p. 109), cautioning, though, that it should not be done "as if the Christ event has not taken place" (p. 109).

Nathan MacDonald's chapter on Numbers spends much space discussing source-critical issues related to the book. He suggests that Numbers, which he dates later than the material of Deuteronomy, was written with the intention of bridging the gap between the Pentateuch (Gen.-Lev.) and Deuteronomy in light of its place in the Second Temple Period. His text is Num. 20-21, a difficult one which MacDonald suggests contains some tensions (particularly in details of the itinerary) meant to provide a deeper reflection on the itinerary from the beginning of Deuteronomy.

Rob Barrett writes on Deuteronomy, which he believes lays the foundation of a new beginning for God's people. Theologically, Barrett finds three emphases in the book. First is loyalty to YHWH, of which he writes, "without this, Israel ceases to be Israel" (p. 150). Second is blessing and curse, which Barrett argues comes at a national level and provides the framework (blessing) for the community to live in obedience to YHWH and the mean (curse) by which they may be restored to loyalty. The third theological theme is the nature of the Law in Deuteronomy, which Barrett argues provides a model of behavior for the people rather than what could be called a law code in the Western sense. Barrett chooses two texts from Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy 8 is the first, which

he believes exhibits the theological pattern of Deuteronomy with its emphasis on loyal obedience, law, and the promise of blessing and curse. His second text is 15:1-11—which addresses the law of Release—illustrating the type of idealized life under God's blessing that the people could expect, and provides an exemplar law for them to loyally follow.

This is a book for students who are beginning to take a deeper look into the Pentateuch. The authors emphasize a close reading of the final form of the text, and their devotion to a theological interpretation helps the reader stay focused on the ultimate purpose of biblical study. Each chapter is not content with only the details of an individual book, but with linking those details to the larger theological concerns of the whole canon. While not ignoring a Jewish reading of the material, the authors are careful to place the Pentateuch in a Christian context. For books such as Leviticus and Numbers, which are often (and unfortunately) ignored by Christian readers, such a reading is instructive.

I would caution the novice to read the book critically, however, as space is devoted to discussions of source-criticism, which bogs down the chapters at times. The authors in this book accept many of the basic assumptions of source-critics, even in their critical interaction with them. Thus, while not always agreeing with historical-critical scholarship, the authors do assume such details as multiple and late (exilic to post-exilic) authorship of the Pentateuch, while still conceding that much of the material could have been early. However, these issues do not take away from this book's benefits. *A Theological Introduction to the Pentateuch* does service to the study Pentateuch and I recommend it (with the aforementioned caveats) to any reader who seeks to take the first five books of the Bible seriously as theological works with a theological message to the Christian Church.

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*A Historical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind, Readings with Commentary.* 2nd ed. By Peter A. Morton. Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2010. 704 pp. \$66.95, paperback. ISBN: 978-1-5511-1852-9.

One of the rarest finds is a book on the philosophy of mind that is suitable for beginners. So many authors seem to approach the material as if they were introducing the topic to philosophy grads. Discipline specific jargon is often ubiquitous, making the language almost impenetrable for cross-disciplinary scholars looking to investigate this subject. What we need is an author who remembers what it is like to be new to a sub-

ject, an author who can explain ideas and concepts without having to resort to philosophy-specific terminology, and an author with a sufficient enough background to be able to steer his readers through the hot-button issues of the day. I have been looking for someone like this for years who would write a book that I can use to help guide my students who are interested in supplementing their theology in this area. So you can imagine my delight when I came across Peter Morton's *A Historical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*. The book is considered a reader, but it is so much more than that.

Morton truly introduces his readers to the philosophy of mind beginning with Plato and Aristotle and moving through Descartes to Hobbes and Berkeley. Upon this foundation Morton looks to the most prominent theories of mind, compiling articles by behaviorists such as B. F. Skinner and Noam Chomsky, by mind-brain identity theorists such as U. T. Place and J. J. C. Smart, and by functionalists such as Jerry Fodor and Ned Block. This covers much of the needed introduction that non-philosophy majors will need to begin their investigations. At this point, Morton takes the lead directing his readers to the contemporary issues. He spends the bulk of the book submitting articles on a variety of subjects within philosophy of mind. Morton groups these articles under subject headings: Artificial Intelligence, Consciousness, Propositional Attitudes, Mental Content, and Mental Causation. Morton seems to have carefully chosen each article to serve as a counter-balance to the others within the subject heading.

The wise selection of materials is not the only reason this book makes for an excellent reader. Morton takes the time to include a well-crafted introduction to each chapter. The introduction is so well written that students might find it tempting to skip the historical passages all together. The other reason that this book is so good is that Morton has included contextual writings that aid the reader in grasping how the thoughts and ideas were developed over time. For example, in the chapter following the presentation of Descartes' *Meditations*, Morton includes Antoine Arnauld's objections. In the introduction to these excerpts, Morton introduces the work: "The fourth of these Objections was written by Antoine Arnauld (1612-1694), a theologian and philosopher at the Sorbonne in Paris. Arnauld's criticism of the argument for dualism in the Sixth Meditation is very useful in understanding Descartes' reasoning" (100-101). This brief introduction is followed by almost a full page analysis of Arnauld's critic of Descartes. And to follow this up, Morton wisely includes Arnauld's objections with Descartes' response. Such additions are a tremendous help for neophytes seeking to understand a cross-discipline.



As I read through the part of the book that covered contemporary issues, I was impressed at the breadth of the discussion. My personal work does **not** usually include Chomsky and Skinner, other than tangentially. But I found their inclusion fitting, especially after Morton's introduction. Following his presentation of the opposing views of Skinner and Chomsky, Morton places the debate in the philosophical context with the inclusion of articles by Gilbert Ryle and Ludwig Wittgenstein: "Criticism of theories that postulate inner mental states revealed through introspection was carried out most effectively by Gilbert Ryle and Ludwig Wittgenstein, two philosophers whose aims were different from those of the logical positivists although they originated from similar concerns. . . . In their [Ryle's and Wittgenstein's] view, a study of everyday use of language is sufficient by itself to eradicate metaphysical problems" (165). Through these two sets of scholars, Morton is able to present a balanced presentation from the behaviorist point of view.

While the contemporary issues part of the book contained some unexpected discussions, it also seemed to miss at least one issue that is almost deafening in its absence. I would have liked to see the inclusion of the work being done in the field of neuroscience. a number of works, including Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?*, (2006); Murphy and Brown, *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It?* (Oxford, 2009), Jeeves and Brown, *Neuroscience, Psychology, and Religion: Illusions, Delusions, and Realities about Human Nature* (Templeton Foundation, 2009); Jeeves, ed. *From Cells to Souls and Beyond* (Eerdmans, 2004), Brown and Banich, *Development of the Corpus Callosum and Interhemispheric Interactions* (Psychology Press, 2000); *Understanding Wisdom*, Templeton Foundation, 2000), and Moreland and Willard, *Love Your God with All Your Mind* (NavPress, 2012); *Kingdom Triangle: Recover the Christian Mind, Renovate the Soul, Restore the Spirit's Power* (Zondervan, 2007), have been advancing the discussion of philosophy of mind through their work for or against neuroscience.

The topic of neuroscience and philosophy of the mind also has made waves in theology. The New Testament scholar Joel B. Green, writing in support of neuroscience, has published a theology book entitled *Body, Soul and Human Life*, published by Baker Academic in 2008, in which he challenges John Cooper's work, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, published by Eerdmans in 2000. If Morton was looking for an area in which he could find opposing literature, the place where philosophy of mind and neuroscience collide is a veritable gold mine. I earnestly hope that the third edition of this book includes a section on the work being done at the intersection of philosophy of mind and neuroscience.

Since the omission of a debate over neuroscience likely can be attributed to the lengthy publication process, the only negative point of

criticism that I have about the book is the way the printers bound the work. Now, I can understand the desire to save money, especially on a book that is not going to make the New York Times bestsellers list, but the flimsiness of the covers makes reading the work a physical chore. The cover is so light that it could make it through your standard photocopier without causing a jam. To hold the book in your lap or in your hand makes for a wavy reading surface. Evenness of lighting and tracking along the short lines was a real problem. I am so glad that the pages were split into two columns, otherwise finding the next line would have been much worse. The only good position for reading this publication is at a desk or table. But even then the pages still had a beautiful curve to them.

Morton's work is an excellent primer on the subject of philosophy of mind. While others purport to introduce students to this area within philosophy, this author actually starts his readers off at the beginning and brings them up to speed. This is not a book for freshmen or even sophomores, but I relish the opportunity to walk through this text with my upper-classmen, those interested in exploring ideas that can enhance their theological education.

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*A Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage of the Explicit Quotations in Hebrews.* By Gert J. Steyn. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011. xiv + 458 pp. \$218.00, hardcover. ISBN 978-3-647-53099-4.

Gert Steyn's book, *A Quest For the Assumed LXX Vorlage of the Explicit Quotations in Hebrews*, identifies and addresses an area of great need in the scholarly community: identifying the text that lay behind the quotations found in the New Testament. He understands that proper interpretation of the text hinges on having some understanding of the origin and content of the *Vorlage*. His claim is that unless one has some understanding of the origin and version of these quotations, attempts to answer the question of variant readings and eventually to interpret the text, are in vain.

Steyn is very adept in his field and knows the gaps in the research, which became the resultant rationale for this study. According to Steyn, we need a comprehensive study, or comparative analysis on all of the new data that has become available, that is, new witnesses available among the DSS, LXX, and NT texts, and a comparative study on the similarities between the thought world and writings of Philo and He-

brews. These are just a few of the areas he sees as lacking in scholarship, areas which he seeks to supply in this book.

In this study, Steyn has identified 14 pairs of explicit quotations following distinct theological motifs. Some of the motifs addressed include the motif of the exalted King, the Hymn of the ‘Pioneer of Salvation,’ the motif of rest, the motif of a Royal Priest – like Melchizedek, and the motif of cultic worship/sacrifices, to name a few. It appears that the organization of the argument in Hebrews could follow these theological motifs, but a discussion about it is not conclusive. The process focuses on a thorough examination of each of these explicit quotation pairs, researching all available resources to date and exploring every variant reading. Steyn not only does the text critical work, but he also probes for answers to questions such as: What was the source of these explicit quotations? Why did he select the passages he selected? Is there any evidence of pre-existing combinations of quotations? Do these quotes indicate the possible existence of an early *testimonium*-collection? Were certain groupings of verses known in the early church? Were they parts of an early liturgy? Or was this the establishing of an early tradition? Steyn takes a scientific approach: a) collecting available evidence, b) analyzing and comparing the available evidence, c) describing the results of the comparative analysis, and d) evaluating those results with great caution in the light of the question which drives his experiment. He does the painstakingly technical work to trace possible text traditions for each passage and explores 5 hypotheses to explain the explicit quotations of Scripture in Hebrews: 1) The *testimonia* hypothesis, 2) the liturgy hypothesis, 3) the homily hypothesis, 4) the Midrash hypothesis, and 5) a different LXX *Vorlage* hypothesis. But, although the study is mainly focused on the textual form, the function of the quotations as used by the author has to be taken into consideration in order to determine a possible source. The author also addresses hermeneutical adaptation for each passage and remarks on interpretation issues, which he does in a way that is both scholarly and refreshingly evangelical.

In his conclusion, Steyn charts the relationships between motifs and quoted verses from the DSS, common quotations, or overlap and similarities in Hebrews with Philo, as well as common passages quoted in other NT books. The fact that 75% of all explicit quotations in Hebrews were also quoted in other early Jewish and Christian literature is significant. This opens the door for a whole new area of research ... yet another “gap” in the scholarship he has identified. His findings are displayed in charts, making the relationship between different sources clear. His treatment of the new evidence, along with suggestions for a revision of the eclectic text both of the LXX and the NT, is extremely thought provoking. Although the NT text is updated regularly (there is already new

manuscript evidence that has not been included in the NTG27 text critical apparatus), the LXX (Rahlfs) eclectic text has not been updated since 1935. This book underscores the need to have all textual evidence logged and made available, if not in an eclectic text, then online where other scholars can access it. Steyn's charts on the variant readings in both the LXX and the NT are extremely informative, and invaluable for text critical work in Hebrews.

In this book, Steyn proposed to "*attempt to address (at least some of) these gaps in the research by investigating the unresolved matter of the origin(s) and version(s) of the Vorlage(n) that were utilized for the explicit quotations in Ad Hebraeos*" (p. 18). I believe he accomplishes this goal, and more. Gert Steyn has given us, not only a very useful tool for scholarly NT/LXX studies, but he's given us a map to follow in the process.

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***The Moral world of James: Setting the Epistle in its Greco-Roman and Judaic Environments.* By James Riley Strange. New York: Peter Lang, 2010. 237 pp. \$88.95, hardcover. ISBN-13: 978-1433108815.**

The coherent message and theme, or possible lack thereof, in the epistle of James has become a topic for much research in the last several decades. The results have been varied. But more than once it has been suggested that the epistle of James finds coherency in its emphasis on community behavior. Dr. James Riley Strange has built this assessment of James's epistle around this theme of community behavior. Dr. Strange's work is a revision of his 2007 Ph.D. dissertation, completed at Emory University,

The primary thesis of this book is that the moral system of James's community is comparable, in many ways to those systems held by other communities of the ancient Greco-Roman and Judaic worlds. Strange builds his discussion on an exposition of James 5:13-20 in which he finds four particular moral/religious acts (prayer, healing, confession and correction). These acts all have implications for community health and solidarity, and provide categories for comparison with the texts of other ancient communities. By comparing James with other similar texts, Strange attempts to show his reader not only the similarities in James but also James's distinct emphasis on community formation and survival, and the distinct religious and moral system that James proposes for such communities.

In the first part of his book Strange demonstrates James's concern for community solidarity and maintenance, particularly in James 5:13-20, but also in the entire letter. Sin, repentance, healing and salvation, are all related to James's concern for community solidarity. The sins that James addresses are those that occur within the community and threaten its solidarity. Sickness is related to those sins. Confession, correction and healing are all restorative not only for the individual but also for the community. Morality in James is also community oriented. This thesis is worked out throughout the book.

In the remaining chapters of this book, Strange compares the epistle to particular texts or groups of texts on the basis of the four diagnostic categories of prayer, healing, confession and correction. Part of his aim is to answer which of these moral/religious acts are done by whom in the communities that produced the ancient texts and how they relate to the community.

Part two of the book examines morals and religion in the Greco-Roman world in the centuries that make up the historical context for understanding James, and compares certain religious and moral texts of that world to the text of James. Strange examines works by three Greek writers, Plato, Plutarch, and Epictetus, and compares these works to the epistle of James on the basis of the aforementioned and other categories that accord with James. These works find particular affinities with the epistle of James in their concerns for prayer, purity, confession and correction but they do not appropriate these concerns to community solidarity as James does.

Strange examines ancient Greek magic papyri and particular inscriptions from the healing cult of Asklepios. These inscriptions and papyri demonstrate a belief in the ability of supernatural forces to act on behalf of individuals who properly petition them. James demonstrates a similar belief in his call for petitionary prayer on behalf of the sick. But the Greek inscriptions and papyri lack the positive moral character of James's petitionary prayer, as they allow for the invocation of the gods for the harm as well as the help of others. He also examines inscriptions from Asia minor that connect with James' category of confession of sins. However, these inscriptions reflect the religious practices of the individual without respect to the community concerns demonstrated in James.

Two chapters in part three establish the Judaic background for the epistle of James by comparing the epistle with moral/religious writings from Judaism. In chapter 5, the author looks at four Jewish text traditions for connections with James in the categories of prayer and healing. Again, James emerges in this context in some ways as similar, and in others as quite distinct. Chapter 6 compares James's epistle to the Qumran community instruction scroll 1QS. Both documents concern prayer,

characterization), Walsh discusses the way biblical narrative shows its characters through his actions and mediation through another character's behavior. At the end of this chapter, Walsh presents such exercises as, "Find examples where the narrator *tells* us about Jeroboam" (p. 39), and "Identify (in the Elijah story) three places where, in your opinion, a character reveals something significant about him- or herself through *speech*" (p. 40).

By continually pointing the reader back to the same three passages, and by using those passages as ways for readers to interact with the material they are learning in an actual text, *Old Testament Narrative* places itself in an excellent position as an introductory textbook. While Walsh's book may not be groundbreaking (along the lines of Alter or Berlin) its simple delivery does set it apart. The chapters are short, and do not get bogged down in numbing technicalities. Such brevity keeps the reader focused on the essentials and makes the end exercises manageable and effective. Further, Walsh helpfully provides three appendices where he discusses the answers to each of the chapter questions. This allows the student to "check his work," though Walsh is careful to point out that his answers are not necessarily the only correct ones.

This leads to one of the significant problems I had with the book. As with many modern hermeneutics, Walsh's approach is steeped in a reader-oriented hermeneutic that detracts from the authoritative nature that most Evangelicals recognize in the biblical text. For Walsh, the reader should be open to the way the author is trying to evoke a reaction from him (which is good), but at the same time take responsibility to construct the meaning of the text himself (which is not). Thus this line in his chapter on the responsibility of the reader: "the text holds the potential for many meanings and that every individual reading of a given text is likely to actualize a slightly different reading" (p. 128). While Walsh does not deny that a text can be misread (or poorly read), he does wish to stay away from labels such as "right" or "wrong," preferring instead "more or less well-founded" (p. 128). Additionally, Walsh's reading does not necessarily care whether the text is portraying actual, historical events. For him, the elements of the narrative are important—true or not. Most Evangelicals would have a problem with that, especially since much of the narrative of the Bible portrays itself as actual events, from which much of its authority is derived.

Such concerns go part and parcel with most studies on poetics, so we should ultimately judge the strength of the book on the way in which it fulfills its purpose. Walsh's goal is to provide an introduction to narrative study of the Old Testament, and the book does this. While he produces nothing new to the discipline, he does provide a helpful and well-mapped-out journey that students will find beneficial. As an instructive

tool, Walsh's approach is much needed. I recommend this book to all students of the biblical text who wish to come to grips with the narrative art of the Old Testament.

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