

MIDWESTERN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

FALL 2014 (Vol. 13/ No. 2)

CONTENTS

Editorials iv

THEME: Challenge in 21st Century Life and Ministry

ARTICLES

Ready to Preach
JASON K. ALLEN 1-19

Ready to Shepherd
JARED C. WILSON 20-35

Ann H. Judson:
An Unpublished Letter
MICHAEL D. McMULLEN 36-41

Scripture Memorization:
Once More
RADU GHEORGHITA 42-69

Comparing Luther's *Enflamed Dialogue*
with Tyndale's *Prayer of the Sinner*
THOMAS P. JOHNSTON 70-80

BOOK REVIEWS

Stanley E. Porter, *How We Got the New Testament:
Text, Transmission, Translation* (2013)
(Reviewed by Todd Chipman) 82-84

P. Vang and T.G. Carter, *Telling God's Story:
The Biblical Narrative from Beginning to End.*
2nd ed. (2013)
(Reviewed by Aaron C. Fenlason) 84-88

- J.C. Laansma and D.J. Treier, *Christology, Hermeneutics and Hebrews: Profiles from the History of Interpretation* (2012)
(Reviewed by Radu Gheorghita) 88-92
- Kevin B. McCrudden, *A Body You Have Prepared for Me: The Spirituality of the Letter to the Hebrews* (2013)
(Reviewed by Matt Kimbrough) 93-95
- James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible* (2012)
(Reviewed by Eric R. Montgomery) 95-98
- Marianus P. Hera, *Christology and Discipleship in John 17* (2013)
(Reviewed by Kyle Quinn) 98-101
- Christopher Tuckett, *2 Clement: Introduction, Text, and Commentary* (2012)
(Reviewed by Brian Renshaw) 102-04
- M. Barrett and A. Caneday, *Four Views on the Historical Adam* (2013)
(Reviewed by Brandon D. Smith) 104-07

MIDWESTERN SEMINARY

Introducing the new

PhD Concentration in Historical Theology



Study the early church, reformation, modern era, and Baptist tradition with leading historical theologians:

DR. JASON DUESING
DR. CHRISTIAN GEORGE

DR. JOHN MARK YEATS
DR. MICHAEL MCMULLEN

APPLY TODAY:
mbts.edu/apply



EXECUTIVE EDITORIAL:

Since 2003, the *Midwestern Journal of Theology* has served to provide high quality scholarship for the purpose of equipping and informing church leaders of current trends in theological studies as well as insightful reviews of significant books. The secret to a quality and relevant journal always lies in who is selected to undertake the thankless role of managing editor. *Midwestern Seminary's* journal has achieved its current status thanks to the labors of its previous top-notch managing editors, and that is why I am pleased to announce the responsibility now falls to Dr. Michael D. McMullen.

Dr. McMullen has served at *Midwestern Seminary* since 1998, and his own scholarship and publications are marked by his skill as an editor. His vision for the future of the journal is one I think readers will treasure, especially as he brings his gifts to bear in tailoring every aspect of the journal to compliment the broader vision of *Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary & College* as existing for the Church. Please join me in welcoming Dr. McMullen to this new role, and thank you for reading the *Midwestern Journal of Theology*.

Dr. Jason K. Allen

EDITORIAL:

Welcome to the Fall 2014 issue of the *Midwestern Journal of Theology*, with the theme of Challenge in 21st Century Life and Ministry. As the newly appointed Journal Editor, I would like to begin with a brief word of thanks. The Journal here at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary is very much a collaborative effort, and much work goes on behind the scenes to bring each issue to production, this present volume being no exception. My sincere thanks then, go to each and every person who has given so sacrificially of their time and talents on this present issue.

We begin this issue, with two Presentations that were given at the recent inaugural, 'For the Church' Conference, held here at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The first by Midwestern's own President, Dr. Jason K. Allen, is a vitally necessary challenge to assess one's readiness to Preach, drawn from 2 Timothy 2:4. We then also have Midwestern's newly appointed Jared C. Wilson's challenge using 1 Corinthians 1:26-2:5, on being ready to Shepherd. The Editor then includes what is believed to be, a previously unpublished Letter from the Baptist missionary, Ann H. Judson, together with a brief sketch of her life, trials and labors, reminding us of the challenges we are all called to face. There then follows Dr. Radu Gheorgita's plea to the Church, to 'taste and see' the fruit that the discipline of the memorization of Scripture will bring forth in one's life and ministry today. We conclude this issue, with Dr. Tom Johnston's call to assess our devotional lives, in the light of very challenging words from Martin Luther and William Tyndale.

The volume concludes as always, with several relevant and thought provoking scholarly book reviews.

READY TO PREACH

2 Timothy 2:4

JASON K. ALLEN

President

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Kansas City, MO 64118

Turn with me in your Bibles to 2 Timothy 4. As you are turning, I want to add my word of greeting to you. Thank you for being here. This is a conference *for the Church*; we are a seminary that exists *for the Church*; I am a man that lives my life, to the best of my ability, for the Lord Jesus Christ and *for the Church*. It is a special thing to gather for the first *For the Church* Conference. I was asked to speak on “Ready to Preach.” For those in the room who are preachers, you know we typically pick texts, but on occasion, a text picks us. I feel that way tonight as we look to God’s Word.

I am going to be preaching especially from 2 Tim 4:2, but in many ways, we will look in and out of two full chapters - 3 and 4 - as we consider this topic. “Preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction” (2 Tim 4:2).

Readiness is a concept to consider, an achievement to pursue, a state of being to seek to maintain. Who among us, after all, would be content in any arena of life to be counted unready? To not be ready, or even appear unready, can derail you in virtually any area of life. As I was thinking about this passage and topic in recent weeks, my mind went back to the 2008 presidential election when the whole idea of readiness became a focal point. You may recall, after eight years of the Bush administration, the nation seemed ready to transition leadership from Republican to Democratic. Political pundits predicted that Hillary Clinton, the former first lady and senator from New York, would stroll to the Democratic nomination and waltz into the White House. Early, the

Democrats were so certain of Hillary's rise to the nomination that observers anticipated the primary season being less a contest than a coronation. Nonetheless, a challenger emerged. He was a first-term, junior senator from Illinois; a political novice with an unusual name, Barack Hussein Obama.

Few took him seriously at first, but Obama proved to be a worthy opponent. The young senator from Chicago stormed through the primaries, built momentum, and seized the nation's imagination until, finally, Clinton went for the nuclear option, quite literally. She released a series of TV advertisements known as the "3 a.m. ads." You may recall them. The ads featured a ringing phone in the middle of the night; visuals of children sleeping in bed with the haunting voice wondering who would be equipped in the White House when the phone rang at 3 a.m. to answer that phone when there was a crisis. As parents, who do you want in the White House when that phone rings to deal with an international crisis, a nuclear incident, terrorist threat, or some other ominous development? While your child slept in the middle of the night, who would you like to deal with this? The message was clear—it was no time for amateur hour in the White House. The next commander in chief must be ready for the office. The ads, however, proved incapable of stopping the wave of support for Obama. Yet, our responsibility is far greater than those who would occupy the White House. Our pastoral office, we believe with full conviction, is more consequential than the Oval Office.

The call to lead the church is higher than the call to lead the nation, and to please the One we serve is more urgent than pleasing the electorate. We must be ready. In fact, readiness is a constant pursuit; you never quite attain it. You seek it throughout your life in ministry week-in and week-out, Lord's Day after Lord's Day.

This idea is front and center in 2 Tim 4:2, and it is front and center in Christian ministry. It is a particular, specific, inspired exhortation. It is a distinguishing mark of a qualified minister—one who is ready to preach. In thinking about the call to be ready—the theme of this conference, and this direct injunction from Paul to us—we confess it lacks a little zip, flare, and panache. It just is not sexy. Ministry in the 21st century so often tells us we should aspire for so much more than being ready. Frankly, it does not register with our priorities. The church's value system in the 21st century seems placed in other areas than readiness.

You would almost think the verse would say “be skilled” as opposed to “be ready.” Be skilled—refine your gifts of communication, strengthen your delivery, sharpen your wit, polish your presentation, spit-shine your sermon outline. Or perhaps it should say, “be networked.” After all, you would almost think Paul was unqualified to speak to us in that he has no Twitter followers nor a Facebook fan page. At this point, he certainly has a diminished rolodex. Or, perhaps the call in verse two should say “to be well-positioned.” We all know those whose gifts have taken them to places that their character has not kept them—the position to which so many aspire, but, tragically, for which so many are not ready. Perhaps we would think it should say to “be platformed,” to have a microphone on social media or a web presence that affords you an opportunity to be known. Perhaps Paul should be saying to “be credentialed.” Theological education has never been more accessible. Anyone anywhere can get a degree, and we are grateful for that. I, after all, lead an institution that is given to that. Yet, one can have degrees, credentials, appropriate résumés, and an impressive CV, but not be ready.

In the context of this passage that rolls with anticipation and concern over faithful ministry and how to preach the Word, Paul stubbornly and directly challenges Timothy to “be ready.” This injunction comes with added momentum because of its context. These are the dying words of a dying man, given to a delinquent son in the faith in the context of a church that is straying. These are his final words. This is Paul’s final letter, and he knows death is near. In 2 Tim 4:6 he says, “I am being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.” Empire-wide persecution of Christians is underway, and this has accelerated mass defections from the church. Apostasy and disavowal of the faith are common. Timothy is vacillating; he is equivocating; he is in need of strength and personal fortification. But Paul writes to him, and he challenges him about ministry. He says, “You preach; you be ready.”

More personally, all of us in the room who preach, have preached, or aspire to preach identify with this book and passage. It captivates us. There is a certain romance to the call to preach that brings us back to these verses again, and again, and again, with a magnetic pull. It is as though we know Paul was speaking to Timothy and the church, but we can read it as though he was speaking directly to us. These are Paul’s

words to Timothy and to the church, and in a real way to us, he says, “be ready.”

The Three Marks of the Gospel Minister’s Irreducible Task

Indeed, there is much for which Paul could urge Timothy to be ready. After all, there is so much a minister is to do, so much he is to undertake, and so much he is to do well. But the irreducible task of the minister of the gospel is to preach the Word. Therefore, it is unsurprising that preaching the Word is coupled here with the call to readiness. Paul says, “You teach the Word, *be ready* in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort with great patience, and instruction.”

The phrase, “be ready” comes to us in a unique formation. It is a command that means “to be standing by or be equipped.” It is not only “to be prepared or equipped,” but also “to be poised, alert, and eager for the responsibility.” John Stott said it appears to take on the flavor not only of alertness and eagerness, but of insistence and urgency. Fundamentally, readiness is coupled with preaching the Word.

“Preach the Word.” This simple, direct admonition that is echoed throughout the history of the church no matter the season, era, continent, receptivity to or rejection of it stands as a timeless charge to preach the Word. This means to herald, to lift up one’s voice, to proclaim, to speak it loudly, boldly, without fear, and to make it known. I love how Paul says, “Preach the Word.” There is no need to clarify whose word, which word, or what word. He says simply, “Preach the Word.”

Much has been said of this passage, and much could be said, but I want to think together around three charges, or marks, of what it means to be ready to preach the Word. We will bob and weave within chapters 3 and 4 because so much is here, but all of this will be rooted and derived from 2 Tim 4:2. My argument is quite simply this—there are three non-negotiable marks of being ready to preach in this verse and throughout this passage: biblical conviction, personal courage, and pastoral care.

Mark One: Biblical Conviction

Mark one of being ready to preach is being a man of biblical conviction. This is set forth clearly when he says, “Preach the Word.” It is as though it says, “What else could we preach?” or “How could we contemplate preaching anything else?”

The premise to preach the Word is built upon the entire canon of Scripture and is fleshed out throughout this book. Look, for instance, at chapter 1. Let your eyes follow throughout this book.

- 2 Timothy 1:13: “Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”
- 2 Timothy 2:15: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”
- 2 Timothy 2:25: “The Lord’s bondservant is to gently correct those who oppose, hoping God to grant them repentance so they may come to the knowledge of the truth.”
- 2 Timothy 3:10: “You followed my teaching.”
- 2 Timothy 3:14: “Continue in the things you have learned from me and become convinced of.”
- 2 Timothy 4:3: “They will not endure sound doctrine.”
- 2 Timothy 4:4: “They will turn away their ears from the truth.”
- 2 Timothy 4:7: “I have kept the faith.”

The immediate context, prior to the call to preach the Word, contains one of the most majestic, informative, compelling statements in all the Bible about the Scriptures. Paul’s command to preach the Word is built upon the logic of the authority and power of the Word as revealed in 1:15–17. He says,

From childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

These few verses form the foundation for Paul's statement in 4:2. It is a clear statement about Scripture that it is indeed inspired from God, from his innermost being.

We formulate from this the conviction of Scripture's verbal-plenary inspiration—that all of it is inspired, and not just all of it in thought, but all of it in word. The words themselves are inspired. Paul says, "Look, all Scripture is given of God. It is inspired by God, and it is profitable for something; for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be mature and maturing, equipped for every good work." The Bible is not a condiment that flavors our sermons. The Bible is the sole source, the foundation, and the content of our sermons. We are called to be ready to preach. If you are not convinced of Scripture—its truthfulness, authority, relevance, and power—you will be disinclined to preach the Word. You may look to it for sermon points because that is what evangelical preachers are to do, but you will never let the Word be your sermon's focus.

Brothers and sisters, I come to you as a man with a great burden because I watch preachers as you do, listen to preaching as you do, and read books on preaching as you do. What we are insisting upon at this seminary and from this text is a commitment to preaching the Bible that is unpopular in the broader Evangelical Movement. It may receive lip service, but actually doing it with discipline, intentionality, rigor, and faithfulness, is, unfortunately, uncommon. Paul says, "Preach the Word." You must be ready, and to be ready to preach, you must be a person of biblical conviction. That means your sermons come from the Scripture.

When I read things people write, I try to do so charitably, but recently a series of articles sent me to a book written by Andy Stanley, *Deep and Wide*.¹ In that book and in other venues, Stanley argues that preachers should stop saying, "The Bible says." He argues that phrases like, "The Bible says," assume a person is a Christian because only a Christian takes the Old and New Testament as authoritative. So, if I am going to preach to people who are not Christians, I have to leverage a different point of authority if I am going to expect them to track along with me. That is 1,000 times wrong. The point is not that we are making assumptions about our hearers; the point is that we are standing upon

¹ Andy Stanley, *Deep and Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012).

presuppositions about God's Word. We preach the Bible. It is authoritative. It is a hammer that breaks the rock. It is words of life that resurrect the dead. The Bible is more than a resource book. We are not doctors who learn medicine along the way and then can treat people without referring back directly to our books of study. We are ministers of the Word and to be ready to preach is to preach with biblical conviction.

I remember like yesterday the first sermon I ever preached, though I have been trying since the day after that to forget it. Some of you know what I am talking about. If you do not know what I am talking about, it is either because you have never preached, or you are too arrogant to think rightly and accurately about that first sermon. I was a college athlete, and as a college athlete who is a Christian, I found myself getting to share my testimony in places. Our church had some men who went to do a Sunday afternoon Bible study at a halfway house for ladies. There were 40–50 ladies there who had experienced some hardship, perhaps some abuse they were seeking to overcome. Some kind of difficulty in life had them there. I was asked on a Sunday to preach the next Sunday. I had never prepared a sermon in my life. No one had ever told me how to prepare a sermon. I had no idea how to prepare a sermon. It seemed like such a great invitation, so I accepted it with eagerness.

As the week began ticking through and Monday became Tuesday, and Tuesday became Wednesday, and I started barreling toward Sunday, I was fraught with panic over how to prepare a sermon. I still remember sitting down in my dorm room and taking out a legal pad to prepare a sermon. I didn't know what to do, so I just wrote down some of my favorite Bible verses. I then wrote down all of the preacher jargon that I could recall. Finally, I sprinkled in a few stories and a couple of illustrations, and I showed up to preach.

I preached this sermon and in my mind I had gamed it out to take 25 or 30 minutes, and I was done in about eight or nine minutes. I didn't know what to do, so I just re-preached it without sitting down. At the end of the sermon, I gave an invitation and six or seven ladies came to the front to receive Christ. I was smitten. I had never been so exhilarated in all my life. I was riding in the car back to the church with the guy who normally led the services. He said, "You did such a great job." I said, "Thank you. Honestly, I was blown away by their response." He said, "Didn't that make you feel great when those ladies came forward?" I said,

“You kidding? Absolutely.” He said, “Those same ladies come forward every Sunday for me.”

I say that not to just get a laugh, but once I learned, in the months that would follow, what a sermon is to be and how one is to make a sermon, it was the most liberating news of my life. I didn’t have to rack my brain for preacher jargon or rifle through illustration books. Instead, I could look to a passage and explain it. It was absolutely liberating to me that I could do that and please the One who evidently was calling me.

Biblical conviction is the first mark of being ready to preach—biblical conviction about what the Bible is, but also about what we are to do with it. Here is the point: there is a correlation between biblical conviction and biblical preaching. It is hard to have a high view of Scripture without a high view of biblical preaching. Biblical preaching does not grow on the vine of a low view of Scripture. Why preach the Word? I realize this isn’t a preaching workshop, but let me just present you quickly with a few reasons why I am convinced of biblical preaching.

The most obvious reason, first of all, is that it most fulfills the biblical commands regarding biblical preaching. Think of 2 Timothy 4:2 and 1 Timothy 4:13–16. Prescriptively and descriptively throughout the Bible, especially the book of Acts, we see repeatedly a model set forth for preaching—that is to preach the Word. Second, biblical preaching—expositional preaching—most honors the authority and the status of preaching. It gives people a certain word. When someone asks you, “What’s your sermon on?” Your first reflexive answer should be a text, not a title. Third, it gives an authority to the sermon. It gives the sermon a “Thus sayeth the Lord” ring. If you’re not bringing the text to bear, you are doing little more than pulling rank. Fourth, it gives weight and gravity to ministry. It brings seriousness to the pulpit while making the sermon’s content objective.

Fifth, biblical preaching most matures your congregation. There will be a trickle-down effect from the pulpit to the pew that causes your church to mature. Moreover, your pulpit will become a beacon in the city, drawing mature believers who move to town and want to be fed and be a part of a mature congregation. Sixth, it demonstrates how to study the Bible. It is no compliment when your church members often ask, “Wow, where did you get that from?” They should be able to see the root of your application. A part of preaching the Scriptures is we demystify the

preaching act and the sermon preparation act, thus educating our people on how to study the Bible.

Seventh, it assures relevance. Though counterintuitive, there is an inverse correlation between biblical relevance and attempted cultural relevance. Nothing dates a sermon like being chock full of pop-cultural references. Eighth, biblical preaching most consistently reveals Christ and a robust gospel message. As you preach the text, you're pointing people to Christ. You're not merely bringing trite or overly simplified gospel presentations; rather, you're preaching a full gospel message and thus producing sound, true conversions. Ninth, it most matures me as a man of God. Discipline in the Word forces me to address difficult passages. Pastoral tenure happens most often in the setting of biblical exposition because you do not have time to update your résumé. You're too busy trying to figure out what Paul meant in the next verses.

Tenth, biblical preaching gives me confidence in my sermon because I have authority that is not my own, but that is derived from Scripture. Eleventh, it most optimally stewards my time. I don't have to spend all my days trying to figure out what to preach on because I just go to the next passage. Twelfth, it ensures balance in the pulpit and prevents hobby-horse preaching.

Are you ready to preach? The person who is ready to preach is the person whose veins pulsate with biblical conviction about what the Bible is and conviction about what to do with it. Mark number one of the man who is ready to preach, for the woman who is ready to teach, is biblical conviction.

Mark Two: Personal Courage

I love the way verse 2 encapsulates personal courage, but the concept flows throughout this book and especially chapters 3 and 4. Recall the backdrop of the book that I referenced previously. Timothy, a young man who is probably in his early 30s, is clearly discouraged and second-guessing himself, so Paul is writing in a prophetic, apostolic way and in essence saying, "Buck up." He is challenging him. He is exhorting him to do this. He is reminding him of his rootedness in Scripture, his call to stand on Scripture, and to preach the Scripture. Then, he moves into how to preach the Scripture and bring it to bear.

First, it is imbedded in the word “preach.” As I have already referenced, to preach means “to herald or to proclaim, to speak intensely.” It comes with a force that presupposes courage. It is not so much the modulation of one’s voice, but the force of the words because of a conviction about that which you speak. Listen closely, preaching is more than a data dump. The central liability of many expositional sermons is just that. It is a rambling commentary that drops data on people, and preachers cannot figure out why people are getting bored. We are to present the text with force, probing, pushing, and prodding our listeners. To preach the Bible is more than a data dump. It is more than transmitting what you read in the commentaries to your people that week. It is to take it and apply it with a “Thus sayeth the Lord” charge.

A number of years ago I took my wife to Chicago for our anniversary. We spent the weekend there. We love Chicago, and when we have the chance to go for a couple days we do. While there, we signed up to take an architectural boat tour. Some of you have done that before. It is an incredible thing to do. It is like a double decker bus tour, except it is a little more romantic because you are on the water and a little less cheesy because people are not gawking at you as you sit at red lights. You are there in the boat, going through a city on the water. It is fascinating. The guide on the microphone will tell you that you are going by the Merchandise Mart building, and how it was built in the 20s. Before the Pentagon, it was the largest building in the U.S. The Kennedy family owned it for years, and they sold it along with some other properties and made \$625 million. You will go by the Sears Tower, and he will tell you about that. You are going through the city by water, and the guide is telling you about every river, every building, the architectural rendering and style, the skyline, and you end it with all of this data about the city.

Often I hear preaching like that. It is merely cruising through the passage, giving a little historical background, a contextual statement here, a little word study there, and an “exegetical fallacy” there, to quote D.A. Carson, and mixing it all in. You leave there saying, “Hmm, that was enlightening.” Preaching should never be less than a Bible study, but it should always be more than a Bible study. It is more than a boat tour or an architectural assessment of the passage. We are doing more than revealing artifacts; we are bringing it to bear.

Notice again how this comes to us. Chapter 3 and 4 necessitate this. Look 2 Tim. 3:1–7,

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

You say, “Oh my, wasn’t the world a mess then.” Yes, but this, I believe, is first and foremost a reference to the church, or at least those who were meeting under the auspices of the church. It is a commentary on the state of the religious.

Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes’s and Jambres’s folly was also. Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! (2 Tim. 3:8–11)

What is going on here? Paul is reminding Timothy of how devastatingly ruinous the culture and the church was and is. Verse-after-verse in chapter 3, we see the cascading effects of the fall. All of this is going wrong. He punctuates it with verse 12: “All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” Then, notice 2 Tim. 4:3–4,

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will

turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

What is going on here? Sandwiched within the documentary of all the decay, compromise, and junk that was taking place in the first century church and culture is a silver bullet to combat it with a preached Word—a preaching that is rich in biblical content and that comes with full-throttled force. Now, to make that point even clearer, and to add emphasis, 4:1 sets the context. Paul says, “I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom.” Paul is saying, “In spite of all of the decay and ruin, you must do something, and I remind you—before I give you the charge to do it in verse 2—in whose presence I charge you, and it is King Jesus.” He frames this by a reminder of Jesus as the soon-coming Judge who is coming to establish his kingdom. Preach the Word with courage. Do something with it. Notice, you reprove, rebuke, and exhort. When do you do that? In season and out of season.

Typically when you hear verse 2 preached, you hear people say that it refers to whether or not the crowd, church, or culture is receptive. Sometimes it will be more in season and sometimes it will be less in season. The point is that it is always either in season or out of season, so always preach the Word. That is not a poor rendering, but I think it is an incomplete one. I think what Paul is getting at in verse 2 is not so much whether it is in season or out of season with his hearers, but whether or not it is in season or out of season with his own soul, with his own heart. He is to preach the Word whether or not he is bouncing into the pulpit and ready to preach with zeal or if he is shirking, tired, complacent, discouraged, weak, down, fatigued, compromised, and befuddled. He is saying, “Have courage, Timothy.” He is saying to us, “Have courage in season and out of season, whether they receive it or not, and whether you are ready to give it or not.” There are certain times the athlete just has to play through his slump, and there are certain times the preacher just has to preach his way out of a funk.

Notice what Paul says. It is here we get our marks of courage: “You reprove, you rebuke, you exhort.” I love those words. To reprove is a negative. It is a corrective word. In 2 Tim. 3:16, Paul mentioned that reproof is what the Scripture does. It carries the idea of challenging

errant thinking and false doctrine. Reprove in your preaching. We are not to be jerks. We do not go around trashing people every Sunday, but if people will speak to your church as they do to the television screen and the publications and all the rest that are clamoring for the attention of your congregates, have the courage to reprove that garbage when it seeps into your congregation. Rebuke is a reference to the heart. It is to bring a person under the conviction of sin. John MacArthur wrote, “[to reprove] discloses the sinfulness of sin. Whereas, [rebuking] discloses the sinfulness of the sinner.”² Paul also says, “Exhort”—come alongside of and encourage. You see, there is an industry, creativity, power, and effort to preaching to where we are bringing the text to bear over and over, so that folks know when they leave someone has spoken to them.

Someone has described contemporary preaching as, “Mild-mannered men standing before mild-mannered people, imploring them to be more mild-mannered.” That is not Paul’s way and that best not be ours.

In December 2012, I preached commencement in the old chapel at Midwestern Seminary, and I made an old throw-away line about preaching and going with courage. I challenged our graduates not to pursue a safe ministry. I said, “Toss your résumé to the wind, grab a six-pack of Red Bull, and preach with courage and zeal.” I received a letter in the mail a few weeks later from a little old lady rebuking me for encouraging our graduates to drink alcohol. I wrote her back and kindly instructed her that Red Bull is non-alcoholic; it is caffeinated. The point that I made with levity is this, just do something. Churches are dying on the vine not from preachers being too energetic, zealous, or forceful. They are dying on the vine from people stumbling into pulpits and giving a 30-minute apology. Think about the greats of church history. They did something with the text. Luther, Calvin, Bunyan, Whitefield, Edwards, and Spurgeon—they brought it to bear. They did not apologize for it or stumble through it. They showed up like a prophet of old and brought it near.

For those in the seminary community, I mentioned the other day a road trip that I took our family on this summer. We left Kansas City and were gone for over a month for seminary travel and some personal

² John MacArthur, *1 and 2 Timothy* (MacArthur New Testament Commentaries; Chicago: Moody, 1995), 177.

vacation. We traveled for 6,300 miles—seven people, two adults, five kids, one suburban for over five weeks. People asked me if I preached on the trip and I say, “I didn’t, but I yelled a lot with five kids in the car. That is sort of like preaching.” I took them to show them a lot of different places in church history.

My favorite stop was at the grave of Whitefield in Newburyport, Mass., where he is buried beneath the pulpit in the Old South Church. It is so gripping to be there and to see this man who shook two continents preaching the gospel with courage; who would preach in fields while people hurled rocks, tomatoes, and dead animals at him; who would preach to crowds outside of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia that would outnumber the total populations of those respective cities. He would preach with such force and courage that people would often cry out—literally moaning—gripped with conviction by the force of his sermons. Now, he is buried under a pulpit, some 250 years later after shaking two continents for the gospel and the cause of Christ by preaching with such boldness.

I finagled my family in to see this church, which is a massive structure. Whitefield helped found the church that is larger than this chapel. It has a massive balcony and as so often is the case, only about 30 people now gather in it. The church is unfortunately marked by liberalism now. His grave was left open until the 1920s, about 170 years after he died because people so wanted to see him that they begged them not to cover the tomb so they could go look at him when nothing was there but a skeleton. Finally, in the 1920s the health department insisted they close it. In the 1770s, in the context of the American Revolution, Benedict Arnold came with his officers to worship at the Old South Church, and they knew that Whitefield was buried underneath. They went down into the crypt, which had some kind of closure on it then, and they forced it open and ripped off pieces of his clothing so they could pin them as talismans to their jackets, seeking good will and divine blessing on their military endeavors. His thumb was stolen and taken back to Europe, as was his forearm.

Nothing has happened in this church for over 200 years, but I will tell you what does happen. I asked the minister and people there, “Do many people do what I am doing?” He replied, “We get tour busses coming through. Daily people come and beat on the doors of this old church and say, ‘Show us where that man Whitefield is buried.’” I will tell

you why. It is because that man preached with courage. No one is driving across the country today to look at the grave of some mild-mannered man who did nothing but bumble through life and ministry. Mark your life and set yourself to preach with courage, to be ready to preach with courage.

Mark Three: Pastoral Care

The third mark of being ready to preach is pastoral care—biblical conviction, personal courage, and pastoral care. I love the end of verse 2, “You do this with great patience and instruction.” You say, “Are you invalidating what you have been saying for the last 20 minutes?” No, I am not, because you can preach a sermon that is full of conviction, but drips with love for a congregation. I know you can do it because I heard one yesterday. You do not have to be abrasive; you do not have to be a jerk. But, with humbleness and forcefulness, you can bring the text to bear into the lives of your people and do so—I love these two words—with patience and instruction. Why patience? Because you are preaching to people, after all. People are not an irritant to your ministry; they are your ministry. People are not a disruption to your ministry; they are your ministry. You do so with patience because you know your own fallenness. You know from whence you have come. You have read the book; you know your soul; and you know that you, like them, stand in the need of grace—do so with patience and instruction. The point here is that you keep teaching, keep preaching, and keep bringing the text to bear. That is what we do and who we are. The man who is ready to preach is not ready to preach one sermon. He is ready to do it again, and again, and again, and again. It is what we do. I am reminded of Paul’s words in 1 Thess. 2:1–6, where he speaks of these things and his love for the believers at Thessalonica.

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain, but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; but just as we have been

approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts. For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness—nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.

Now listen closely.

But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.

For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. (1 Thess. 2:7–12)

A funny thing happens when a person leads and pastors a church. It is a sweet thing to see how their passions become yours. I remember the first church I went to pastor over a decade ago. My wife and I were so eager to serve. It was a small church outside of Louisville, Ky. I remember the first Easter there. It was a small church, but had a big Easter week. Every night, seemingly, there was something else to do. There was a big Wednesday night service, a Maundy Thursday service, a Good Friday service, an Easter cantata on Saturday, a sunrise service on Sunday, a regular Sunday morning service, and a Sunday night service. I looked at that and thought, “Good grief, not trying to sound sacrilegious, but are we overdoing Easter?”

The sunrise service was a particular irritant to me—I will confess—because I had never been to a sunrise service, and most of the

people resolved to attend a sunrise service were rather up in years and would be at all of the other services anyway. So, we did it. I remember the first year we did the sunrise service by the lake. We were there and my wife had a baby or two on her hip, and we were hanging on to the kids and doing the service. A funny thing happened. Over the next several years, I began to like those sunrise services, not because I really felt like we needed them, but I began to love those people who loved the sunrise services. By the time the Lord called us from there back to Southern Seminary to serve, I have to tell you, I not only miss those people to this day, but I still sort of miss that sunrise service. Why is that? In my own way, there was a heart of a pastor for the people and a love for the church that was there. I believe that is instructive for what it means to preach faithfully and how we are to preach. The person that is ready to preach is a person who knows biblical conviction, personal courage, and pastoral care.

Conclusion

Readiness to preach is a lifelong pursuit. There is a sense in which I never have to prepare a sermon again, and I can stumble into a pulpit and have something to say because I have prepared so many. But there is a sense in which I'd never stumble into a pulpit without having prepared to preach because who am I not to be ready? This seminary is seeking to ready ministers for the church, and the penultimate mark of that is to ready ministers to preach.

I close with some anonymous words you may have heard before. They certainly contain a measure of hyperbole, but they are pertinent to the subject of keeping us ready, of our being ready and devoted to discipline and doctrine. Referring to the pastor, this author wrote,

Fling him into his office. Tear the office sign from the door and nail on the sign, "Study." Take him off the mailing list, lock him up with his books, computer, and Bible. Slam him down on his knees before texts, broken hearts, and the lives of a superficial flock and a Holy God. Force him to be the one man in our shallow communities who knows about God. Engage him to wrestle with God all the night through, and let him come out

only when he is bruised and beaten into a blessing. Shut his mouth forever from spouting remarks, and stop his tongue from forever tripping lightly over every nonessential. Require him to have something to say before he breaks the silence. Bend his knees in the lonesome valley. Burn his eyes with weary study; wreck his emotional poise with worry for the things of God and make him exchange his pious stance for a humble walk with God and man. Make him spend and be spent for the glory of God. Rip out his telephone; burn up his ecclesiastical success sheets; delete his social media accounts. Put water in his gas tank. Give him a Bible, tie him to the pulpit, and make him preach the Word of the living God. Test him, quiz him, examine him, shame him, and humiliate him for his ignorance of things divine. Shame him for his good comprehension of finance, batting averages, and political infighting. Laugh at his frustrated efforts to play psychiatrist. Form a choir, raise a chant, and haunt him day and night, "Sir, we would see Jesus." When at last he dares to stay the pulpit, ask him if he has a word from God. If he does not, dismiss him. Tell him you can read the morning paper and digest the television commentaries and think through the day's superficial problems and manage the community's weary drives, and bless the assorted baked potatoes and green beans, ad infinitum, better than he. Command him not to come back until he has read and reread, written and rewritten, until he can stand up worn and forlorn and say, "Thus sayeth the Lord." Give him no escape until he is backed against the wall of the Word, and sit down before him and listen to the only word he has left: God's Word. Let him sup with it, until all he says about it rings with the truth of eternity. When he is burned out finally by the flaming Word, when he is consumed at last by the fiery grace blazing through him, finally transferred from earth to heaven, then bear him away gently, blow a muted trumpet, and lay him down softly. Place a Bible in his coffin, and raise the tomb triumphant, for he was a faithful soldier of the Word; and ere he died, he had become a man of God. He died having proved himself ready. He died as one who was ready to preach.

READY TO SHEPHERD

1 Corinthians 1:26-2:5

JARED C. WILSON

Managing Editor, Midwestern Resources

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Kansas City, MO 64118

JWilson@mbts.edu

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." And I, when I came to you, brothers, 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, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.
1 Corinthians 1:26-2:5

The first thing that we should say about the readiness to shepherd—the readiness to pastor a church or a particular ministry

within a local church—is that in fact you are never ready when you start. When you are about to assume your first pastorate it does not matter how old you are, how much education you have, whether you have read all the right books, listened to all the right podcasts, read all the right blogs, attended all the right conferences, have argued all the right doctrines, whether you have your license, your ordination, and your resume—you are not ready. And here is why: Because you do not know yet whom you are pastoring. Now, you might know the name of the place, of course, and some names of the people in the place, but you do not know yet whom you are pastoring. What I mean by that is, you do not yet know who you are loving.

Of course, none of the accomplishments that I have mentioned above are bad things. There is nothing wrong with any of those things and you should pursue all of them if you are able. But you are not really ready to shepherd until you are neck deep in the sheep. You are not ready until you know what it is that keeps your people up at night, what it is that breaks their heart, what they are chasing after, what their hopes are, what their dreams are, what drives them during the day, what they are praying about, what they are worrying about, or what their idols are. You are not ready to shepherd until you have had in some way your heart moved by these people. And you are not ready to shepherd until you have had your heart in some way broken by these people.

In a way, pastoring is like marriage. I have been married for eighteen years and I have performed many wedding ceremonies and discipled many married couples. But I have to laugh when I think about the way the whole thing begins. I tend to see the idea of the wedding ceremony as two idiots standing up in front of a group of people making all sorts of crazy promises they have no idea if they really have the strength to keep. They are each assuming the best of each other as they say, “I am going to love you and forgive you, no matter what.” But they have no clue what that “no matter what” will actually turn out to be. In fact, the worst that they can imagine tends to not be all that bad. I’ve never counseled a couple who expected their spouse to cheat on them or abuse them.

Most married couples, however, think they will be prepared when the “for worse” time comes. But in the moment they make this audacious promise, even though they don’t know what they’re promising to forgive in the future, the promise is still a good thing. Not knowing

the future should not prevent a couple from getting married. But, still, they are not ready. They are not ready until they have had their dreams of marriage shattered by the actual marriage that they are in. And the same is true for pastoral ministry. The shattering is the preparing.

When it comes to the Corinthian Church, Paul felt deeply for them because they were a messy bunch. I find it funny that often we look back to the early church with this idealistic vision and we think wistfully, "If only we could just get back to the early church, everything would be great." But have we actually read the Bible? The earliest chapters of Acts may paint a rosy picture, but the further you go, the messier it gets, and once we get into Paul's epistles and see what kind of problems he is addressing, we realize that our church is probably more functional than the Corinthian Church!

At the time Paul is writing 1 Corinthians, it is likely everything that he wanted for the Corinthian Church was being threatened in his imagination. He has such hopes, dreams, vision, love, and affection for them. He desires for them to come alongside Christ and see Christ's glory. He sees how all the practical functionality that they lack would come from this vision for them if they would center on the gospel of grace. Yet they've become so distracted by the flesh and divided among themselves, it has frustrated the realization of Paul's vision for them, and you can almost feel his brokenness about them as he writes.

You are ready to shepherd
when you are ready to sacrifice your dreams.

The first thing that I would say to anyone contemplating pastoral ministry is this: you are ready to shepherd when you are ready to sacrifice your dreams. Of course, nobody undertakes ministry with a plan to see decrease. Nobody undertakes a ministry with a plan to struggle. Each of us has aspirations and ambitions. We have big dreams, big visions, big ideas, and we want to see growth, success, and flourishing. There is nothing wrong with desiring those things or praying for those things. But the church has never been built on big ideas.

Consider this: when looking at the gospels, do you ever get the sense that Jesus has intentionally picked the biggest morons that he could find? One of my favorite examples of just how deep the levels of cognitive deficiency go with the disciples, is in Mark's Gospel, beginning

with the feeding of the five thousand in Mark 6, when the disciples are looking out at the hungry crowd. Jesus wants to feed them and says, "What do we have?" They have a few loaves and fishes. Jesus feeds the five thousand with what they have and leftover are twelve baskets.

Going a little bit forward into the narrative, Jesus performs other miracles and then encounters another hungry crowd. It is a large crowd, but not as large as the first one and yet the disciples are saying, "Where are we going to get bread?" Jesus says, "What do we have?" and this time they have more than they had with the five thousand. If you are doing the math, they have before them a smaller crowd than previously but more resources than previously. And while the disciples are still scratching their heads, Jesus feeds the four thousand with seven baskets leftover.

Shortly after that, perhaps in the same day, the disciples get on the boat and Jesus begins teaching them, "Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." The disciples say, "Oh, he's talking about bread! He must be hungry. Where are we going to get bread?" Then, Jesus responds with questions the answers of which he already knows, essentially saying, "Are you still so dull, that you are asking about getting bread?"

The disciples are just like us. Jesus was not looking primarily for the intellectuals or the cultural elite when he selected his disciples. He picked these sort of blue-collar guys and some outcasts with scandalous occupations, sure, but I think that Jesus was also really looking for dumb people. Or I guess we should just say ordinary people.

This certainly proves true through the explosive growth of the early church in the pages of Acts. The church does not spread with great power through the work of experts, but through the work of converts.

So Paul in 1 Corinthians seeks to remind them of this fact. He is probably looking at all they're doing and thinking, "You guys are so stupid! You just don't get it!" However, in Paul's mind, in the economy of the gospel, this fact actually can be an asset. Paul goes right to reminding the Corinthians of the recipe for faith itself: God's grace and their utter nothingness. "Consider your calling brothers, not many of you are wise," he says, which is probably a very polite way of saying, "Y'all are really a bunch of dum-dums. Jesus was not picking the cream of the crop with you people. You weren't wise according to worldly standards, not many of you are powerful, not many are of noble birth. But look what God does

in his grace. He chooses what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. He chooses what is weak in the world to shame the strong.”

The ministry frustration that comes out of this dynamic is that actual ministry runs so often counter to visionary ministry. Frequently, chasing the vision for the church that we want keeps us from loving the church that we have. One of the most obvious things that Peter says when exhorting the elders in 1 Peter 5 is, “Shepherd the flock of God that is among you.” You might read that and think, “Why would he need to say that? What other flock would they be shepherding?” Well, there is the flock that is in your head. Or the one down the street. You look around and see who seems to be experiencing growth and excitement and you start thinking, “Man, it would be great to get to shepherd that flock over there. They seem so much better put together than my flock.”

One of the most formative books of my Christian life, much less ministry, is a book by Dietrich Bonhoeffer called *Life Together*, which is a little book about the experience of Christian community. One thing that Bonhoeffer discusses is the concept of the wish dream. Bonhoeffer challenges us this way:

If we do not give thanks daily for the Christian fellowship in which we have been placed, even where there is no great experience, no discoverable riches, but much weakness, small faith, and difficulty; if on the contrary, we only keep complaining to God that everything is so paltry and petty, so far from what we expected, then we hinder God from letting our fellowship grow according to the measure and riches which are there for us all in Jesus Christ. This applies in a special way to the complaints often heard from pastors and zealous members about their congregations. A pastor should not complain about his congregations, certainly never to other people, but also not to God. A congregation has not been entrusted to him in order that he should become its accuser before God and men. When a person becomes alienated from a Christian community in which he has been placed and begins to raise complaints about it, he had better examine himself first to see whether the trouble is not due to his wish dream that should be shattered by God; and if this be the case, let him thank God for leading him into this predicament. But if not, let

him nevertheless guard against ever becoming an accuser of the congregation before God. Let him rather accuse himself for his unbelief. Let him pray to God for understanding of his own failure and his particular sin, and pray that he may not wrong his brethren. Let him, in the consciousness of his own guilt, make intercession for his brethren. Let him do what he is committed to do, and thank God What may appear weak and trifling to us may be great and glorious to God. Just as the Christian should not be constantly feeling his spiritual pulse, so, too, the Christian community has not been given to us by God for us to be constantly taking its temperature. The more thankfully we daily receive what is given to us, the more surely and steadily will fellowship increase and grow from day to day as God pleases.³

What Bonhoeffer is calling the “wish dream” is essentially the vision we have for the church we want. In one sense, this is a good thing. If you are in pastoral ministry, you should want your people to be moving along, following Christ, and growing in grace. Whether you call that process discipleship or whether you are looking from the 30,000 foot view, thinking sanctification, you certainly want to see some progress, some victory over sin, some repentance. That is all biblical and good. But it is nevertheless so dangerous and insidious to begin dreaming, wishing, hoping, and loving the church that exists in our head and not the church that has been given to us.

The flock you currently have is the flock God has given you. He has not given you anybody else but the people you have. In his grace he may give you more, but the ones you have are the ones you are to love. Do not let your vision for the disciples you want get in the way of God’s vision for the disciples you actually have. Let us not be our church’s accuser.

Are you ready, then, to have your wish dream shattered by God? We come to the ministerial task with our ideas, visions, plans, and

³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, translated and with an introduction by John W. Doberstein (New York: Harpert, 1954), 26. See also *Life Together and Prayerbook of the Bible* in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume 5* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 37-38.

strategies, but then we actually have to pastor. So when Satan draws you up to that high mountain and shows you the brilliant vision of the valley below—all the vast kingdoms built by your ministry, the multiple campuses, the filled sanctuaries, the fawning congregants, the book deals, the speaking tours, the admiration and the adulation—and he says, “All this can be yours,” you say, “Be gone Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord my God and him only shall you serve.’” You are ready to shepherd when you’re ready to sacrifice your dreams.

You are ready to shepherd
when you have been brought low.

Secondly, you are ready to shepherd when you have been brought low. With all that the New Testament says about weakness and suffering, it is amazing that we still find these things weird. Peter says in 1 Peter 4:12, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.” How many times have you thought, “Man, I did not see that coming?” For me, it is on almost a daily basis. I find the landmines by stepping on them.

In my own wisdom, I tend to think that what is “normal” is the absence of difficulty. But if the biblical pattern is to be believed, we should find it weird when everything is going well! This is why R.C. Sproul has said we need to redirect our “locus of astonishment,” which is to say, we need to relocate our astonishment from tragedy to success. Whenever tragedy or disaster strikes, we are quick to respond, “This is such a catastrophe!” Yet Sproul is saying that because the world is sinful and broken, fragile and dysfunctional, our astonishment should really run the other way. We should be driving over bridges and when they do not collapse underneath us, we should say, “I can’t believe I crossed that bridge!” You take a deep breath and say, “I can’t believe I didn’t die just now.”

When you have your heart tuned to what is normative ministry according to the New Testament you begin to see the difficulty as not just normal but sanctifying. But we are not naturally astonished in this way because we have a built-in sense of entitlement. We assume that we deserve life and not death, so when little deaths of hardship, suffering, and affliction come, our entitlement is violated. Our sense of self-

sovereignty is violated, and our pride gets hurt. And if there is one thing pastors must get used to, by the grace of God, it is having their pride hurt. And not just hurt, but assailed, pummeled, and eviscerated. Listen to Paul in verses 28-31:

God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him, you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Do you know who the greatest preacher who ever lived was? I assume it was John the Baptist and this is why: He certainly preached and declared the way for the coming of his cousin the Messiah, but it is Jesus himself who said, "Among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist" (Matt 11:11). I assume this means by virtue of his being "the greatest man who ever lived," excluding Jesus Christ himself of course, that John therefore is the greatest preacher who ever lived. But what I find really telling about the whole scenario is what precipitates Jesus' startling declaration.

John is in prison awaiting execution, and he sends the question, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" Now, this is the same man who said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" And "I'm not fit to touch his shoes!" Yet, in the midst of his suffering, sitting in jail, stewing on life and death and ministry, it is as if he is suddenly thinking back and wondering, "The Lamb of God? Okay, I know I said that, but let me make doubly sure."

Like John, we pastors have to be honest about our weaknesses and our questions. We have to own up to our failings. In every church, the pastor should be the primary repenter. We should not cover up our flaws with fig leaves. The reason that we do not often own up to our failings is because we are really interested not in being known, but in being idolized. We want to be our people's idols. We like the idea of being their functional savior. We are not interested in being followed but in being worshipped. This is when it's really helpful to understand that Jesus did not die for some false version of us. He died for the real you, the you that you are when you are all alone in your study or your room and it is just little ol' you with your little ol' mind going to the places that are a little darker and a little more depressed. You are not putting on the

smile for the people, not sucking it up, and not pulling yourself up by your boot straps. Instead, you are the you with fears and doubts, questions and concerns. With wounds. That is the you that Jesus loves.

So when John sends this question, “Are you the one who is to come?” it is because he is scared. But it is also, in an odd way, because he is not scared of being scared. He could have “sucked it up” and put on a happy face and pretended, “I guess I started this thing, so I better ride it out. You know, just sort of cross my fingers.” He could have not wanted to risk offending Jesus. Yet in asking the question, we see that he had a little bit of doubt. He was not sure and so he thought perhaps that the answer to his question actually might be “no.” And how devastating would that be? To find out that your ministry had actually been based on a lie or a misunderstanding?

However, rather than avoid the devastating truth, should it be the actual truth, John took the risk. He was scared but he was not scared of being scared, and that is really the essential quality of discipleship—following Christ. John was willing to be brought low and to own his brought lowness. Pastors and would-be pastors, we need to get over ourselves and start being ourselves. He knows you are afraid. He just wants you to not be afraid of being afraid. We have to own our weakness.

What’s more, I find it incredibly interesting and helpful that it is in the context of receiving this question from John the Baptist that Jesus says what he says about John. Jesus does not say, “Oh, you’ve got to be kidding me! This John character. I’m telling you. What a loser! With everything that he saw, everything that I said to him, everything that’s been revealed to him, the strength of his ministry, and now facing a little weakness, he’s going to get all wobbly on me? Can you believe it?” No, instead Jesus says “Among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist.”

Is that not a picture of grace? We honestly bring our wounds to Christ and in the gospel he says, “I’ll take those. I’ll take those from you.” He is not tapping his foot when you show up. He is not checking his watch when you are there a little while longer than you thought you would be. Jesus is not surprised at how your sanctification is progressing. He knows.

Jesus then adds something extraordinary and spectacular. He has first a message of grace for John who was brave enough to show his fear. Jesus says, “The greatest man ever, that guy.” But then he follows it

up to say, “The one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

How can this be? It is almost as if in the kingdom of God things are upside down. Well, really, they are right side up! If we will own our weakness, our sinfulness, and our failure—if we will be willing to be brought low—Christ will give us his strength, power, life, and righteousness. As John the Baptist has said, “He must increase, I must decrease.”

This is the only deal that Jesus will make. When you come to the negotiating table of the gospel, you better have nothing in your hands but your sin. If you bring your nothingness to him, he will give you his “everythingness”—that is, he will trade you all of your poverty for all of his riches. But if you bring one little penny of merit, of works, of ambition, you cheapen the whole thing and the deal will be off. As Paul says in this passage, “As it is written, ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’”

So, I ask you, is he your boast? Are you prepared to boast of your weakness? To own it, to be brought low? You have sent your resume to a church but what do you send to Christ? You are not ready if your approval in ministry is tied to anything other than the finished work of Christ. If your ministry approval is tied to the feelings of your flock—you are set to boast in yourself. To have your justification tuned to either the approval or the disapproval of your people is a recipe for disaster because their admiration will puff you up or their criticism will steal your joy.

Now, Paul’s words on calling in verse 26 are not about the calling into the work of pastoral ministry. He is speaking to the Corinthian church and he is referencing the effectual calling of God upon their lives, the call that brought them to saving faith. This is an important passage to consider because we must never forget that being a pastor does not put us into Christianity 2.0. We are no more holy or justified than the brothers and sisters in Christ in our flocks. We may have an office of authority in the church, we may be a leader to whom ecclesial submission is due, but all that we are at the end of the day is because of Jesus Christ, not ourselves. This is important to remember because when we forget it we begin to take license with our office.

Pastoral humility results in obeying God rather than men. God is not calling the self-assured into the pastorate. He is calling an army of men confident in the gospel and fearful of themselves. One of the first

things I look for when we assess men for our eldership process is their response when I say to them, “Hey, I’d like you to consider being an elder.” When they say, “Man, I don’t think I’m good enough,” I think, “Whew, you passed the first test.” We need pastors who have had the swagger gossiped out of them. We need men who are lowly.

Of course, none of us are naturally that kind of man, and very few of us begin ministry that kind of man. But by focusing on our brother Jesus, who scorned the shame of the cross and forsaking the leverage of his divinity and emptying himself to nothing, we can share in his suffering and fill up what is lacking in his afflictions (Col. 1:24) and thereby enjoying the indomitable power of the one who is calling us to this work. The one who is himself filling the world with his glory through the faithful ministry of men who will get low. You are ready to shepherd when you have been brought low.

You are ready to shepherd
when you are centered on the gospel.

Thirdly, you are ready to shepherd when you have centered on the gospel. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2, “And I, when I came to you, brothers, 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.”

We face daily competing messages from outside in the world and inside our own heart. Messages that would distract us, messages that would frustrate us and debilitate us. The siren song of cultural relevance comes scratching our ears. The complaints of those who, you know, kind of like this gospel stuff but would really like, say, something a little more “meaty” fill our inboxes. The constant, thrumming crave of the law pounds beneath our flesh like the beating of a drum in the bowels of a slave ship with its “do more, be more, try harder,” ominously seeking to set our rhythm of life. The bar of worldly wisdom gets raised higher and higher. “Yes attendance was ‘x’ this week, but what about next week?”

But we must resolve to know nothing but Christ crucified. “The heart,” John Calvin said, “is an idol factory.” As those idols come down that production line of our ministry output on a daily basis, we must set about slaying them all. As you navigate the murky waters of ministry idolatry, you will hear the siren songs of all sort of competing messages—

the “lofty speech” of the intellectualized ministry, the “wisdom” of pragmatism—but you must lash yourself to the mast of the gospel. Some trust in academic chariots and some in practical horses but we trust in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ our God. We resolve to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

James warns us, “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness” (3:1). For a very long time I assumed this meant in the final judgment that God would judge us with greater strictness, and maybe there is some truth to that. But I also wonder if James is just looking at the practicality of ministry. You are going to be in a fish bowl and you are going to be judged, and you are going to have arrows fired your way. You are going to be considered with a lot more strictness than if you were not in ministry. So it is important to center on the gospel.

I have been reading 1 Corinthians and also 2 Corinthians to my friend, Natalie. She was one of the first people at Middletown Springs Community Church to hurt my feelings. I was very new and as an introvert by nature it takes me a little while to warm up in crowds and to make an effort to go talk to people I do not know. I was relatively new to our area and there was a funeral that I had attended that took place at our church. I was not officiating the funeral but I was present at the reception. Everyone was out at the tables, eating. It was a big crowd. And do you know where I was? I was in the kitchen with the ladies from my church. Because I knew them; that was a safe place to be.

But Natalie comes in and she says, “What are you doing in here?” I said, “I’m just talking to people.” She says, “You’re the pastor, you need to go out there and talk to the families!” And it hurt me. What she said was not a hurtful thing to say but if you knew me and you knew what is inside my heart, I am thinking she is disapproving of me and I just got to this church and I really want people to like me. She was the first person to hurt my feelings and I have to tell you she did it plenty of times after that too!

I will tell you, though, that Natalie is one of my closest friends, one of my greatest encouragers. And by God’s will, Natalie is slowly dying of pancreatic cancer. She’s taking a long time to die, which is good from our perspective, because it gives us more time with her, but she hates it. She is just ready to go home. Hospice has been set up and she is actually living in the basement apartment of some friends of hers. Her husband

sleeps there with her and the hospice nurses comes in every day. Her pain is increasing day by day, so the pain medication is increasing day by day. Barring a miracle, the writing seems to be on the wall. I do not know much about pancreatic cancer but I have been told it is not one that people typically recover from, and she has opted not to pursue surgery or chemotherapy or anything like that. She is just going to let time run out.

I have been visiting Natalie almost daily and we read Scripture together. We look back at our time together and reminisce and cry and laugh and have wonderful talks. We have also been able, by God's grace, to share the gospel with some of her lost friends. Natalie is a gal on mission. She has more lost friends than any Christian I know. I love the way that she defines them or labels them so I will know who is coming into the circle. She says, "Sue, my communist friend, is coming over later." "Linda, my atheist Jewish friend, is coming over after that." We have been able to share the gospel with these folks and also with some of her caregivers, which she loves because it is not like they can leave the room!

Natalie's favorite books of the Bible are Ecclesiastes and Revelation, so we have read those a lot. But 1 and 2 Corinthians have become very special to us also. One reason why they are special to me is because you feel Paul's heart for these people. His heart is broken for them. This has been a very difficult year in our ministry. For lots of reasons many people in our church know about, and for some that only a few in leadership have been aware of, it has been a very hard season. My wife and I have lost two close friends to cancer in the last year, within two months of each other, both to brain tumors. Now I am about to lose a third friend. And these are not just people at my church; they are my friends. We have also had some growing pains that come with a growing church. God has really blessed us with a lot of growth and a lot of excitement. When I came they were somewhat small, the average age was a little older, and there was one baby in the church. Over the last four years we have had young families, young couples, and young singles flocking to the church. The place is overrun with children. But within this growth, within this energy there are all sorts of stresses and none of us were prepared for the rate of growth and it has exposed some deficiencies in me and in our church. It has exposed some idols. It has just been a very difficult season.

Thus, as I read through 1 and 2 Corinthians at the bedside of my dying friend, I feel this text. I feel the weakness and the lowness. I do not feel very strong and I do not feel like I can boast in anything in myself right now. In fact, there are some days, and some hours, and some days that I wish I would just “poof! vanish” and not have to deal with this world anymore. Yet I love that I can feel that Paul is feeling this too. In 2 Corinthians 6:12 he says, “We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open.” The gospel that Paul preaches is not theoretical, not academic, and it is not merely an idea. It is a power, a force, and he has been hijacked by the Holy Spirit who has come and waylaid him. He basically says, “I was apprehended” in Philippians 3:12. Brothers, you are ready to shepherd when you are centered on the gospel.

You are ready to shepherd
when you have had an experience of the gospel.

Fourthly and finally, you are ready to shepherd when you have had an experience of the gospel. I cannot tell you how important it is that you feel the gospel in the biblical text, that what is sad in it saddens you, and that what is glad in it gladdens you. If you want your people to be bored with God’s word, just treat it like it is boring.

You will learn, pastors, that your flock does not get excited about what you tell them to be excited about. They will be excited about what you are excited about. (This is something that I first heard from D.A. Carson and have seen it confirmed over and over again.) So if you are telling your church to be gospel-centered, but it is clear that what really fires you up is the law, guess what? They are going to be drawn more to the law. And they do not need any help with that! But we like to dress the law up to make it not seem so heavy. We turn it into helpful hints, or steps to victory, or whatever. I like to call it “Pharisaism with wax in its hair.” Most people love it because their flesh loves it. It makes them feel like they have what it takes, but the gospel is predicated on the very idea that we do not have what it takes. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 2:4:

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 my speech and my message were not in plausible

words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

He tells us what happens if we come with plausible words of wisdom in verse 5: “Your people’s faith will rest in the wisdom of men.” But when you have had an experience of the gospel, the gospel is not just an historical announcement, it is bread for a starving man. It is water for a man in the desert. It is oxygen. You are not ready to shepherd until you have been spiritually discombobulated by the gospel and essentially reconstituted by the gospel. I do not simply mean that you have become a Christian. I mean, you better be a Christian. Pastors should definitely be Christians! And I am not saying necessarily that you should not go ahead and become a pastor. I am just saying that until the gospel has “undone” you, until it has “woe is me’d” you, you are not ready.

When you have tasted and seen that the Lord is good and it has ruined you for everything else, you are ready. When you have been hijacked by grace, you are ready. By his grace, then, brothers, you are ready to pastor when weakness and fear and trembling actually make sense to you.

My friend David Pinckney in New Hampshire, director of Acts 29 for New England, says, “Every pastor should know what the carpet in his office smells like.” He means that your face should be in it often. The Lord is faithful. If he has called you to it, he will sustain you in it. You are never ready for the next heartbreak, the next tragedy, the next catastrophe, but the glorious truth is this—God is! He is always ready to help you. He is an ever-present help in a time of trouble. Christ the Good Shepherd, the only perfect pastor, is ready to gather up all his little lay pastors into his arms like little broken lambs. Where your wisdom fails, his will prevail. Where your righteousness falls short, his will justify. Where your spirit is flagging, his will empower. Where your glory fades, his will increase, expand, and magnify that the feebleness of your coming ministry might redound to his glory. He is the end-all, be-all. He is the first and the last.

You will notice as you study the Bible that for Paul and Peter both, especially in their encouragement to elders, the hope that they keep holding out for sustenance in ministry is not any kind of attendance benchmark or conversion rate. It is instead the unfading crown of righteousness they receive when their ministry is over. Peter bookends his exhortation to elders in 1 Peter 5 with this idea. You are “a partaker

in the glory that is going to be revealed," he begins in verse 1, and he follows that up in verse 4 with, "When the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."

When the end comes, after you have suffered a little while (1 Pet. 5:10), it will all make sense and will be worth it. It is the unfading crown of righteousness that Peter and Paul receive when their ministry is over that motivates them for the thick of ministry day to day. Let us resolve to know nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified that our ministries may serve only to adorn the blazing beauty of our King. May we say on that last day, "Man, I messed up big time. I have nothing, I am nothing, I claim none of my achievements. All of the things that they will say about me down there, back there the write ups, the memorials, the tributes, I claim none of that. I claim only your blood, Jesus."

May we be so tuned to His word of promise that we will entrust our approval not to our faithfulness but to the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. "To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen" (1 Tim 1:17).

You are ready to shepherd when you have had an experience of the Gospel.

ANN H. JUDSON
An Unpublished Letter

MICHAEL D. McMULLEN
Professor of Church History
Director of the Wilberforce Journals Project
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Kansas City, MO 64118
MMcmullen@mbts.edu

The present writer is currently heading a project in collaboration with the direct descendants of William Wilberforce, to transcribe and publish his *Spiritual Journals*, which after 200 years, still remain surprisingly unpublished. In the course of that research at Oxford University's Bodleian Special Collection's Library, several letters were discovered, written to the Wilberforce family from a number of 18th and 19th Century 'spiritual giants'. These include letters from David Livingstone, Mrs. Charles Wesley, Andrew Fuller and also the letter published here, it is believed for the very first time, from the Baptist missionary to Burma, Ann Hasseltine Judson. It is interestingly a letter written not to Wilberforce himself, but to his beloved wife, Barbara.

Many Baptists especially, will be aware of Adoniram Judson, though one suspects nowhere near as much as Baptists used to be. Francis Wayland's 1853 biography of Adoniram Judson for example,⁴ sold at least 26,000 copies in only its first year. One further suspects that Adoniram's wife's life and contributions, would be even less known, apart from maybe simply her name. This is nothing short of a tragedy and one that previous generations of believers would simply never have believed

⁴ Francis Wayland, *A Memoir of the Life and Labors of the Rev. Adoniram Judson*, (Boston: Phillips, Sampson & Co., 1853).

could ever happen, especially since Adoniram has been the subject of at least 56 biographies,⁵ and Ann herself has been the subject of a further 16 in her own right.⁶ The 1830 biography of Ann Judson by JD Knowles⁷ for example, which was regularly reprinted for the next quarter of a century after its initial appearance, was described as “a book so universally known that it scarcely need be mentioned.”⁸

Within just two weeks of their marriage, the Judsons sailed for India in February, 1812. Who could ever have foreseen what really lay ahead for this young Christian couple, lives that one writer described as being marked “by years of toil and hardship, loneliness and grief.”⁹ Little wonder then, that in his *Advice to Missionary Candidates*, written after twenty years’ experience on the field, which included having to bury Ann and their children all lost to smallpox and other diseases, Adoniram would write, “It may be profitable to bear in mind, that a large proportion of those who come out on a mission to the East die within five years after leaving their native land. Walk softly, therefore; death is narrowly watching your steps.”

In 1822, Ann was suffering from a very serious liver disease and was told that she must return to either Europe or America for life-saving treatment. To spare her husband losing at least two years of field work at a very crucial time, Ann set sail at first for Britain, alone. It was during this two years away from Burma, that she wrote the letter that appears below. It speaks of the hardships they and she in particular, endured as pioneer missionaries. But this was not the first mention she makes of such things, for in an 1816 letter to her parents, Ann wrote, “But God has taught us by afflictions what we would not learn by mercies – that our

⁵ A tragedy Midwestern’s very own Provost, Dr. Jason G. Duesing, has sought to remedy with his, *Adoniram Judson: A Bicentennial Appreciation of the Pioneer American Missionary*, (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2012).

⁶ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/2006/issue90/8.2.html>.

⁷ James D. Knowles, *Life of Mrs. Ann H. Judson, Late Missionary to Burmah; with an account of the American Baptist Mission to that Empire*. (Philadelphia: 1830).

⁸ Amanda Porterfield, *Mary Lyon and the Mount Holyoke Missionaries*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 56.

⁹ Sharon James, *My Heart in His Hands: Ann Judson of Burma*, (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 1998), 78.

hearts are his exclusive property, and whatever rival intrudes, he will tear it away."¹⁰

Ann took the opportunity whilst in America, of publishing one of the first accounts of an American foreign mission actually written by a missionary, *A Particular Relation of the American Baptist Mission to the Burman Empire*.¹¹ The proceeds were already earmarked for several projects in Burma, including buying the freedom of female slaves. After Ann had sufficiently recovered, she returned to Burma in 1824. In spite of all she would experience, Ann soon displayed significant language abilities, even surpassing Adoniram in her spoken Burmese. She became involved in actual translation work, resulting in not just several tracts being translated into Burmese, but the two complete books of Daniel and Jonah, together with a catechism that she actually wrote in the same language. Because of her interest in the many Siamese (Thai) in Burma, Ann began to learn Siamese too, and with her translation of Matthew's Gospel (as well as translating a number of other writings), she is celebrated as the first Protestant to translate any Bible book into Siamese.

In 1825, eight months after Adoniram was arrested and imprisoned in Burma under suspicion of spying, Ann gave birth to their daughter Maria. She would constantly visit the prison with the child, petitioning for Adoniram's release. In the midst of these great trials, she wrote the following:

Sometimes for days and days together, I could not go into the prison, till after dark, when I had two miles to walk, in returning to the house. O how many, many times, have I returned from that dreary prison at nine o'clock at night, solitary and worn out with fatigue and anxiety . . . and endeavoured to invent some new scheme for the release of the prisoners . . . the acme of my distress, consisted in the awful uncertainty of our final fate.

¹⁰ Knowles, *Life*, 122.

¹¹ Ann H. Judson, *A Particular Relation of the American Baptist Mission to the Burman Empire: In a Series of Letters, Addressed to Joseph Butterworth, Esq. M.P.* (Washington City, 1823).

My prevailing opinion was, that my husband would suffer violent death; and that I should, of course become a slave, and languish out a miserable though short existence in the tyrannic hands of some unfeeling monster. But the consolations of religion, in these trying circumstances, were neither 'few nor small.' It taught me to look beyond this world, to that rest, that peaceful happy rest, where Jesus reigns, and oppression never enters.¹²

Ann died the following year, a premature death surely hastened by the horrendous journey she undertook to follow her husband to a prison he had been transferred to. This Article is by its very brief nature, unable to depict much at all of what both the Judsons achieved, but nor is it the aim. My aim is to challenge us all to read again, some of the great biographies of the men and women of God that have gone before. To be challenged, to be encouraged and most of all, to be reminded of the God they loved, served and worshipped. As a tribute to their immovable faith, Francis Wayland wrote the following in 1853:

They always enjoyed the most entire certainty as to the result of their labours, though occasionally doubting whether they would live to witness it. Their confidence rested solely and exclusively on the Word of God. They believed that he had promised; they doing as they believed his will, accepted the promise as addressed to them personally. Their daily work was a transaction between God and their own souls. It never occurred to them that God could be false to his promises.¹³

With the brief, preceding sketch above as the backdrop, we now have the opportunity to witness Ann Judson share word of the very real trials with significant religious doubts she endured, whilst on the mission field, doubts that she probably only ever shared with Adoniram and Barbara Wilberforce as here. She writes too though, of the faithfulness of God and

¹² Knowles, *Life*, 239.

¹³ Wayland, *Memoir*, Vol.1, 162-3.

the instrumentation of one particular book¹⁴ that God used in her life, to resurrect her faith in her Savior. It is rightly said I believe, that with God there are no coincidences, and it is interesting to note that as a teenager under conviction of sin, the first instrument that God used, was a book by Hannah More with the innocuous title, *Strictures on Female Education*. It was when Ann read the phrase, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth," that she was immediately convicted. Hannah More was an English Evangelical poet and writer, a close friend of William Wilberforce and an active member with him in the Clapham Sect. It is also worth noting, that because the majority of Ann Judson's private papers, including her private Journals, were destroyed by herself in 1824 to prevent them falling into the hands of the Burmese,¹⁵ the following letter is surely even more precious:

London, Bradford Square
July 23 - 1822

My Dear Mrs. Wilberforce

It seems to have been the design of providence, that my wishes relative to an interview with yourself and Mr. Wilberforce should be frustrated, notwithstanding my endeavours to the contrary. I cannot however prevail on myself to leave England, without making some apology for the earnest desire I have manifested to intrude for a few hours, on that time so valuable to the public good.

My reasons were the following - to express to Mr. Wilberforce the happy effects produced by a perusal of his writings, of which I have been a witness in two cases, 2. To obtain some hints which might have been invaluable to us among the heathen. Four or five years ago, my mind, in consequence of my long residence in a heathen and a constant witness of idolatrous scenes, became harassed with doubts

¹⁴ William Wilberforce, *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country, Contrasted with Real Christianity*. (London: 1797).

¹⁵ Knowles, *Life*, Preface.

relative to the existence of an eternal God, and the divine authenticity of the Scriptures.

Mr. Judson was the only person to whom I could communicate my trials. He gave me Mr. W. View of Religion. A perusal of it was the means, not only of removing my doubts and restoring my mind to its former state of tranquility, but gave those high and elevated ideas which that work is so admirably calculated to produce. The transition from a state of darkness and distress, to light and joy was so great, that I was on the point of communicating to Mr. W. the change that work had been the means of effecting but the fear of intrusion prevented.

The other case was on board ship on my passage to England. Two young ladies on board, daughters of Sir. F.M. now in India, became the subjects of religious impression. I put into their hands the above mentioned book. It was the means of establishing and comforting their minds, and we entered into an engagement to read through that book once every year, beginning the first of March. I should have considered it a particular privilege to have communicated with Mr. W. on the best plans to be adopted, in introducing the Gospel among the Burmans, but it is none too late. Allow me my dear Madam to express my sense of kindness in Mr. W.'s letter of yesterday, and the hope that his valued life will long be continued a blessing to his Country and family. I embark this evening for Scotland, thence, after a few days, for America.

With best wishes for your health and happiness.

I remain

My dear Madam

Sincerely and respectfully yours

Ann H. Judson.

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION, ONCE MORE.

RADU GHEORGHITA

Associate Professor of Biblical Studies

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Kansas City, MO 64118

RGheorghita@mbts.edu

“You should write a piece about it and submit it to our *Midwestern Journal of Theology*.” Such was the advice from our former Dean after I informed him that my proposal for a paper on Scripture memorization for the Evangelical Theological Society annual meeting was declined by the committee as not fitting the profile of the session. The paper, “A Better Way: Scripture Memorization Book-by-Book”, was originally submitted for the section on Hermeneutics, usually open for papers that explore ideas, old and new, in biblical interpretation. To be fair, it must be said that Scripture memorization as such does not recommend itself as a topic capable of competing with the more exotic proposals that usually make the cut. There was nothing in my paper that had the look of, to echo one of Churchill’s sayings, a syntactical riddle, wrapped in a lexical mystery, inside of an enigmatic passage.

Yet, my reason for suggesting the paper was precisely the fact that, after 20 years of practicing biblical exegesis, I can think of no methodology more capable and adept at unpacking the biblical text than the memorization of the entire book. There is much hermeneutics involved in the exercise of memorizing a book, even though it is not as obvious as one might expect; rather, it lurks behind the surface, not always easy to distinguish or pin down. Unfortunately, my proposal was not persuasive enough. The paper did not make the cut, even for the general sessions, and hence the decision to follow the Dean’s advice and offer it to the readers of the *Midwestern Journal*.

The rejection of the proposal left me with mixed feelings, alternating from nonchalance to disappointment. Disappointment, not

because of the rejection as such; after a certain age, one learns to not take personally life's closed doors. The disappointment comes solely from witnessing again the low ranking that serious Scripture memorization receives in today's Evangelical academia. This is most surprising when one considers that it used to be part of the normal work of biblical scholars. There is a long string of anecdotal evidence, from R. Bultmann to G. B. Caird and from C. H. D. Moule to F. F. Bruce, that they all, allegedly, had committed to memory the entire Greek New Testament. The Southern Baptists, too, have a representative in this privileged elite group. Professor Dale Moody of SBTS, according to a recently published history of the seminary, "had a prodigious memory and seemed to be able to quote any verse in the Greek New testament by heart." It seems that memorizing significant portions of the Scriptures was once considered part of the trade of the Biblical scholars. Unfortunately, that is no longer the case, not even among evangelicals.

This was not the first time when I encountered a lack of interest in my attempts to upgrade the status of Scripture memorization from "something that we only do in Sunday school," to something that is accepted as an indispensable part in the instrumentarium of biblical studies. In the past decade I submitted several proposals for books devoted to Scripture memorization to various evangelical publishing houses. Their response was invariably enthusiastic, yet negative: "good idea, but not marketable; it will not sell." This was intriguing, especially when a browsing of current titles reveals that there is little attention devoted to this spiritual discipline. Take Zondervan as a case in point. A search for "prayer" yields eight pages of titles; "memorization," however, appears only in the advertisement of the Zonderkidz Bible Memorization App., with an attached blurb from Chuck Swindoll reading, "I know of no other single practice in the Christian life more rewarding, practically speaking, than memorizing Scripture." The situation is similar at Baker Academic: "prayer" yields two dozen titles, while "memorization" has not even a single entry. InterVarsity Press fares a bit better: there are twenty titles under the topic of prayer, yet only one under memorization. It would be fair to conclude that Scripture memorization has gone out of favor not only with academia but also with the ecclesia. I should mention, however, that Lifeway Resources did show some interest and included a series on Scripture memorization under their Ministry Grid platform.

The given situation naturally raised a few questions in my mind, none more pressing than those probing the rationale for the proposal's rejection: why would an approach to biblical studies based on book-by-book Scripture memorization fail to convince academia about its usefulness and legitimacy among the panoply of approaches to biblical studies? Why does serious Scripture memorization fail to assert itself as a bona fide methodological approach in the serious, professional study of the Scriptures? The remainder of this paper proposes several possible answers to these questions, followed by a subsequent piece in which the work of memorization and its results will be exemplified by a concrete example taken from a New Testament book.

Here then are some possible explanations for the desuetude of memorization in recent times.

First, I believe that this current fate is the result of a close association of Scripture memorization with Sunday school activities. What works in Sunday school, the argument goes, is not a discipline worthy to be considered alongside the more scholarly approaches. Inadvertently, AWANA Clubs and other similar programs of Scripture memorization for children have tainted this spiritual discipline. To memorize the Scriptures ends up being unvaryingly associated with this particular age group and church activity. It is thus condemned to obsolescence for other ages and groups, and ultimately unable to acquire a legitimate status among the more serious disciplines of biblical studies.

In all fairness, I would be the first one to concede that Scripture memorization, the verse-by-verse approach in the classical Sunday school setting, useful as it is, would not qualify for a place among the facets of biblical *Untersuchung*. But the method advanced here – essentially the same as the one proposed for the ETS paper – envisages not a verse-by-verse approach to memorization, but rather it advocates a more substantive endeavor: a book-by-book approach, with the life goal of covering the entire New Testament. Also, the proposal is not limited to working with an English translation; in fact it recommends memorization of books in the original languages. This approach cannot be dismissed as outdated or unprofitable. On the contrary, memorization of significant portions of the Scriptures – a default approach to their sacred writings taken by both the Rabbinic schools and the Islam devotees – needs to be reintegrated among the disciplines of biblical studies. Could it be that Christianity is becoming the first and only one

of the three “religions of the Book” to dispense with memorization as a mark of devotion to its sacred text?

In this debate, there is a faint echo of Tertullian’s “what indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What has the Academy to do with the Church?” Indeed, what does memorization have to do with Biblical studies? It turns out that it has quite a lot. Here is just the tip of the iceberg: memorization of an entire book gives the student a solid, thorough knowledge of the biblical text, something that cannot be achieved at this intense level by any other exegetical means. The primary cognitive benefit of memorization is a mastery and intimate grasp of the biblical text in its canonical form. Issues such as vocabulary and style of the author, themes deemed important by the author, the overall message of the book, the atmosphere of the writing, particular theological nuances, the structure of the argument, and many others are revealed by book memorization with more ease and precision than by any other ways of exploring a book. During the memorization process, no doubt due in part to the activity of human memory, the analytic and synthetic processes of thought bring together, in a unified and coherent message, the apparently scattered details of the text. Both the panoramic view acquired on the book as a whole, as well as the limitless possibilities for zooming in on any of the details of the book (from individual words to overarching themes, from stylistic features to discourse analysis), are supplied by memorization with unrivalled aptitude.

There is a second possible explanation for the low ranking status that memorization bears. It is perhaps limited to the Western world, the electronically savvy world, where computerized biblical studies have become beneficiaries of the digital revolution. When computer software in specialized biblical studies can do the type of analyses that no mind can duplicate, let alone surpass, why would anyone waste their time by devoting themselves to memorization, an antediluvian approach to biblical studies? Again, the argument has considerable strength on the surface. Indeed, no mind can compete with the power of digitized databases and search engines. It dissipates, however, when one realizes that having the Scripture stored on a machine is not the same thing as having the text inscribed on the tablets – no pun intended – of the heart and mind of the believer. The internalization of Scripture, the assimilation of the text resulting from memorization, is in a different category altogether than anything a machine can do. In fact it would not

be too far-fetched to say that the ability to acquire the text by memorization is a *sui generis* aspect. A computer could never transfer by osmosis its abilities and performance in working with the biblical text to the owner of the program. Whatever the computer does, it is still on the "outside". Not so with memorization. Once a book is very well known, its riches are assimilated internally, and they are assumed as one's own in the most direct, unmediated way.

One close parallel of this process could be found in the world of musical performance. A programmable computer can play the preludes and fugues of Johann Sebastian Bach's Well Tempered Clavier with unmatched precision and technical perfection. But it would be an austere and lifeless performance, incomparably inferior to the execution of the same pieces processed by the artistic prowess of the master pianist. In a similar way, having the Bible on a preferred i-Gadget should not and could never be a substitute for having God's word in one's heart and mind. To meditate on God's law day and night (Ps 1:2) or to be filled with the word of Christ (Col 3:16) is the task of the believers, not of their electronic devices.

For those unconvinced by the above argument, I propose the following challenge. Choose any two books similar in size, genre, and preferably not by the same author, for example Ephesians and James. Take the first book and memorize it to perfection, staying with it for several months as you daily go over the routine of reciting the entire book in one setting. Then devote as much time to the meticulous investigation of the other book, using any approach, any exegetical tool, or any resource available, no limits imposed. When the process is completed, do an honest evaluation of the level of mastering the two books, the one memorized compared to the one ploughed with the chosen tools of the exegetical and hermeneutical process. There is no doubt in my mind of the outcome of the challenge: the memorization would yield substantially better results.

This leads me to a third reason why memorization is neglected or, worse still, discouraged. There might be a psychological factor involved: people are afraid of memorization. Presumably it is a difficult task, and since there is little personal experience and consequently very little palpable results, there is little incentive to stick with it, let alone to pass it on to others. This is in my estimation one of the most unfortunate aspects, because it is diametrically opposite to the actual reality. In most

cases memorization of large portions of Scriptures is abandoned before it is even tried. What is even sadder is that many who give up on this kind of memorization do it without realizing how achievable the task is, and, more importantly, how totally rewarding the experience is. To substantiate this point, I shall insert below a sample of the evaluative comments from students in a D. Min. seminar who had as one of their requirements the memorization of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians in its entirety. Understandably, to undertake the memorization of an entire book as an assignment for a doctoral seminar was a daunting task, since most students in the program were in their forties or early fifties. A look of terror could easily be read on their countenance when we went through the syllabus. And yet, after being gently persuaded by my unwillingness to change the assignment, those who opted for the assignment succeeded in doing it. It took them no more than three months in the unaltered routines of their lives and ministries. Here are some evaluations of the task received from them at the end of the process:

Dr. G.,

Thank you for your encouragement and help in our Scripture memory. Though this task has certainly been challenging, it has proved to be one of the best things I have done. Thank you for leading us in this direction. It is making a difference in my life.

Dr. G.,

Attached you will find the Ephesians memorization assignment from the Integrating Christian Faith and Practice doctoral seminar. I chose the HCSB because this is the translation I preach from. This has been an enriching experience. I plan to continue memorizing other books of the Bible as part of my ongoing devotional practice. Thanks for the challenge!

Dr. G.,

Thanks for the additional time. The task has been both easier and more difficult than I expected. Getting to a place of general memory was much easier than I expected. However, taking it to the final level of being able to write it without any reference to the text has been very difficult, although it has brought a deep

level of understanding also. The amount of time required has been a surprise - it has consumed much more time than I had planned. However, I now know the book in a manner that I have never come close to in the past. This extension will enable me to enjoy the final phase without so much pressure. I will consider book memory again in the future as it brings a comprehensive view that is impossible through any other method. I also believe that the next time would be easier, knowing how to approach it, and what to expect.

Dr. G.,

I am sending the Ephesians memory work now. This has been both a beneficial and intensive effort (for an old guy). It would have been easier if I had not been in the text previously in so many translations. However, without doubt memorizing a book provides a tremendous tool for both spiritual benefit and as a tool to be able to study and teach a book. I intend to preach through the book now that I have such an extensive grasp of it. Thanks.

Dr. G.,

Attached is my corrected Ephesians memory assignment. It was a very hard but rewarding assignment. I really think I will try to tackle other books of the Bible. Thank you for your investment in our education and spiritual growth.

Sir,

To tell you the truth, in some ways I did better than I thought I would but in others I left out parts I should have known but they just escaped me at my time of need. Thanks for challenging me to do this, it has been a great experience I expect to continue. I will spend some more needed time with Ephesians before I try to tackle another book.

Dr. G.,

Attached is my herculean effort at memorizing Ephesians for DR 30060. Thank you for the challenge--it has helped me to become a more consistent and serious student of the Word.

Dr. G.,

Thank you for issuing this challenge to us. I have been greatly encouraged by this project.

Dr. G.,

Thank you for the challenge. I would have never thought that this was really attainable.

Dr. G.,

Today I was driving in heavy traffic in Memphis. Something made me think of Ephesians and I began to quote it in Spanish ... I could not have done that if you had not given the memorization assignment. Thanks for showing me that I can.

I believe the quotes speak for themselves. The most encouraging aspect of their effort is that if students in their forties and fifties can do it, then anybody can do it. In fact, in more than two decades of giving book memorization assignments in my classes, there were very few students who, once they opted for the assignment, were unable to finish it.

I can think of no better way of closing the first part of this article than to tease out an idea, which I hereby put in print for the first time. It has been a personal burden for some time, and one that I believe it is worth exploring, though I am aware that would be neither easy to make a persuasive case for it, nor easy to be implemented. Yet, it is a novel and intriguing proposal, one that I am hopeful could be tried in the not too distant future. In essence the idea is to design and implement a program for a biblical studies designed entirely on Scripture memorization. What student of theology today would not enroll in a seminary that would have Paul, Moses, David, and Isaiah on their faculty? Who would not want to study the Pentateuch with Moses, Hebrew Prophets with Isaiah and Jeremiah, or the Psalms with David? Who would not sign up for a class on the earthly life of Jesus taught by Mark, or on the sermons of Jesus with Matthew, or the history of the early church with Luke? Who would miss a chance to take Paul's course on the use of the Hebrew Scriptures in the New Testament, or study eschatology with John the Revelator? You get the picture. Such a seminary would have no problem recruiting

students. But this is precisely what the Bible is and does. The Bible is an open forum of instruction in which these men of God, their ideas, theology, ministry, and life experience can be encountered as a firsthand account. They emerge from the Scriptures as the ones who teach us, mold us, and challenge us; they expect from us to study them, to scrutinize them, and to follow their lead in the ultimate adventure of knowing God. And they do it by means of their words, God's Word, our Scriptures. Memorization of their words is one approach that can offer an intense, direct, unmediated access to their thought, life, and ministry. This might sound simplistic or naïve, but it is neither. All one needs to do is try it.

If such a program would be implemented, what might it look like? Here is a proposal envisaged for a three year program with concentration on the New Testament. This should be completely attainable if the students would give the same effort and time demanded by their regular program of 12-14 credit hours a semester. What can be memorized in three years? Surprisingly much. Here is the list I would recommend, and which I truly believe is within the reach of anyone trying it.

1. *First year - Pauline studies*
 - a. Paul the Younger – Galatians
 - b. Paul the Senior – Ephesians
 - c. Paul the Systematic Theologian – Romans
 - d. Paul the Counselor – 1 Corinthians
 - e. Paul the Pastor – 1 & 2 Timothy

2. *Second year – the Gospels*
 - a. Gospel of Mark
 - b. Sermons of Jesus in Matthew and John

3. *Third year – the Apostolic witnesses & Revelation*
 - a. James
 - b. 1 Peter
 - c. 1 John
 - d. Jude
 - e. Hebrews
 - f. Revelation chps. 1-5, 21-22.
 - g. (bonus 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John)

Memorizing these texts would lead not only to an unmatched grasp of their content. That would be only the beginning. The depths of the theological thought of each writing, the distinct perspective each biblical author brings to the apostolic roundtable, and the nuances of their individual contribution to the canonical corpus of writings will all form an incredibly rich experience and knowledge of God through His Word. Think of the depth of their understanding of the Scriptures and how meaningful their insights would be. Think of the profundity of the sermons that would emerge from their effort. Think of their joy of storing and treasuring God's word in their hearts and mind. Think of the amount of material the Holy Spirit will have at his disposal to radically change their minds, hearts, and lives. May I be as bold as to suggest that no classic format of a M.Div. program, regardless of which school might offer it or who the instructors might be, would prepare the students as thoroughly as this program? Seminary professors have been increasingly complaining about the alarming level of biblical illiteracy among today's students. Here, I suggest, stands a cure that would not only solve the issue of students' biblical illiteracy but would prepare them for ministry and life better than any alternative program that can be conceived. My prayer continues to be that the Lord would raise up a courageous seminary which would dare to implement such a program. I believe that the results would be nothing less than absolutely spectacular.

This challenge brings to an end of this section, which advanced the thesis that serious Scripture memorization is a worthy tool among the instrumentarium of the exegete, both for the seminarian as well as for the seasoned scholar. Where absent, it needs to be promoted; where present, it needs to be intensified; where dormant, it needs to be revived; and where challenged, it needs to be defended. No defense of these ideas would be more efficient than showing several results of the method applied to Paul's second epistle to Timothy.

The best advocacy for Scripture memorization's aspirations to receive a place among the exegete's instrumentarium is to let it speak for itself. This part of my contribution will test the method of book memorization by presenting some of its results when applied to Paul's second epistle to Timothy. It might be useful, in the beginning, to include a brief presentation of the methodology employed in memorizing a book. The methodology presented here claims no universal validity since an

approach that works for some might be completely unproductive for others. This is, however, the approach I have used in my own memorization program and have encouraged the students in my classes to use, and so far it has proven to be successful.

Once I have chosen the book for memorization, that portion of the Scriptures becomes the focus for the following several months. The process of memorization is comprised of four distinct phases.

The first phase, the acquisition, has as a goal the ability to recall and recite the entire book with the aid of a prompter. I set the goal of memorizing 10-12 verses a day, always reviewing what had been memorized to that point, and proceeding to the next group of verses. If done faithfully, reaching the goal is achievable for anyone. By the end of the acquisition phase, the entire book can be recalled from memory, glancing at the open text whenever needed, regardless of how often this would be necessary. It is important to underscore the obvious: the book is not yet known by heart at this stage. In fact it is not known very well at all, but at least each paragraph was memorized separately and reviewed daily.

The second phase, the consolidation, extends anywhere between three to five weeks. The goal for this phase is the ability to recite fluently the entire book from memory, without the help of the prompter. During this phase, the daily objective is to recite the book at least once, preferably in one, but no more than two, sittings. Both the speed and the accuracy of recalling the content increase from day to day. By the end of this phase, after the book has been recited daily for this interval of time, the book is safely stored in the memory.

Once the book is known this well, the third phase starts, the elation, a phase which I continue to consider the most scintillating stage in book memorization. During this phase I spend three or four months on the book, not doing much more than reviewing it daily. The primary goal is to enjoy fully the nourishment that comes from a text perfectly known by heart. By this stage, the fluency of recitation has reached its peak, and total attention can be devoted exclusively to the text itself. The joy of discovering God's truths in the written text reaches its highest intensity, unsurpassed in my experience by any other spiritual disciplines. The last phase, the hibernation, starts when the book is no longer reviewed daily, allowing the exegete to move to the next book.

Memorizing the Scriptures Book-by-Book 2 Timothy Test Case

Before turning the attention to the results of memorizing 2 Timothy, it is helpful to recall one of the axioms of biblical hermeneutics, *Scriptura sacra sui ipsius interpres*, the Bible is its own interpreter. The tenet “Scripture interprets Scripture” is arguably the most fundamental interpretive starting point in Protestant hermeneutics. As a heuristic principle, it had long been observed and practiced, under a variety of names, throughout Jewish and Christian Scripture interpretation. The Reformers made it the cornerstone for establishing the *Sola Scriptura*, one of their distinctive theological pillars. As it will become evident, this principle is directly relevant to the practice of memorizing an entire book since, both during the memorization process as well as after its completion, the book memorized stands as the sole focus of interaction with the Biblical text; no commentaries, no studies, no monographs, no encyclopedias... just *sola Scriptura*, in the most real sense of the syntagma. From this axiom spring forth two other corollaries that should be mentioned here: “the Bible clarifies itself” and “the Bible complements itself.” Both of them are equally operative and useful during memorization.

Given the space considerations, only a sampling of the results from memorizing 2 Timothy will be discussed in this article. The investigation limits itself to three aspects, and though they are similar in some respects, it is still beneficial to treat them separately. All three are directly relevant to the work of memorization.

a. Intratextuality

One way of observing the aforementioned axiom is through the phenomenon of intratextuality. Linguists define intratextuality as the literary phenomenon in which similar parts within a text were intended by the author to be read in light of each other. Exploring the phenomenon of intratextuality ranks among the most efficient activities for acquiring a fuller understanding of the book’s message, as well as among the most enjoyable components of memorization. More than any other exegetical tools, memorization enables a heightened capacity to

investigate and to appreciate the inner texture of ideas and themes in the book, providing not only a holistic picture of the writing, but also a detailed understanding of each constituent passage.

Many examples of intratextuality are easily noticeable during the earlier stages of memorization, either because they are in close proximity, or because they have a distinct resonance. The expression “that day”, for example, is employed three times in this brief epistle:

2 Tim. 1:12, “That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day”;

2 Tim. 1:18, “May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus”;

2 Tim. 4:8 “Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”

The nature of “that day” could be profiled by noting what each verse discloses about it. It is the day of the consummate disclosure of God’s grace, either in damning judgment or in rewarding vindication. “That day” is invariably and unambiguously linked with the parousia, the appearing of our Lord and Savior. Once this designation is made, it is easy to see how the thought becomes embryonic as it interlocks with several other topics that are part of the theological fabric of the epistle. In 2 Tim 4:8, “on that day” is linked to “appearing of our Lord” a clear reference to the second coming. Yet in other passages, “the appearing” is a concept referring not to the “second coming” as in 2 Tim 4:8, but, using the same verbiage, to the “first coming” as in 2 Tim 1:10. Instantly several layers of meaning pulsate together clarifying and complementing each other.

Similarly, intertextuality can be noticed with regard to the phrase “good work.” Although it is used only two times in the epistle, it plays a role inverse proportionally to its frequency. The phrase denotes the distinct outcome of salvation:

2 Tim. 2:21, "If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work."

2 Tim. 3:17, "so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Pauline theology, in fact the entirety of New Testament theology, champions the idea that salvation is granted on the basis of God's grace (1:9), through faith (3:15b). Yet, this salvation has "good works" as one of its most important outcomes. In fact, the good works are just as much one of salvation's intended results as they are one of its clearest evidence. The Christian then is someone saved not by good works, but for good works. Both passages above advocate this truth, each of them focusing in turn on the two distinct facets of the same reality. The first looks at man's responsibility in the process ("[i]f a man cleanses himself" then "he will be ... prepared to do any good work"), while the second looks at the role and function of the Scriptures ("[a]ll Scripture is God-breathed and is useful ..." so that "the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work"). The complete gamut of good works triggered by our salvation is suggested by the accompanying adjectives "any" and "every/all."

Examples of intertextuality that can be detected with ease can be readily multiplied. It is evident in the prepositional phrase "away from the truth," which alerts of the constant danger of drifting away, as did Hymenaeus and Philetus "who wandered away from the truth ... say[ing] that the resurrection has already taken place" (2:18); so, too, did the many unnamed ones, who "will not put up with sound doctrine, ..., but turn their ears away from the truth" (4:4). Intertextuality is also seen in the recurrent accent on "faith and love," cardinal among other virtues. Timothy is to keep the sound teaching "with faith and love" (1:13), all the while fleeing the youthful desires as he pursues "... faith, love, ..." (2:22), as it was modeled unquestionably by the old apostle, "you know all about my ... faith, ..., love" (3:10). No one memorizing the epistle can miss the deep sadness of the apostle, reflected in the phrase "(all) have deserted me." Incredible as it may sound, by the end of his ministry, many had parted ways with the apostle. Some were from his beloved Asia

“everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes ” [1:15]), others were in Rome (“Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me” [4:10]), while still others parted at the neediest time in Paul’s captivity (“at my first defense, no-one came to my support, but everyone deserted me” [4:16]). These and similar examples of intertextuality surface effortlessly as the book is reviewed, adding richness to the emerging grand picture of this remarkable apostolic testament.

Other cases of intratextuality, however, are more subtle. They tend to emerge only after spending considerable time in the epistle. A case in point is Paul’s references to the will (of someone):

2 Tim. 1:1, “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,”

2 Tim. 2:26, “and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.”

The first usage of the collocation “the will of” is in reference to God, while the second is with regard to the devil. By juxtaposing the two verses, a truth, consistent with the tenor of the whole Scripture, emerges: human beings are not endowed with nor able to acquire a status of absolute independence. While often desired or pretended by them, independence from the will of a higher power or authority is impossible. Humans are positioned at the very center of the confrontation between the will of God and the will of the devil: they must either conform to the will of God (Paul being a worthy example [1:1]), or submit as captives to the will of the devil (as those in “the trap of the devil” have [2:26]). It goes without saying that both references to “the will of” may be developed further, supplemented by other relevant information available in the epistle.

A similar case of an intertextual connection not immediately obvious in the early stages of memorization is found in the dual, complementary roles of the Scriptures and the preacher.

2 Tim. 3:16, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God might be thoroughly equipped"

2 Tim. 4:2, "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage, with great patience and careful instruction."

The role of the Scriptures in rebuking and correcting (besides, of course, teaching and training) is paralleled by that of the preacher, who, as he preaches the Word, also corrects and rebukes. Herein lies the solution for a balanced spiritual life: believers are to be exposed to the words of the Scriptures as well as to the preaching of the Scriptures. This intratextual clue also casts light on the crucially important role of the preacher who, through the Word preached, contributes to steering God's people in actions similar to those of the Scriptures. God uses both the written Word and the preached Word to accomplish his work in his people. In Paul's understanding, both sides are equally indispensable for a healthy spiritual life. Timothy's own life stood as an example of this synergy. He was exposed to the Scriptures "from infancy" (3:15), no doubt helped by his grandmother and mother (1:5). At the same time, he also benefited from the teaching given by Paul, the minister of the Word (3:14).

b. Thematic Soundings

Another benefit of book memorization is acquiring the ability to detect the main theme(s) and primary theological interest(s) of the writing. Searching for the major themes of any given biblical book always leads to several potential contenders. Memorization of an entire book is arguably one of the most effective ways to collect, assess, and decide on these potential contenders. There is a degree of overlap between thematic soundings and the intratextuality discussed above. Yet, thematic investigations deserve separate treatment because themes are broader constituents of the writing's theological fabric and they encompass more than mere words or expressions used by the author.

No reader of 2 Timothy would fail to identify Paul's intense preoccupation with the transfer of the apostolic kerygma to the next generation. This process is primarily referred to by means of a specific group of cognates ("teaching, teacher, to teach") used in no less than eight verses in 2 Timothy:

2 Tim. 1:13, "What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus."

2 Tim. 2:17, "Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus ..."

2 Tim. 3:10, "You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance ..."

2 Tim. 3:16, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,..."

2 Tim. 2:2, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."

2 Tim. 2:24, "And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful."

2 Tim. 1:11, "And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher."

2 Tim. 4:3, "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear."

The sheer number of occurrences, as well as their uniform distribution throughout the epistle, indicate that the concept behind the words of this semantic domain is especially important to Paul. The book needs not to be reviewed many times before this aspect becomes very clear. Each recitation from memory of the epistle usually garners a

similar cache of words or semantic domains with prominence in the texture of the writing (e.g., “endurance, perseverance, and suffering” or “grace, salvation, faith and love”). What memorization accomplishes quite well in addition to simply determining these words/themes is also helping to build an intricate matrix of meaningful interconnections between them.

It might be suggested that the process outlined above is not dissimilar to using a concordance. In fact, it could be argued that making use of a concordance might be more time efficient. The objection seems fair enough to require an answer. Time permits only three short considerations for a rebuttal, though each one could be developed more fully. First, a concordance is as good as the user’s ability to know what to look for. Second, there is a vast difference in the net results: while a concordance when used properly can supply the same raw data, the words identified through memorization emerge not as independent lexical units mechanically looked up in the concordance, but rather they come as part of a network of intricate lexical ties with multiple resonances within the text. Third, one should always decide on the more efficient of the two approaches by trying them both and assessing them. I believe that the matter will be settled in favor of memorization.

c. Discipleship: One Thematic Dominant

The remainder of the paper traces one of these prominent themes in the epistle to a deeper and fuller exploration. Each of the facets presented below were first identified during the daily recitation of the book. As it usually happens, ideas that seem unrelated at first accumulate slowly and perceptively to form a growing cluster, reaching semantic critical mass, around which grand ideas of the book (and of Paul) crystallize. Not infrequently, just from sheer thoughtful recitation a grand, architectonic structure becomes noticeable and begins to dominate the perception of the book’s theology. These moments of “personal encounter” – for lack of a better term – with God’s Word are the ultimate goals of daily recitation. It is during these moments of theological crystallization that the elation linked earlier with the third phase is markedly present. David refers in his Psalms to this phenomenon of absolute delight:

Ps. 1:2, "... but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night."

Ps. 19:7, 10, "The law of the LORD is perfect ... More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb."

Ps. 119:72, "The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces."

Ps. 119:103, "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

These moments are indeed the greatest incentive to book-by-book memorization. One such grand theme in 2 Timothy is discipleship. While a complete biblical theology of discipleship in Paul's writings must include all his letters, the goal here is to limit the considerations to only this epistle (which is, in reality, a very representative model as far as discipleship is concerned). This self-imposed limitation, however, is actually very useful in several ways. First, it gives evidence to just how much information about discipleship is amassed in 2 Timothy. It is often the case that jumping to other books to complete the contour of a theme prevents one from mining deeper into what one book has to offer. Memorization of a book is a good safeguard in this respect. Second, it helps the exegete to relive the experience of many first-century Christian congregations who might have had available only one apostolic writing, or at most a very limited number of them. Their weekly meeting on the Lord's Day exposed them repeatedly to this apostolic word, which, by reading and exposition, would end up being ingrained in their hearing and memories. It is only by the second century that Christian congregations had the benefit of using the entire collection of the New Testament canon. Third, and yet foremost, it gives the clearest evidence in support of book memorization and the benefit of focusing on one book at the time. The question to ponder, then, is what does 2 Timothy have to say about discipleship?

It might be useful to start with a working definition for biblical discipleship, one that emerges from direct textual observations on the way Paul describes his relationship with Timothy: Discipleship is a special

type of relationship intentionally and purposefully developed between followers of Christ in which more mature Christians help, at manifold levels and in a variety of ways (e.g., teaching, guiding, training, exhorting, leading, helping, commissioning, assisting, encouraging, rebuking, etc.) less mature Christians to grow in their spiritual life and in their ministry of the Gospel.

Several comments are in order for unpacking the definition. The use of the term “relationship” to describe the genus proximum of discipleship is justified on the basis of Pauline parlance. The metaphor in Paul’s writings most often used in conjunction with discipleship is that of spiritual parenting (fatherhood), a distinctive terminology which Paul frequently employs: “Paul ... to Timothy my true son in the faith” (1 Tim. 1:2); “Paul ... to Timothy, my dear son” (2 Tim. 1:2); “You, then, my son...” (2 Tim. 2:1). The similarities between natural, biological parenting and discipleship are extensive and are often invoked to shape a better understanding of the latter. It is also important to remember that the relationships forged within the boundaries of discipleship are not identical to nor superimposed on blood or kin relationships – in fact, this is alluded to in 1:5 where Paul mentions Timothy’s grandmother Lois and mother Eunice. Similarly, neither are they to be confounded with the de facto relationships established between believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, while discipleship at times may involve either familial or ecclesial relationships, it cannot be reduced to or be confused with them; discipleship is a distinct type of relationship. It is *sui generis*.

Although discipleship is not to be confused with the relationship of Christian brotherhood within the body of Christ, it is important to underline that Christian discipleship is possible only because of a commonality of faith. Christian discipleship according to Paul is built on the foundation of shared spiritual realities and truths. The prevalence of this aspect, traced here in a limited but representative sample, cannot be overemphasized:

2 Tim. 1:2, “Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

2 Tim. 1:14, “Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.”

2 Tim. 1:8, 9, “by the power of God,⁹ who has saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.”

2 Tim. 1:9, “This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time...”

2 Tim. 4:8, “... the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”

Though Paul repeatedly insists on his God-given appointment as herald, apostle, and teacher (2 Tim. 1:1, 1:11, cf. 1 Tim. 2:7), he does not fail to remind Timothy, as well as his readers, about the wealth of spiritual realities that they share in common. Christ is “our” Lord, not Paul’s Lord only; the Holy Spirit lives in “us,” not in Paul only; God saved and called “us,” not only the apostle; the grace was given to “us,” not to Paul only; the crown of righteous is not for the apostle only but for “all” who long for the appearing of the Lord. This is the solid foundation on which discipleship is built. Its ethos is not that of an elitist society. The privilege as well as the responsibility of participating in it are within the reach of all who belong to Christ, based on the wealth of shared spiritual realities.

Just as important as its foundation, mention must be made of the very essence of discipleship, to which Paul often alludes. Discipleship consists of entrusting one’s spiritual authority and heritage to the next generation of believers in a personal, direct, unmediated way, by instruction and by example. This “passing on of the authority” was a complex process, often accompanied by external symbolism mirroring the deeper spiritual truths of discipleship:

2 Tim. 1:6, “For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”

The act of laying on of hands, unmatched in importance in the economy of NT leadership, is corroborated throughout the epistolary corpus of the NT (cf. 1 Tim. 5:22). The complexity of this act practiced by the early church, as it is represented both in the epistles of the NT as well

as in the post-canonical writings of the Church Fathers, prevents a fuller analysis here. Behind this act, however, stands a condition of the discipling relationship that is often forgotten or undervalued. The transfer of spiritual authority was done through a process characterized foremost by unmediated, physical presence. What Paul handed down to Timothy was not done in writing (as important as his pastoral letters are), nor was it done by proxy agents: it was transferred by direct presence and example. This reality is reflected in several passages:

2 Tim. 3:10, "You, however, know all my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, ..."

2 Tim. 3:14b, "... because you know those from whom you learned it ..."

2 Tim. 1:18b, "... you know very well in how many ways he helped me..."

Here is the textual evidence that discipleship was done in direct contact. Paul did not simply communicate information to Timothy: he modeled it, he displayed it, and he lived it out. In the most profound sense of the word, he incarnated it. "You know my way of life" means that Timothy saw it first hand, observed it, participated in it, and assessed it; and all this was done in direct, unmediated contact with his disciple maker. Discipleship cannot be done in a mailman fashion by handing down the truths of Christianity as a transfer of information. This is hardly surprising, since this master-pupil relationship has been ingrained in all human societies and activities that involved discipleship. One cannot become a good pianist, tennis player, master painter, carpenter, engineer, politician, preacher, theologian, or evangelist just by receiving a set of information. Discipleship is so much more than just transfer of information; it involves the transfer of passions, skills, and experience—a transfer of one's very life—and all was done in close proximity: discharging all the duties of ministry together. Discipleship was serious business for Paul. It required openness, vulnerability, disclosure, and sacrifice of time and energy. The very future of the Gospel and of the Kingdom depended upon it. One cannot but remember Jesus' words "... he appointed twelve that they might be with him!" (Mark 3:14, NIV).

How exactly did this process take place? Here is, in closing, an extensive list of dimensions entailed in the process which surface in 2 Timothy. Each one of them has been noticed at one time or another during the recitation of the book.

Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel / Timothy is summoned to not be ashamed:

2 Tim. 1:12, "Yet, I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed,..."

2 Tim. 1:8, "So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner ..."

Paul suffered for the Gospel / Timothy is summoned to join in the suffering for the Gospel:

2 Tim. 2:8b, 9, "This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained"

2 Tim. 1:8, "But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God,"

Paul endured every possible hardship / Timothy is called to endure in the same way:

2 Tim. 2:10, "Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect that they too may obtain the salvation ..."

2 Tim. 2:3, "Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus."

Paul suffered persecution / Timothy, as one who will live a godly life, will tread on the same path:

2 Tim. 3:11, "You know about ... persecutions, sufferings--what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured..."

2 Tim. 3:12, "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,"

Paul was strengthened / Timothy will have to be strengthened:

2 Tim. 4:17, "But the Lord ... gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed ..."

2 Tim. 2:1, "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

Paul was in chains / Timothy will most likely end up there. The information in Heb. 13:23 informs us that the potentiality became reality in Timothy's life:

2 Tim. 2:9, "... I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal ..."

Heb. 13:23, "I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been set free."

Paul kept the faith to the end / Timothy will have to keep the faith and love:

2 Tim. 4:7, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith"

2 Tim. 1:13, "What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith ..."

Paul fought well the faith's battle / Timothy is to do the same:

2 Tim. 4:7, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith"

1 Tim. 1:18, "... you may fight the battle well,..."

Paul was appointed / Timothy is appointed to ministry:

2 Tim. 1:11, "And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher."

2 Tim. 1:6, "... the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands."

Paul was summoned to the ministry of the Gospel and of the Word / Timothy is summoned to a distinct ministry of the Gospel and of the Word:

2 Tim. 1:11, "And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher."

2 Tim. 4:2, 5, "Preach the Word, ..., instruct, do the work of an evangelist, ..."

Paul entrusted the good deposit, the teachings of sound doctrine, to Timothy / Timothy must continue the process with other faithful men:

2 Tim. 1:11, "...what was entrusted to me, for that day."

2 Tim. 2:2, "And the things you have heard me say ... entrust to reliable men ..."

Paul reminded Timothy of his responsibilities / Timothy is to remind those following him of their responsibilities:

2 Tim. 1:6, "For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God..."

2 Tim. 2:14, "Keep reminding them of these things ..."

Paul remembered realities of the life of faith / Timothy is to remember essential truths:

2 Tim. 1:4-5, "Recalling your tears, I long to see you,... 5 I have been reminded of your sincere faith..."

2 Tim. 2:8, "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David..."

Paul laid hands on Timothy / Timothy is to lay hands, after careful consideration, on the men under his spiritual authority:

2 Tim. 1:6, "... which is in you through the laying on of my hands."

1 Tim. 5:22, "Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, ..."

If all these facets were to be reduced to one verse, this would certainly be 2 Tim. 2:2. What Paul received, he entrusted to Timothy / what Timothy received from Paul, he must entrust to the next generation:

2 Tim. 2:2, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."

What Paul received from the Lord, he entrusted to Timothy; what Timothy received from Paul, he is to entrust to the next generation, which is to continue the process. The list above is evidence of the many-faceted nature of the discipleship endeavor. Behind each individual item on the list, however, there seem to be two operating principles which can sum up biblical discipleship, or at least how it was perceived and how it functioned in Paul's relationship with Timothy.

Rule One

The discipler can never ask the disciple to do what he himself is not practicing. As evidenced in the verses above, Paul disciplined Timothy by example, not by mere instruction. This is a paramount rule of discipleship all too often forgotten. In fact, throughout the history of the Christian Church the situation has deteriorated so much that it lead to

the concoction of many cynic aphorisms that ridicule discipleship. In the Eastern Orthodox Church prevalent in Eastern Europe, there is the saying: "Do what the priest says, not what he does!" Paul would have shivered at the reality behind the cliché and would have anathemized any so-called disciple maker not himself walking on the path he expected his disciples to tread. The very status of a disciple maker demands that the instruction given to a disciple is an overflow of a way of life in which that instruction is consistently and genuinely lived out. Paul could legitimately instruct Timothy in matters of discipleship because he himself was practicing them. This is foremost a matter of integrity: because Paul practiced it, he also had the moral authority to demand it from others. The responsibilities of this rule are directly laid on the disciple maker. Paul could not have urged his disciples to a vibrant prayer life, if he, the master, lacked one. And that stands true for all the other disciplines that he was eager to pass on to his disciples.

Rule Two

The discipler always summons the disciple to do what he himself is practicing. The second rule is equally important, and lays the responsibility upon the disciple. The disciple maker does more than just suggest possible actions for the disciple: he expects them; even more, he demands them. Once the disciplines are present in the life of the disciple maker, the responsibility of following rests with the disciple. No reading of Paul's letters would suggest that he would have been satisfied only with giving Timothy a set of instructions and his own example and then leaving it up to him to follow or not. The text suggests more the verbiage of a command: "I, Paul, am doing it; you, Timothy, have to do it too." There is not a hint of volunteering involved in discipleship. By virtue of the grace of God given both to the disciple maker and to the disciple, the way of discipleship with all that it entails is compulsory. There is no leeway attached to it which would allow the disciple to sign in or out, as he pleases, from the responsibilities of teaching, preaching, evangelism, pastoring, discipling, or many others which the disciple maker is practicing. No expression captures this aspect better than Paul's qualifier "in season and out of season" from 2 Tim. 4:3.

There are many other facets of discipleship that transpire in Paul's correspondence with Timothy. The ones outlined above are just snippets of the complex master-pupil relationship, plenary illustrated in their relationship. What has been listed above is a token of the richness of Paul's theology of discipleship. More importantly, for the theme of this article, is the fact that each one of them surfaced in the process of reciting the book: they are the direct result of memorizing the epistle. The mind has an incredible capacity to make connection, to see implications, to trace similarities, to assess contrasts, to see multiple levels of interdependence of the text, and so on. And when that God-given capacity is let loose on the Word of God, the inexhaustible fountain and repository of divine truths, elation is the guaranteed outcome. One only has to "taste and see."

COMPARING LUTHER'S *ENFLAMED DIALOGUE*
WITH TYNDALE'S *PRAYER OF THE SINNER*

THOMAS P. JOHNSTON

Professor of Evangelism

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Kansas City, MO 64118

TJohnston@mbts.edu

Below is a very convicting work from the pen of Protestant Reformer Martin Luther, written in 1519. It is paralleled with its 1526 translation and adaptation by William Tyndale. Luther took a common religious ritual in his day, the saying of the Lord's Prayer, and added to it God's response to the seven petitions of the prayer from Scripture. He contextualized a variety of biblical texts and applied them to the person who may recite the Lord's Prayer with a spirit of indifference. The result is a very convicting text.

Luther considered that the Lord's Prayer emphasized "the Law." Therefore, he applied the tutelage of this "Law" to bring the reader of the prayer to see himself as a sinner in need of Christ's forgiveness. Luther referred to his reader praying the prayer as "the Soul." Tyndale, for his part, used as the title "Sinner" for the person praying the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. Both men included this prayer as part of their commentary on the Book of Romans. It is likely that they both considered this *Enflamed Dialogue* as a worthy response to the message of justification by faith in Romans. Perhaps they sought to exemplify what is meant by "calling upon the name of the Lord to be saved" (Rom 10:13).

Luther's "Lord's Prayer" was translated into French in 1519, the same year it appeared in Germany. The original translator gave it the name "Enflamed Dialogue." Then Marguerite, Duchesse of Angoulême, and sister of the King of France, put this prayer into verse giving it both elegance and cultural prominence.

In a very powerful way Luther's *Enflamed Dialogue* took what were to become the great doctrines of the Protestant Reformation and applied them in the form of a prayer. In that way, the readers would be guided to pray biblical words of conviction and confession "from their heart" (Rom 10:6, 8). Could it not be that this very prayer was instrumental in bringing a large wave of persons to "call on the name of the Lord to be saved" in the early 1520's? For example, this author has wondered about the actual time of conversion of the Anabaptist Balthasar Hubmaier. Was it possible that Luther's "Lord's Prayer" was a topic of a discussion when Hubmaier visited the house of Hans Blabhaus in Regensburg for "evangelical meetings" in 1522? If so, is it not possible that heartfelt prayer could follow such a discussion? While based on conjecture due to the lack of sources on this topic, the availability and distribution of such a prayer could provide a definitive point at which Hubmaier turned from his Catholic ministry at Beateous Mary, leaving Regensburg in order to pastor and lead a gospel-revival in the city of Waldshut.

As for the French, despite waves of intense persecution, Protestantism became a strong force in France. Could it not be that the *Enflamed Dialogue*, put in verse by the King's sister, burned in the hearts of some throughout France as their country was evangelized? Would it not follow that such a prayer would lead to a rich harvest of souls? It was reported that there were "well over a hundred thousand" French Protestants before the "First War of Religion" of 1562 and many more by the Saint Bartholomew Massacre of 1572.

As for its English language usage, Luther's *Enflamed Dialogue* was translated into English and revised by William Tyndale in 1526. He appended it to the preface of his translation of the Book of Romans. Sadly, Tyndale's *Prayer of the Sinner* was locked into his 1526 edition, never to be included in any subsequent compilations or later republications of Tyndale's writings. Amazingly, Tyndale's *Prayer of the Sinner* remained unknown and unstudied until Malcolm Yarnell found it and published it 478 years later in 2004.

In his introduction to the prayer, Yarnell explained how he providentially came upon it:

While reading through the original documents collected en masse at the Bodleian Library at Oxford University, this author

was concerned to discover Tyndale's doctrine of royal priesthood, especially as evidenced in his biblical commentaries. Having finished a thorough reading of Tyndale's preface to Paul's book of Romans, an unexpected document was found appended to that preface. This was a surprise because both of the authoritative editions of the collected works of Tyndale, which had been previously consulted, neglected to reprint the document.

For this present author, a student told me about Yarnell's article on *Prayer of the Sinner* in 2013. Later, after reading Yarnell's article, I noticed a French book in my home library titled, *La Substance de l'Évangile de Luther* ["The Substance of the Gospel of Luther"]. I had acquired this book as part of my inheritance from my late father's library. When I looked in the table of contents, sure enough, there was a section titled "The Lord's Prayer" [*L'Oraison Dominicale*]. It was a French translation of Luther's 1519 *Enflamed Dialogue*, and was very similar to Tyndale's *Prayer of the Sinner*.

Therefore below please find my English translation of Luther's 1519 *Enflamed Dialogue* as published in French from Strasbourg. Then following Luther is Tyndale's adaptation of this prayer in English. The original French and the original English are provided in footnotes. The form of the prayer is an antiphonal dialogue between the Soul's entreaty and God's response. It comprises the seven entreaties of the Lord's Prayer, as found in Matthew 6:9-13, concluding with several sentences on faith and God's assistance.

Opening Address

[Luther] The Soul. Oh our Father, who is in heaven, we are your children, on earth, separated from you, in great misery. What a great distance there is between you and us; how can we return to you and to our motherland?

[Tyndale] The Sinner. Our Father which are in heaven, what a great space is between you and us. How therefore shall we, your children, here on

earth, banished and exiled in this vale of misery and wretchedness, come home to you in our natural country?

God's Response

[Luther] God. "A child honors his father and a servant his master." If I am your father, where is the honor that you owe me? If I am your Lord, do you fear me and do you respect me? For my holy name is blasphemed and dishonored among you and by you (Isa. 52).

[Tyndale] God. The child honors his own father, and the servant his master. If I be your father, where is my honor? If I be your Lord, where is my fear? (Mal. 1). For my name through you and by your means is blasphemed, railed upon, and evil spoken (Isa. 52).

First Entreaty

[Luther] The Soul. Oh Father, that is only all too true. We recognize our sin. Be a gracious father and do not take into account our sins, but give us your grace in order that we may live in such a way that your name would be sanctified in us. Hinder us from thinking, saying, doing, having or from proposing to ourselves that which would not contribute to your praise and to your glory, in order that we may diligently seek before all else the glory of your name and not at all our vain glory. Make us love you as children love, fear, and respect their father.

[Tyndale] The Sinner. Alas, our Father that is truth. We acknowledge our sin and trespass. Nevertheless, please be a merciful Father, and do not deal with us according to what we deserve, neither judge us by the rigors of your Law, but give us grace that we may so live, that your name may be hallowed and sanctified in us. And keep our hearts that we neither do nor speak, no, that we not once think or purpose anything, but that which is to your honor and praise. And above all things, make your name and honor be sought of us and not our name and vain glory. And by your mighty power bring to pass in us—that we may love and fear you as a son his Father.

God's Response

[Luther] God. Isaiah 2, Genesis 8. How can my honor and my name be sanctified among you, when your thoughts and hearts are so entirely inclined to evil and in the bonds of sin? And moreover no one can sing my praise in a strange land (Psa. 137).

[Tyndale] God. How can my honor and name be hallowed among you, when your hearts and thoughts are always inclined to evil? And you are in bondage and captivity under sin? Moreover, seeing that no man can sing my laud and praise in a strange country (Psa. 136 [137]).

Second Entreaty

[Luther] The Soul. Oh Father, it is true, we recognize that all our members are inclined to evil and that the world, the flesh, and the devil want to reign in us and chase away your honor and your name. That is why we beseech you, deliver us from that misery, establish your reign, in order that sin would be expelled and that we may be rendered holy, in order that you alone reign in us and that we become your kingdom by placing at your service all the strength of our souls and bodies.

[Tyndale] The Sinner. O Father, that is truth. We feel our members, yea and also our very hearts prone and ready to sin, and that the world, the flesh, and the devil rule in us, and expel the due honor of your holy name. Wherefore we beseech you most merciful Father, for the love that you have unto your Son, help us out of this miserable bondage, and thy kingdom come, to drive out the sin, to loose the bonds of Satan, to tame the flesh, to make us righteous and perfect, and to cleave unto you. That you alone may reign in us, and that we may be your kingdom and possession, and that we obey you with all our power and strength, both within and without.

God's Response

[Luther] God. Deut. 32. I destroy he whom I want to help and I kill them, I render poor, bring to naught, him who I want to bring to life, to salvation, and whom I want to render rich and holy. But you do not accept that I think and act in this way (Psa. 77). How then can I help you? What more can I do for you? (Isa. 5).

[Tyndale] God. Whom I help, them I destroy. And whom I make living, safe, rich, and good, them I will condemn and cast them away, make them beggars and bring them to naught. But so to be cured by me will you not suffer? (Psa. 77) How then shall I heal you, yea, and what shall I do more? (Isa. 5).

Third Entreaty

[Luther] The Soul. We regret that we have not understood nor accepted that which your salvific hand wanted to do for us. O Father, give us your grace and your help that we may allow you to work your divine will in us. And if it hurts us, continue, correct, cut out, strike, burn. Always do what you want, in order that only your will be done and not ours. Do not suffer, dear Father, that we undertake or accomplish anything according to our ideas, our will. For our will and your will are contrary; yours is only good, even though it does not always seem to be so, and ours is bad, even though it sometimes has a beautiful appearance.

[Tyndale] The Sinner. That is to us great sorrow and grief, that we can neither understand nor suffer your wholesome hand. Wherefore, help dear Father, open our eyes, and work patience in us, that we may understand your wholesome hand. And also patiently suffer your godly will to be fulfilled in us. Furthermore, though this most wholesome cure be ever so painful to us; yet go forward with it—punish, beat, cut, burn, destroy, bring to naught, damn, cast into hell, and do whatever you will—that your will may be fulfilled and not ours. Forbid, dear Father, and in no wise suffer us to follow our own thoughts and imaginations, neither to execute our own will, meaning, and purpose. For your will and ours are clean contrary to one another. Yours is only good, though it appears otherwise to our blind reason; and ours evil, though [in] our blindness [we] see it not.

God's Response

[Luther] God, Psalm 77. It has happened quite often that they love me with their lips and that their heart is far from me. And when I make an effort to correct them, they flee and elude my action, as you read in Psalm 77, "They were converted in the day of battle." They started well so that I decided to take care of them, but then they turned back and relapsed into their sin to my dishonor.

[Tyndale] God. I am well served and dealt with all, that men love me with their lips and their hearts are far from me. And when I take them in hand, so to make them better, and to help them, then they run backward, and in the midst of their curing, while their health is working, they withdraw from me, as you read in Psalm 77 (Lat. *conversi sunt in die belli*). They are turned back in the day of battle. That is to say, they which began well and committed themselves unto me, that I should take them in hand and cure them, are gone back from me in time of temptation and killing of the flesh, and are returned to sin and unto dishonoring of me again.

Fourth Entreaty

[Luther] The Soul. Alas, Father, that is true. No man is strong in and of himself (1 Kings 2). Who could subsist before you, if you do not strengthen us and you yourself do not console us? That is why, dear Father, spur us on, accomplish your will in order that we may become your kingdom, to your honor and your glory. But, dear Father, give us your strength in this matter by your holy word, give us our daily bread. Print on our hearts the image of your dear son Jesus Christ who is the true bread from heaven, in order that, strengthened by him, we may accept and joyfully support that our will be thwarted and destroyed and that your will may be accomplished. Grant also your grace to all Christianity, send us instructed priests and preachers who will not teach vain fables, but your holy Gospel and Jesus Christ.

[Tyndale] The Sinner. O Father it is true. No man can be strong in his own strength—in the second chapter of the First of the Kings. Yea and who are able to suffer and abide before your hand, if you yourself do not strength and comfort us? Wherefore, most merciful Father, take us unto your cure, fulfill your will in us that we may be your kingdom and your inheritance, unto you laud and praise. Also, dear Father, strengthen and

comfort us in such business with your Holy Word. Give us our daily bread. Engrave and print your Son Jesus in our hearts, that we, strengthened through him may cheerfully and gladly suffer and endure the destroying and killing of our will, and the fulfilling of your will. Yea, and shed out your grace upon all Christianity and send priests and preachers, to teach us your Son purely. And feed us with the word of your Holy Gospel, and not with the dregs and chaff of fables and men's doctrine.

God's Response

[Luther] God. Jeremiah 5 and elsewhere. It is not good to give to dogs holy things and the bread of children. You sin daily, and while I want you to preach day and night, you do not listen and my word is despised.

[Tyndale] God. It is not good to cast pearls before swine, neither to give holy things and the children's bread to the dogs and hounds. You sin continuously without ceasing, and though I let my word be preached among you ever so much, yet you follow it not, neither obey, but despise it.

Fifth Entreaty

[Luther] The Soul. Oh Father, have mercy and do not refuse us daily bread. We regret that we have not appreciated your holy word and we ask you to have patience with your poor children. Forgive us this sin. Do not judge us, for no one can be considered righteous by you. Take into account only your promise, in order that we may forgive those who have trespassed against us, because you have promised your forgiveness. Not that we merit your forgiveness because of our forgiveness. But you are true and you have promised in your grace to forgive all those who forgive their neighbors. We place our confidence in your promise.

[Tyndale] The Sinner. O Father, have mercy on us, and deny us not that bread of love. It grieves us much, even at the very root of our hearts, that we cannot satisfy your word and follow it. We desire you therefore to have patience with us, your poor and wretched children. And forgive us our trespass and guilt. And judge us not according to your Law. For no

man is righteous in your presence. Look on your promises, we forgive our trespassers, and that with all of our hearts, and unto such hasten your promised forgiveness. Not that we through such forgiveness are worthy of forgiveness, but that you are true, and of your gracious mercy hast promised forgiveness unto all them that forgive their neighbors. In this promise is all our hope and trust.

God's Response

[Luther] God, Psalm 77. Very often I forgive and I deliver, and you do not persevere. You are people of little faith. You do not know how to watch and persevere with me, you very quickly relapse into temptation (Matt. 26).

[Tyndale] God. I forgive you often, and you never abide steadfast. Children of little faith are you! You cannot watch and endure with me a little while. But once again fall into temptation, Matt. 26.

Sixth Entreaty

[Luther] The Soul. We are weak and sickly, oh Father, and the assaults of the flesh and of the world are strong and varied. Oh dear Father, uphold us and do not allow us to fall into temptation and relapse into sin, but give us thy grace in order that we may persevere and fight valiantly up until our end. For without your grace and your help we can do nothing.

[Tyndale] The Sinner. Weak are we, O Father, and feeble. And the temptation [is] great and manifold, in the flesh and in the world. Keep us, Father, with your mighty power, and let us not fall into temptation and sin again. But give us grace that we may abide standing, and fight manfully unto the end, for without your grace we can do nothing.

God's Response

[Luther] God, Psalm 2. I am righteous, and upright is my judgment. That is why sin cannot remain unpunished. And it is necessary that you endure

affliction. That you may suffer by it is a consequence of your sin that requires me to punish it and shackle it.

[Tyndale] God. I am righteous and my judgment is right. And therefore sin may not go unpunished. Yea, and you must suffer evil and affliction, and as doubtful that you have temptation thereby, that is only your sins fault, which compels me thereunto, to kill it and to heal you. For sin can with no other medicine be drawn out of you, but through adversity and suffering of evil.

Seventh Entreaty

[Luther] The Soul. Because hardship is for us a temptation and threatens to cause us to fall into sin, deliver us from it, dear Father, in order that, liberated from all sins and from all hardships by your divine will, we may become your kingdom and we may praise you, may glorify you, and may sanctify you eternally. Amen.

[Tyndale] The Sinner. For as much then as adversity, tribulation, affliction, and evil, which fight against sin, give us temptation, deliver us out of them. Finish your cure and make us thoroughly whole. That we, loosed from sin and evil, may be unto you a kingdom, to laud, to praise, and to sanctify you. Amen.

Concluding Comments

[Luther] As you taught and commanded us and you have promised to answer us, we hope and we are assured, very dear Father, that in order to do honor to your truthful word, you will give us all this by your grace and by your mercy.

If someone would ask, lastly: "What can I do if I cannot believe that I will be answered?" Answer: Do as the father of the possessed (Mark 9). When Christ told him: "Are you able to believe? All things are possible for him who has faith," this father cried out with tears: "Lord, I believe, come to the aid of my faith if it is too weak."

To God be honor and glory.

[Tyndale] And seeing that you have taught us to pray in this way, and have also promised to hear us, we hope and are sure that you will graciously and mercifully grant us our petitions, for your truth's sake, and to the honoring of your truth. Amen.

Finally, some man will possibly say: "What if I cannot believe in my heart that my prayer is heard?" I answer: "Then do as the father of the possessed did in the 9th of Mark, when Christ said unto him, 'If you could believe, all things are possible unto him that believes.'" The father answered, "I believe, help mine unbelief." That is to say, heal mine unbelief and give me perfect belief and strengthen the weakness of my faith and increase it.

CONCLUSION

Is not the power of this prayer is in its antiphonal dialogue between God and man? The reader is brought through the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer, God withholding each request one at a time. Then in the conclusion, the script turns a corner when Luther, followed by Tyndale, helps the person who is weak in the faith. The person who considers himself hopelessly lost finds hope through the statement of the father of the possessed boy, "help my unbelief." There is a God in heaven who hears the helpless sinner's heart cry out for mercy! What an amazing approach to the Lord's Prayer, turning it into a "Prayer of the Sinner."

***How We Got the New Testament: Text, Transmission, Translation.* By Stanley E. Porter. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013. 222 pp., \$21.99, paperback. ISBN: 978-1441242686.**

When I noticed that Stanley Porter had written on textual criticism with the subtitle *Text, Transmission, Translation*, I hoped for an entry-level textbook, something along the lines of Paul D. Wegner's *A Student's Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible: Its History, Methods and Results* or R. F. Hull's *The Story of the New Testament Text: Movers, Materials, Motives, Methods, and Models*. Porter's volume, a collection of edited lectures delivered at Acadia Divinity College in 2008, lacks charts, tables and pictures of manuscripts common to classroom textbooks and will not compete with Wegner or Hull's volumes. Nonetheless, Porter's clear analysis of the broader philosophical issues related to textual criticism offers theological students insight into the state of the discipline today and makes bold proposals for studying the text of the NT for the future.

In chapter one, "The Text of the New Testament," Porter is first defensive then offensive. He defends the traditional goal of textual criticism, namely seeking the original or explanatory reading. He notes that this goal motivates nearly all textual analysis from Erasmus to Westcott and Hort to Nestle to the Alands. What prompts Porter to uphold the long-standing aim of textual criticism? Recent proposals by Bart D. Ehrman and David A. Parker. In *The Living Text of the Gospels* et al., the latter questions if establishing the original or explanatory reading is even a possibility, suggesting instead that scholars view the text as having a life of its own. Attention should thus be given, according to Parker, primarily to the pre- (what social factors might have caused the text to be written?) and post-history (how might the text have been expressed in later communities?). Porter counters that though Parker's proposals may offer insight here or there, Parker's very claim that the texts exist assumes a single original—the identity of which is the traditional concern of textual critics (29-32). Porter briefly recounts Ehrman's thesis, expressed in *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture, Misquoting Jesus* et al., that the variants in the earliest manuscripts are the result of theological biases rising in specific social contexts of early Christianity. Porter attacks Ehrman's claim by noting that nearly two-thirds of the NT has no variants, and that even across the various

theorized text families the NT remains 90% consistent (65-66). Ehrman, Porter states, makes large claims from a small quantity of unstable text.

Having articulated the stability of the NT text as a means of defending the traditional goal of textual criticism, Porter goes on the offensive by arguing that text critics should recognize the stability of the NT text in early, single manuscripts. For him, the fact that early papyri discovered since Westcott and Hort have not offered significant changes to the readings identified in the fourth century Codexes Sinaiticus (01 a) and Vaticanus (03 B), scholars no longer need be preoccupied to establish the original text through comparison (reasoned eclecticism) of the 5,800+ manuscripts catalogued to date. The original text has (likely) been established in these early Alexandrian witnesses, whose readings are pushed further back by the extant portions of the NT represented in third and fourth century texts like P⁴⁶ or P⁷² (75). Thus Porter argues that since the original text of the NT is almost certainly preserved in these early texts, NT scholars should give more attention to criticism of these single manuscripts—books or papyrus pages that were actually used by Christians in the early centuries of Christianity.

Chapter two concerns the transmission of the NT. Citing the consistency of readings attested in the pre-Constantine papyri and the fourth century Codexes Sinaiticus (01 a) and Vaticanus (03 B), Porter counters claims that during the pre-Constantine era the NT was not transmitted accurately. He argues that the ordering of the NT from Gospels to Acts to Pauline epistles to Catholic epistles and the Revelation reflects the order of composition of these texts and, to some degree, the respective chronology of manuscript dates containing each genre. Porter cites the stability of the text of the Gospels in the second and third centuries in papyri like P⁴⁵ (portions of the four canonical Gospels and Acts), P⁴ (early portions of Luke), and P^{64, 67} (portions of Matthew). Pre-Constantine witnesses of the Pauline epistles include the early third century P⁴⁶ (portions of Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, and Hebrews), and the citations of Romans and 1 Corinthians (and perhaps Titus and Hebrews) in *1 Clement*, dated to the end of the first century. The latter NT can be traced to the second and third centuries in P⁷² (portions of 1-2 Peter and Jude) and P²³ (portions of James 1). Though these papyri underscore the stability of the text as it was transmitted from the first through fourth centuries, Porter questions the value of the more fragmented papyri. He argues that

those manuscripts (whether papyri or parchment) that have continuous, more complete ranges of text should be distinguished for their superior value. He suggests categorizing all extant manuscripts (papyri or parchment, uncial or minuscule) according to two categories: "The first category should include those manuscripts that consist of continuous text of what was originally clearly established as at least one New Testament book, and the second category should include those manuscripts that are not clearly continuous text of the New Testament" (142).

In sum, Porter argues that NT scholars should prioritize criticism of *complete* texts of the NT (and rely less on the theory of reasoned eclecticism concerning all 5,800 mostly fragmented manuscripts) or at least those manuscripts that transmit *complete* sections of NT books (to more easily identify scribal habits versus errors). What might summarize Porter's argument concerning the translation of the NT (chapter three)? He suggests that translators should aim to communicate each NT book as a *complete* unit of thought (as opposed to concern for individual, isolated words or phrases). He suggests that the poles of formal and dynamic equivalence have too long dominated translation theory debate and should be replaced by concerns for how NT books might be better translated as complete units of thought by employing principles of discourse analysis.

Porter's concern that NT scholars appreciate the high degree of stability in the early manuscripts—texts that may have been held by Christians and actually used for worship and instruction—provides a pathway out of the often dark forest of text-criticism theory. Calling attention to the value of complete texts advances Porter's argument for textual stability in the early centuries of Christianity, and emboldens modern students' confidence in the trustworthiness of these early manuscripts. Yet, NT scholars might not be so favorable to Porter's prioritizing of complete manuscripts, or books that have been transmitted complete or with larger continuous ranges of text. After all, Codexes Sinaiticus (01 a) and Vaticanus (03 B) are eclectic texts, and the early papyri likely had exemplars as well. Porter's esteem for single-manuscripts and continuous blocks of text has as much to do with preservation of manuscripts as their textual quality and transmission history. The fact that a text has been well preserved does not necessitate that it was used or that it should have superior value on its own. NT

scholars should appreciate Porter's insights while continuing the work of reasoned eclecticism.

Todd Chipman
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Telling God's Story: The Biblical Narrative from Beginning to End.* 2nd ed. By Preben Vang and Terry G. Carter. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2013. 430 pp., \$39.99, hardback. ISBN: 978-1433680007.**

Preben Vang is professor and chair of the Department of Biblical and Theological Studies at Palm Beach Atlantic University. Before joining the faculty, Vang held the J.C. and Mae Fuller Chair of Bible and Theology at Ouachita Baptist University. His major area of research is New Testament studies and theology. Terry G. Carter is associate dean of Pruet School of Christian Studies, W. O. Vaught Professor of Christian History and Ministry, and chair of the department of Christian Ministry at Ouachita Baptist University.

The idea for *Telling God's Story* arose from the authors' concern that their students could not tell the story of the Bible as a whole and were unable to place individual books, sections, and characters in their respective place within that story. According to the authors, this stemmed from the practice, both in preaching and in private reading, of focusing on favorite biblical themes and isolating smaller stories from their contexts. The purpose of the book is to remedy this situation by presenting the metanarrative of the Bible from beginning to end, and by doing so, to demonstrate how the biblical sub-stories work together to form one all-encompassing story of God's purpose for creation.

The book begins with a short overview of what is to be developed in the body of the work. This is followed by a discussion of background issues: the layout of the Bible into Testaments and books, including the differences between the Hebrew Tanak and the Christian Old Testament, and the process of canonization. At the end of this section the authors provide the reader with the presuppositions with which they read the Bible: belief, theism, monotheism, supernaturalism, revealed theism,

and trinitarianism. These presuppositions clarify that the authors are working from a decidedly evangelical perspective.

The body of the book is divided into sections and chapters, which the authors dub “Episodes” and “Acts,” respectively. In this second edition the chapters are punctuated with full color pictures, maps, and illustrations. Sidebars provide further information on various interpretive, historical, or theological issues. Each chapter concludes with questions, suggestions, and assignments that allow the reader to dig deeper into the material that has been presented.

The Old Testament is covered in seven episodes. Episode 1, “Creation,” discusses the creation and the fall. Episode 2, “The Plan of Redemption,” focuses on the Abrahamic covenant and its development in Genesis. Episode 3, “The Forming of a Nation: God’s People and the Law,” discusses the exodus from Egypt, the giving of the Law at Sinai, and the wilderness wanderings. Episode 4, “The Promised Land and Sin’s Power,” deals with the conquest of Canaan and the period of the judges. Episode 5, “Israel Gets a King,” deals with the ministry of Samuel and the reigns of Saul and David. Episode 6, “Rebellion, Judgment, and Future Hope,” covers Solomon’s reign, the division of the kingdom, and the history and fall of the northern and southern kingdoms. In this episode, the authors include a short chapter on the nature, message, and methods of the prophets. Episode 7, “Captivity and Return,” discusses the nature of the exile as divine judgment, the captivity, the return and rebuilding of the temple and of Jerusalem. This episode concludes with a discussion of biblical wisdom literature which includes a very brief treatment of the Psalms.

The New Testament is also divided into seven episodes. Episode 8, “Unto Us a Child Is Born,” discusses the birth of Christ as prophetic fulfillment and offers some theological reflections on the incarnation. Episode 9, “The Ministry of Jesus,” discusses Jesus’ ministry, his message, and the nature and purpose of his miracles. Episode 10, “A Prophet Must Die in Jerusalem,” discusses the triumphal entry, the Last Supper, and the crucifixion. Episode 11, “The Grave Could Not Hold Him,” highlights the burial and resurrection of Christ and his post-resurrection appearances. Episode 12, “This Gospel Shall Be for All People,” covers Pentecost, the arrival of the Holy Spirit, and the spread of the Gospel by means of Paul’s three missionary journeys. Episode 13, “Church Growth and Church Struggles,” highlights various issues faced

by the early church as gleaned from the Pauline and general epistles. Episode 14, "Looking for a City," focuses on the Book of Revelation and other eschatological passages in the NT to highlight the final hope of believers and the second coming of Christ. The book ends with a consideration of how the Bible story ought to impact believers in the twenty-first century.

The construction of the book merits some comment. At almost two pounds, the book is rather heavy for its size. The contrast of black, red, and white on the cover makes the book stand out visually. Each episode and act heading, as well as the numerous charts found in most chapters, is outlined with these colors, and while the bleeding of the colors to the edges of the pages makes it easy to locate major sections in the book, the colors quickly become overbearing. The glossiness of the pages also makes reading difficult in some lights. Apart from these problems, the book is sturdy and the full color maps, illustrations, and pictures provide a nice touch.

The strengths of the book are threefold. First, the authors have presented a work that successfully demonstrates the unity of the biblical story. This is a welcome remedy for the practice of reading Scripture as isolated units disconnected from their larger contexts. The reader is helped to see that each movement in the story contributes to, and is important for understanding, the whole picture. Second, in addition to clarifying their own theological presuppositions, the authors include sections throughout the book that comment on the theological significance of major events in the story. While this goes beyond a simple presentation of the biblical metanarrative, and though readers may not agree with the authors on every point, these discussions demonstrate that the Bible is a story with more than simply entertainment value. Third, the book is an easy read for those who are new to the study of the Bible. There is very little technical jargon or critical research presented in the book. For those who wish to pursue issues in a more academic fashion, the footnotes and resources provide entry points for further study.

The book has several weaknesses, in addition to those mentioned above regarding its physical construction. First, there are a number of errata. For example, the book contains several dittographies (pp. 63, 85), Moses is said to have placed his own staff in the Ark of the Covenant (p. 81), and an incorrect page reference is made to a chart under discussion

(p. 151). Second, the book is necessarily selective regarding the material that it discusses. Since the authors are concerned with providing the metanarrative of the Bible, little attention is given to those portions that are not narrative, especially in the OT. For example, Leviticus, Ruth, and many of the Wisdom Books and Minor Prophets are barely mentioned, while Esther and Lamentations, with the exception of their mention in the arrangement of the biblical books, receive no attention at all. This last scenario is also true of 2, 3 John and Jude in the NT.

Third, given the authors' goal of presenting "the biblical narrative from beginning to end," as the subtitle says, the book appears to be quite out of balance. As a quick glance at the Table of Contents and Scripture Index shows, the NT receives the same amount of space and is referenced twice as much as the much larger OT. The Gospels and Acts alone account for five episodes and occupy more space in the Scripture Index than the entire OT. One would expect a straightforward presentation of the biblical narrative to be the other way around. This preference for the NT is notable also in the discussions of OT topics, such as when the authors use James to provide a definition of OT wisdom literature (pp. 203–204). In light of these observations, the book might better be described as a theological reading of the biblical narrative in light of the New Testament. Such a reading would not be bad, but this is not what the authors have stated as their purpose. It appears that the authors have equated theological significance with narrative significance.

Overall, the book provides a nice introduction to the biblical story for lay persons and beginning students of the Bible. In the classroom, the book might be used as a *supplement* to standard introductions which tend to focus on historical matters and individual books or units rather than metanarrative. Nevertheless, the book should not be used as a *replacement* for those introductions. However successful the authors might be in presenting a unified biblical narrative, because of the selective nature of the work, the book, if taken alone, leaves the reader with a less than unified Bible.

Aaron C. Fenlason

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Christology, Hermeneutics and Hebrews: Profiles from the History of Interpretation.* Edited by Jon C. Laansma and Daniel J. Treier. Library of New Testament Studies, 423.**

London, New Delhi, New York, Sidney: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2012. xvi + 264 pp. paperback \$34.95. ISBN: 978-0567609656

This collection of essays has its origin in the presentations made to the Evangelical Theological Society Hebrews section. The editors assembled a team of distinguished Hebrews scholars to offer a “selective history of interpretations” representative for Hebrews’ *Wirkungsgeschichte* (3) with the intended result that Hebrews “will be heard more fully and faithfully through the program of ‘theological interpretation’ than it has been through the governing research program of the modern period,” (5). The entire project is a clarion call to modern scholars to participate in the diachronic dialogue on the interpretation of the epistle not by pontificating the results of modern scholarship, but by humbly accepting their need to hear the voices of yesteryears. To make the task more manageable the project focuses primarily on Hebrews’ Christology, a doctrine no reader would exclude from Hebrews’ theological landscape. How one ought to accomplish this desideratum and the benefits therein are aspects delineated in J. Laansma’s opening chapter. His outstanding analysis of the recent research in “Hebrews: Yesterday, Today, and Future; An Illustrative Survey, Diagnosis, Prescription” not only gives ample justification for the project, but also confirms him as a leading voice in current Hebrews scholarship. The following twelve chapters can be divided in a first group of nine, each one sampling a momentous event in the reception history of Hebrews, followed by three concluding chapters evaluating the efforts engaged in the project.

Frances Young’s “Christological Ideas in the Greek Commentaries on the Epistle to the Hebrews” is the only contribution previously published. The editors were wise to bring a rather old article (originally published in 1969) to the attention of younger generations, not only for the astuteness of its content, but also for further proof that the questions with which Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Cyril wrestled are still substantive for our attempts to understand who God is, in light of the Incarnation and his Self-revelation. Her plea for a Christological program, equally characterized by a commitment to traditional Christology and by an indissoluble connection to soteriology, is as imperative today as it was when originally penned. D. Jeffery Bingham

invites the readers to third century Rome, Lyons and Latin Christendom, through a look at the *adversus haereses* literature of Irenaeus. Though built on the shoulders of the Clementine epistle, itself deeply indebted to Hebrews, the *adversus* literature has only random intersections with the epistle. Yet, the article presents a strong case that “Hebrews, though Irenaeus scarcely cites it in *Adversus haereses*, is present in allusion in significant ways” (71). With Charles Kanningiesser’s “Clothed with Spiritual Fire” the readers move to the Patristic East and the homilies of John Chrysostom. Several theological issues addressed by Chrysostom built directly on Hebrews, including the themes of the mystery of our salvation, the captain of our salvation, and being clothed with spiritual fire. The mastery and eloquence displayed in his homilies on Hebrews are yet to be given proper attention in the history of reception.

The Middle Ages are represented by only one theologian, albeit a towering one, assessed by Daniel Keating in “Thomas Aquinas and the Epistle to the Hebrews: ‘The Excellence of Christ’.” As systematician, Aquinas’ point of departure in his Christology of Hebrews is the Chalcedonian definition of Christ as one person in two natures. This was the virtual hermeneutical lens through which Aquinas read, understood and interpreted the biblical text. This led to an interesting paradox: “the Christological doctrine of the Church defines for Thomas the field of play for interpreting what Hebrews has to say about Christ, but this enables the text of Hebrews to reveal the person and work of Christ with great depth and detail” (86-87). The chapter also sheds light on Aquinas’ balancing act of shaping his Christology, which emerged from his work on the commentary on Hebrews and from his *Summa*, which depended heavily on his commentary.

Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Owen were chosen as representatives of the protestant, reformed, and puritan reflections on the epistle. M. Mattox looks at Luther’s Christology distilled in his *Lectures on Hebrews*, from which emerges a picture “solidly catholic and orthodox and deeply Chalcedonian” (102). The article traces the Christological stances behind nine passages in Hebrews. Though these are often misunderstood as points where Luther departed from the exegetical tradition “prone to speculative trinitarian or Christological readings” (109), according to Mattox, there is no hint of discontinuity with the broad catholicity. Luther stands thus as a paragon who “simultaneously reads Hebrew Christologically, and reads his Christology

out of Hebrews" (118). In "The Perfect Priest," R. Michael Allen examines Calvin's work on Hebrews, a difficult task since the protagonist was engaged in systematic thought as well as exegetical work on the epistle. Calvin's perspective gravitates around the priestly mediation of Christ who perfects the economy of salvation. The "once-for-all" nature of Christ's priestly sacrifice receives deserved emphasis. Attention is drawn to Calvin's delicate attempt to strengthen the correct, yet insufficiently safe, phrase *theos aethinos*, "fully/truly divine," by adding the concept of *autotheos*, "very / perfect God" predicated to Christ, as well as to the Father and to the Spirit. On the human side, Hebrews presents a perfectly human Christ as representative and exemplar of humanity. Readers of the reformed theologian will find "close conceptual ties between themes Calvin found in Hebrews and his own dogmatic distinctives" (133), the true mark of an adequate theological endeavor. Kelly Kopic turns to J. Owen, who towers over all other historical interactions with Hebrews, in a "work of gigantic strength as well as gigantic size" (135). Though pre-critical in its timing, Kopic contends that Owen anticipated the battle ground of criticism to come and, in order to avoid compromising the authority and inspiration of the epistle, he took conservative positions on the issue of authorship, use of Scripture, canonicity, interpretation, and application. For Owen, the governing argument of the epistle is simply "Jesus is the Messiah and faith in him is the only way to rest before the holy God" (141). The epistle's Christology is built on the Old Testament, as the author of Hebrews used "a distinctive kind of Christological typology to illuminate the person and work of Jesus" (144).

Modern theology is served, first, by a brief presentation of Karl Barth's exegesis of Heb 1:1-4. Bruce McCormack wrote a particularly useful presentation of material culled from "hundreds of exegetical notes, references, and allusions to Hebrews to be found in the *Church Dogmatics*" (156). Barth's interest in the prologue is also considered in connection with the continuous debate on the nature of theological exegesis, of which four models are presented and assessed. The Swiss theologian promoted a "Christology that proceeds methodologically from the economic Trinity to the immanent Trinity and not vice versa" (172). This conclusion derives directly from the Protestant emphasis on the primacy of Scripture – indeed, *sola Scriptura* – and not the Church's dogma. Second, the task of gleaning through modern systematic

theologies to assess the representation of Hebrews – or, more to the point, its relative neglect – is left to Daniel Treier and Christopher Atwood. No less than seventeen prominent figures, starting with C. Hodge of the 19th century through to R. Jenson of the late 20th century, are presented in concise fashion, with the pensive assessment that “few if any of these theologies contribute creative readings of Hebrews on the whole, or even of major motifs therein” (186). When present, systematic theologies intersect with Hebrews at the level of several doctrines, including revelation, the two-nature Christology, the triune God, the atonement priesthood and covenant, sanctification and perseverance. On the pastoral side, Hebrews’ Christology has direct practical implications, as it revolves around the scriptures as divine speech, the sanctification as a pilgrimage of faith, and the atonement with its imperatives of victory and cleansing. In tracing the formal contributions of Hebrews to systematics, the authors advance an intriguing proposal: text-proofing from Hebrews in systematic theologies is traceable to scriptural text-proofing in Hebrews.

One could think of no better closing for the volume than the articles penned by H. Attridge, D. Hagner, representing the voice of biblical scholars, and K. Greene-McCreight, representing that of systematicians. Attridge not only recapitulates the major theses of the volume but also provides a nuanced critique of the various positions espoused in them. Hagner focuses on Hebrews distinctives among the NT writings, which are responsible in part for its relative neglect, ranging from its difficult subject matter to its almost *sui generis* form and genre. He advocates for an approach that combines theological interpretations with the canons and stringencies of the historical critical method, the vantage point for his evaluation of the previous chapters. Greene-McCreight calls for a more rigorous program for theological exegesis. Her challenge to Hagner’s proposal is worth pondering. While it is ideal to have theological exegesis (however one defines it) and historical-critical method living under the same roof, she questions whether this is actually possible. The previous chapters are then scrutinized with this very tension in mind, and *regula fidei* is allowed to make its corrective contribution: “the Rule of faith provides not only an epistemology for our interpretation of Scripture... even reality. Whatever we know about reality, we know most surely that it is called forth, nurtured, and defined

by the Triune God. It cannot be defined or circumscribed by human reason, apart from great hubris on our part” (237).

In the end, the reviewer and perhaps the reader is left with a conundrum. On the one hand, the sheer wealth of theological ideas triggered by an ancient letter is enriching and worth exploring. Hebrews’ genome is a marvel to appreciate, to study, and to understand: the historical sampling in the volume proves that two thousand years of engaging the epistle has not exhausted its theological potency. On the other hand, a daunting question with regard to its interpretation hovers throughout. The reader cannot fail to ponder whether all these interpretations are valid. Are they all equally true representatives of the author’s thought and theology? Would he have put his stamp of approval on all of them? Ultimately, is there a true, correct interpretation of the epistle? These questions, of course, are at the heart of any hermeneutical enterprise. Yet, while with regard to the former aspect, the volume satisfies admirably, the readers would have enjoyed seeing the contributors engaging a bit more substantially with the latter.

Radu Gheorghita
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***A Body You Have Prepared for Me: The Spirituality of the Letter to the Hebrews.* By Kevin B. McCrudden. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013, 146pp., \$19.95 paperback. ISBN 978-0814658888.**

Methodologies such as form and redaction criticism approach the formation of Scripture logically and concretely. However, Kevin B. McCrudden suggests that the generative source of the New Testament is personal, experiential spirituality. In other words, each NT author’s spiritual experiences directly influenced his production. *A Body You Have Prepared for Me* analyzes the spirituality of the book of Hebrews’ author and audience. McCrudden defines spirituality as a theocentric series of encounters with the Spirit, who challenges Christians to live faithfully in light of their eschatological hope. To counteract the pain of social marginalization, the audience of Hebrews must exalt Christ as a living

example of endurance, helper for the spiritually weak, and high priest whose sacrifice enables luminescent encounters with God.

McCrudden, who serves as professor of religious studies at Gonzaga University, is author of *Solidarity Perfected: Beneficent Christology in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Walter de Gruyter, 2008) as well as a recent article on fidelity in Hebrews 12:24 (*Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 75). Readers familiar with these works will recognize their emphases in the present book.

A Body You Have Prepared for Me is a brief introduction to Hebrews for pastors, students, and church members, written in an accessible style. The author does not attempt to exegete every passage of Hebrews or format the work according to the literary structure of Hebrews. Rather, the book is an introduction to Hebrews' broad themes and background.

Because the experiences of spirituality described in Hebrews were shaped by the historical circumstances of the letter, chapter one surveys Hebrews' author, style, audience, destination, date, and purpose. McCrudden proposes that Hebrews is an anonymous document (19) addressed to Gentiles (30) who possibly resided in Rome (32). Written after 70 A.D., the letter encourages perseverance for those experiencing social marginalization as a result of countercultural living (35). Endurance flourishes only as Christians imitate the paradigmatic suffering and fortitude of Jesus (38).

McCrudden, in chapter two, explains the significance of Christ's perfect high priestly ministry. Perfection means dwelling with God in glory and, thus, joining with the transcendent. Jesus' perfection appears in Hebrews as a model that will produce in his followers practical obedience to the will of God evidenced by righteousness, perseverance, and communal compassion.

Much of chapter two is an examination of Christ's priesthood, which is perfected at his enthronement (43-9). Jesus' enthronement is a result of his righteous obedience in the face of death and suffering. Similarly, Christian perfection is only completed in the heavenly presence of God, a location reserved for those who endure trials.

In chapter three, McCrudden wrestles with the nature of salvation in Hebrews. Although Jesus experiences unfiltered heavenly perfection, the audience must persevere through their struggles to enjoy

eschatological rest. Through prayer, however, believers in community may approach God's presence now in a limited manner.

In one sense, Christ's sacrificial *death* was the factor that allows believers to draw near to God through prayer. Yet, Hebrews 9:24-25 also suggests that Jesus' *enthronement* allows his brothers and sisters to approach the throne of grace with confidence (91). Enthronement is vital because Christ's high priestly work occurs in the heavenly realm, where he has eliminated the curtain that separated man from God's presence. Prayer, then, is a relational journey into God's presence, a spiritual experience that empowers Christian living (102).

In the final chapter, McCrudden uses Hebrews 12:24 as a case study for the author of Hebrews' use of Old Testament figures. McCrudden argues that comparison to Abel further emphasizes Jesus' faithful obedience to the will of God. Contemporaries of the author of Hebrews considered Abel the first righteous sufferer to enter God's presence. Jesus, then, is Abel *par excellence* who wholly obeys the will of God and also helps his weaker siblings (123). Consequently, reference to Jesus' blood in 12:24 is not an allusion to sacrifice but is indicative of Christ's righteous inward disposition, which makes him an obedient son and compassionate brother.

Overall, McCrudden's approach is unique and offers a new angle from which to form a robust picture of Hebrews. He provides a scholarly, yet brief and approachable, introduction to the theology of the letter. McCrudden's exegesis illuminates background elements for those unfamiliar with Hebrews' context, and he includes footnotes for further research. McCrudden particularly shines as he explains the concept of perfection and underscores the exemplary endurance of Jesus.

While the budding field of spirituality is stimulating, McCrudden's language is, at times, elusive. For example, he describes belief in the resurrection and atonement as "highly personal religious experience[s]," neither of which are "true in any strictly demonstrable sense" (41). He then quotes Hebrews 11:1 (referring to faith in things not seen) as if it points back to the life of Christ instead of forward to future promises. Yet, the audience's spiritual foundation was not merely a transcendental vision or spiritual sense of Christ's earthly work (41). Instead, their Christian commitment was built upon the testimony of those who heard Christ and who enacted tangible demonstrations of the Spirit (Hebrews

2:3-4). Therefore, at least to the eyewitnesses, Christ's resurrection was true in a demonstrable sense.

Evangelical readers may also struggle with McCrudden's interpretive perspective, especially as he describes the account of Christ's temptation as "a legendary story" (125). Yet, McCrudden's stance does not eclipse or negate the value of his work. For busy pastors and students who wish to interact with advanced scholarly works on Hebrews condensed into a brief, approachable book, *A Body You Have Prepared for Me* is an admirable point of departure.

Matt Kimbrough

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible.* By James C. VanderKam. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012. 202 pp., \$25.00, paperback. ISBN 978-0802866790.**

In *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible*, James VanderKam examines the relevance of the Qumran texts for biblical studies. VanderKam is presently the John A. O'Brien Professor of Hebrew Scriptures at the University of Notre Dame and has served on the editorial team for the *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, the official publication series for the Dead Sea Scrolls. With this experience, VanderKam is able to bring a wealth of knowledge and decades of research to bear on the relationship between the scrolls and the Bible. In the present work, VanderKam seeks to provide an up-to-date and accessible overview of major subject areas where the academic study of the Scrolls and the Bible coincide.

The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible consists of seven chapters, six of which originated from the Speaker's Lectures at Oxford University delivered in May 2009. In chapter 1, "The 'Biblical' Scrolls and Their Implication," VanderKam surveys the importance of the Scrolls for text critical studies of the Hebrew Bible. He provides several examples of how the Scrolls supplement information from the MT, Samaritan Pentateuch and Old Greek, grouping textual variants into four principle categories: orthographic differences, individual textual variants, isolated interpretive insertions, and new and expanded editions of biblical books. VanderKam's brief study of the Scrolls and Hebrew Bible textual criticism

is commendable in that it highlights not only the importance of the “biblical” manuscripts, but also the relevance of the *pesharim*, *tefillin*, *mezuzot*, and biblical quotations found in texts like the *Temple Scroll*.

In chapter 2, VanderKam examines aspects of scriptural interpretation in the Scrolls. He begins by discussing some examples of scriptural interpretation within the Hebrew Bible and in older non-biblical texts. VanderKam then turns to consider a number of methods of scriptural interpretation in the Scrolls, including the continuous and thematic *pesharim*, what he calls “simple sense exegesis” (i.e., the addition of an explanatory statement into a biblical citation), and the practice of blending together related passages from different locations in Scripture in order to smooth out discrepancies and produce one consistent statement.

VanderKam’s third chapter, “Authoritative Literature According to the Scrolls,” addresses the concept of authoritative writings in early Judaism and the development of collections of authoritative texts. In determining which texts were thought to be authoritative, VanderKam considers a number of criteria, such as the use of collective phrases like “the law and the prophets” to denote Scripture, the use of citation formulae, and books for which commentaries were written. Using data from the Scrolls and the New Testament, VanderKam argues that by the first century CE there was a core group of texts that most Jews could agree was authoritative. Some texts, like the Enoch literature and *Jubilees*, were considered authoritative by the Qumran community, but it is unknown how many other Jews maintained this view.

Chapter 4, “New Copies of Old Texts,” deals with works outside of the Hebrew Bible that were known to exist before the discovery of the Qumran caves and for which the Scrolls have now provided the earliest copies. In this chapter, VanderKam discusses *Jubilees*, *Aramaic Levi*, the *Book of Giants*, the Wisdom of Ben Sira, Tobit, the Enoch literature, the Epistle of Jeremiah, and Psalms 151, 154, and 155. For each work, VanderKam lists the relevant manuscripts from Qumran, their date and contents, and the significance of the manuscripts for our understanding of the work as a whole.

In Chapter 5, “Groups and Group Controversies in the Scrolls,” VanderKam discusses the relevance of the Scrolls for understanding the Essenes, Sadducees, and Pharisees. VanderKam defends the hypothesis that the community which copied and composed the Scrolls was related

to the Essenes and that the Pharisees were their chief opponents. VanderKam doubts whether the Scrolls refer to the Sadducees, but he notes that the Qumran community's interpretation of the Law resembles that of the Sadducees, although the community itself was certainly not Sadducean.

Chapters 6 and 7 focus on the Scrolls in relationship to the New Testament. In chapter 6, VanderKam compares the Scrolls and the Gospels with respect to their messianic views, methods of scriptural interpretation, legal interpretations and practices, and disciplinary procedures within their respective communities. In Chapter 7, VanderKam examines certain similarities between the Scrolls and the early chapters of Acts, focusing especially on the communal sharing of property and the importance of the Festival of Weeks as a time of covenant renewal. In this chapter, he also considers the interpretation of prophetic texts in Paul and the Scrolls, affinities between the Scrolls and the pericope in 2 Cor 6:14–7:1, and how the Scrolls shed light on Paul's use of the phrase "works of the Law."

VanderKam has written with characteristic meticulousness and lucidity, and his conclusions are fair, balanced, and well-reasoned. While he is aware of the complexities of both the Bible and the Scrolls, he avoids getting bogged down in minutia and scholarly debates. Since *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible* is intended to be a survey, the treatment of each topic is necessarily brief. There are, however, ample footnotes and a bibliography for those who desire to delve more deeply into a particular issue.

In many ways, VanderKam's book covers much of the same ground as other standard introductions to the Dead Sea Scrolls (including his own *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*). At times the book is more concerned with the Scrolls themselves than with their relationship to the Bible. That said, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible* will serve as a valuable introductory survey for seminary students, pastors, and non-specialists who are interested in the relevance of the Scrolls for understanding the Bible. Those who work in Old Testament/Hebrew Bible or New Testament studies may find the specific examples that VanderKam works through in each chapter enlightening. Since our understanding of the Scrolls has changed substantially in recent years, VanderKam's book will prove useful to biblical scholars who need to familiarize themselves with the current state of Scrolls research.

Eric R. Montgomery
Green Valley Baptist Church

***Christology and Discipleship in John 17.* By Marianus Pale Hera. WUNT 2, Vol. 342. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013. 206 pp. \$103.00, paperback. ISBN: 978-3161522192**

In this work, a revised version of his 2012 dissertation at Catholic University of America, Hera, a member of the Japanese Province of the Society of the Divine Word and assistant professor of Christian Studies at the Catholic University of Nanzan, makes an insightful study of the interrelationship between Johannine Christology and the call to discipleship. While focused upon John 17, Hera's purpose is to produce an exegetical analysis that demonstrates that the root of John's teaching on discipleship is centered in his Christology and that John's Christological message leads to the teaching of authentic discipleship. From this perspective, Jesus is portrayed in a manner that leads the readers to more fully understand their identity as disciples and followers of Jesus (36).

Hera divides his work into four chapters. In chapter one, he pays close attention to general scholarship on John 17 concerning the titles given to it, historicity, genre, redaction, significance of its literary context, structure, and general themes before proceeding to focus upon recent scholarship concerning discipleship in the chapter. After this discussion, Hera establishes the rationale for his work as moving beyond the past study of Johannine discipleship, which has either focused upon the disciples and other biblical figures or upon the study of key words, in an approach that makes particular note of how John in both the Gospel as a whole and in chapter 17 in particular moves from Christology to discipleship (35).

In the second chapter, Hera explores the nature of discipleship in relation to Christology in John 1-12, with focus upon the prologue, the calling of the first disciples, the wedding at Cana, the man born blind, and the 'I Am' sayings of Jesus. For the first four of these topics, he provides a narrative reading before demonstrating a movement from

Christology to discipleship. In the case of the 'I Am' sayings, Hera addresses their obvious Christological character, and then demonstrates that their narrative context reveals implications for discipleship because of the events that occur before and after Jesus speaks and because they define the relationship between Jesus and the world. A prime example of this is in the analysis of John 8:12 where Hera demonstrates a shift from the Christological nature of Jesus' assertion of being the light of the world to both an invitation to follow and the promise that his followers would "never walk in darkness" (82).

In chapter three, Hera tackles the literary context, text, and structure of John 17. To begin this analysis, he provides a discussion of the entire Johannine farewell discourse, which covers John 13-17, and focuses upon the washing of the disciples' feet, the dismissal of Judas, and the two major parts of Jesus' farewell speech. Then, Hera briefly discusses textual critical questions concerning John 17 before concluding the chapter with an examination of the narrative structure of John 17. The narrative structure builds the case that an important key to understanding the organization of Jesus' prayer in the chapter is the move from Christology to discipleship. Hera's central argument is that throughout John 13-17, Jesus is preparing the disciples for both his passion and their coming persecution by reminding them of who he is and how he wants them to be in a hostile world (90).

Finally, in chapter four, Hera performs a literary exegetical reading of John 17. Drawing from the analysis of chapter three, he divides the chapter into five major sections: (1) John 17:1b-5, linking the coming glorification of Jesus with the eternal life for the disciples who know him and the Father; (2) John 17:6-11a, linking Jesus' revelation of God with the faith and understanding of the disciples; (3) John 17:11b-19, identifying Jesus as one, who like the Father, protects and consecrates the disciples while identifying the disciples as those who are both separated from and sent into the world in order to bring faith to future believers; (4) John 17:20-23, linking the unity between Jesus and the Father with the unity among the disciples; and (5) John 17:24-26, linking Jesus' revelation of the Father with the disciples dwelling in love with the Father and the Son. This work is especially insightful in Hera's analysis of the fifth section. Here he connects the relationship Jesus and the Father with Jesus' revelation of the Father through his ministry and coming death on the cross, and with the ultimate sending of the Holy

Spirit. The arrival of the Holy Spirit will bind the disciples together in relationship to one another, to Jesus, and to the Father. Hera brings all this together by reflecting upon the literary structure of John 17:24-26. In this way, it is demonstrated that the relationships involved are all connected to revealing God to the world (162-164).

After this analysis, Hera concludes that John 17 is rich in Christology, projects an ideal picture of the disciples, and demonstrates an intimate and profound link between John's teachings on Christology and discipleship. He asserts that the last point is particularly fruitful as it indicates that discipleship flows from Christology, that growing in knowledge of the Jesus and the Father is greatly significant, that Jesus is the model for the disciples, that divine sovereignty and human responsibility are to be balanced, and that Jesus has a central role along with the Father as both the goal and the mediator of the disciples' unity (167-169).

After the review of the contents of Hera's work above it is apparent that he largely accomplished his purpose of demonstrating that the root of John's teaching on discipleship is centered in his Christology and that John's Christological message leads to the teaching of authentic discipleship in a clear and understandable manner. The greatest strength of Hera's work is its clear focus upon the relationship between John's development of the person and work of Jesus with Jesus' relationship to the world in general and to his disciples in particular. This provides the reader of John's Gospel with a helpful tool in understanding the narrative from a new, fresh perspective. However, Hera's narrow focus, at times, seems to be forced, especially in his attempt to establish a link between Christology and discipleship in the Johannine prologue.

The greatest weakness of the work comes in the limited development of the concept of discipleship. While Hera's first chapter expresses how different facets of discipleship have been developed by previous scholars in previous studies, he does not provide his own development or definition of the concept. This would have been helpful in making the link between Christology and discipleship in John more concrete.

While the author writes from a moderate to traditional Roman Catholic approach that defers too much to redaction criticism in some places, Hera largely produces a work that is accessible to any scholarly audience that seeks to better understand the connection of the biblical

teachings concerning the identity of Jesus and its implications for those who would follow him as disciples. Despite being technical in places much of the work is accessible not only to scholars but also to pastors and educated laypersons.

In final reflection upon the work, Hera invites the further development of ideas in two major areas. First, his work suggests that more attention should be paid to the link between Christology and discipleship throughout the Gospel of John and not simply in chapter 17. Finally, Hera's work suggests the necessity of further study of the link between Christology and discipleship in the other writings of the New Testament so that Christians can more fully understand who they are to be in light of who their Lord and Savior has been revealed to be.

Kyle Quinn

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

2 Clement: Introduction, Text, and Commentary. By Christopher Tuckett. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. 328 pp. \$230.00, hardcover. ISBN: 978-0199694600.

2 Clement: Introduction, Text, and Commentary by Christopher Tuckett represents the inaugural volume of the *Oxford Apostolic Fathers* commentary series. The scholarly literature on 2 Clement is sparse. J.B. Lightfoot wrote the latest English commentary on 2 Clement but this is almost a century old. Other recent commentaries include ones by Lindemann and Pratscher but both are written in German. Therefore, Tuckett's commentary also provides a much-needed work on the Apostolic Fathers in English.

Tuckett organizes the commentary in three parts: an introduction covering most prolegomena material expected in a commentary, a full translation of the text, and a verse-by-verse commentary. Tuckett argues throughout that *2 Clement* is a sermon of some sort written to insiders of the community exhorting them to morally ethical behavior in light of their past salvation and the future judgment.

Tuckett vies for the anonymous authorship of 2 Clement and argues that any search for the original author is in vain. Most notably the

author argues against Donfried's proposal that 2 Clement is composed by one of the elders who was brought back into the Church of Corinth after the letter of 1 Clement. Tuckett sees little or no textual warrant for such a proposal (16). Ultimately, we only know the writer was not a Jew before converting to the Christian faith (17).

Concerning the literary unity of the text, Tuckett says that the evidence is weak for any disunity between chapter 1–18 and 19–20. Arguing against the proposals of Pratscher and others, Tuckett provides a sound case for the unity or, at least, the weak evidence for disunity. With such a small sample size one cannot really argue for disunity by only using varying vocabulary. Because writers often use synonyms we cannot expect the same word choice throughout the sermon. Moreover, if you remove any other unit the size of 19–20, then one can justify disunity in chapters 1–18. Tuckett takes the book as a whole and explains the unique themes of this section are actually woven throughout the sermon.

Is the text a polemic against Gnosticism? By reading earlier literature on the text from Donfried and others one could surmise the primary thesis of the sermon is a polemic against Gnosticism. Contrary to earlier works, Tuckett provides a more conservative approach arguing yes, the letter does have some anti-Gnostic tendencies, but the sermon itself does not seem to be written as an argument against this theology. Instead, the author seems to be arguing against an "ethical laxity and/or 'freedom' (47). By championing higher ethical standard, the writer may be *implicitly* arguing against Gnostic thinking along the way but no explicit references to the contrary exist.

The commentary proper naturally continues with the same careful and insightful exegetical decisions that comprise the introduction. At the start of each chapter he analyzes the parallels between, OT, NT, and other apocryphal and agrapha sayings. Tuckett's analysis of citations and allusions is one of the most valuable aspects of the commentary. He provides a detailed analysis of each allusion providing helpful comments along the way. An explanation of each verse is then given and expounded on when needed.

The commentary brings refreshment to the reader because Tuckett is both humble in his exegesis while also offering valuable insights. When the text is ambiguous, Tuckett often times gives his proposal but concludes that ultimately there is no way of knowing for certain. Overall, the commentary itself provides a detailed analysis of

each verse and will guide the exegete in making thoughtful interpretive decisions themselves.

Overall, Tuckett provides an excellent model in how to engage with the Apostolic Fathers. Any negative critique must not be seen as representative of the whole but only minor disagreements with some of his conclusions. One objection that I have regards his conclusion of the writer's knowledge of Paul. Tuckett argues that the use of Paul is weak. Based on his analysis of possible Pauline allusions, it seems to be that the case is stronger than he contends. There are many places throughout the text that has strong Pauline allusions. For example, in 14:2 the author argues that the church is the body of Christ. In 9:3 it is said that the addressees are to keep their bodies as a "temple of God." Elsewhere there are allusions to Pauline metaphors that don't necessarily match Paul's use of them. There is reference to the "pot and the potter" (2 Clem 8 cf. Rom 9:21), God's calling (2 Clem 1:8 cf. Rom 4:17), and using the same text of Isa 54:1 (2 Clem 2:1 cf. Gal 4:27). One of these reasons alone does not constitute an argument for knowledge of Paul but taking the evidence as a whole I would argue that there is a stronger case for Pauline knowledge and use than Tuckett allows.

To conclude, this inaugural commentary in the *Oxford Apostolic Fathers* series provides a needed addition to the study of the Apostolic Fathers. Biblical scholars will benefit from the commentary especially for the careful analysis of the allusions and echoes to various biblical texts. Even where one might not agree with the conclusion of the use or nonuse of texts one will undoubtedly be equipped to make a sound exegetical decision for themselves and will have to reckon with the Tuckett's arguments. Scholars of Early Christianity will also gain much insight into the text of 1 Clement. Tuckett makes conservative decisions regarding the specific situation that the text is addressing while at the same time interacting with previous work on the corpus.

Brian Renshaw
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Four Views on the Historical Adam.* Edited by Matthew Barrett and Ardel Caneday. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013. 288 pp. \$19.99, paperback. ISBN: 978-0-310-49927-5.**

In *Four Views on the Historical Adam*, four major evangelical positions are espoused: the evolutionary creation view, the archetypal creation view, the old-earth creation view, and the young-earth creation view. After each case is presented, the other three contributors have the opportunity to critique the writer's viewpoint, and the writer is then afforded a final chance to address the critiques. Appended to these interchanges are pastoral reflections by two seasoned pastors.

Denis O. Lamoureux of the University of Alberta begins with the evolutionary creation view, making him the only contributor denying the existence of an actual historical Adam. Lamoureux grounds his argument in the idea that Scripture features an ancient understanding of the physical world and is rooted in ancient biology. He also notes that he believes in the historicity of all people represented in the Bible from Genesis 12 onward, but suggests that Genesis 1-11 be read as a unique type of literary genre that is distinct from the rest of Scripture. He describes this method of understanding Scripture as the Message-Incident Principle: the message is inerrant, but the incidental scientific and historical mistakes are a by-product of God using and accommodating ancient writers.

John H. Walton of Wheaton College represents the archetypal creation view. He explains that "Adam and Eve were real people who existed in a real past in time and space; but I believe that both in Genesis and in the New Testament, there is more interest in them as archetypes (notwithstanding their reality)" (90). For Walton, Adam and Eve are depicted in Genesis 1 as representations of humanity itself in that they are individually male and female, and in their roles to subdue and rule creation. He notes that this idea is not foreign to ancient Near Eastern thought. As Walton moves into Genesis 2, he explains that "Adam" is a general term in the Hebrew for humankind. Since the first man certainly did not speak Hebrew (it was developed sometime post-Exodus), it is hard to believe that his personal name was actually Adam. As such, even the name Adam is archetypal of humanity rather than an historical designation. Whoever the first man was, one must admit that his name surely was not Adam.

C. John Collins of Covenant Theological Seminary offers the old-earth creation view. He argues that the use of biblical literature and critical thinking can lead one to conclude that the Earth is not young.

Theories that claim that the world came to be 13-14 billion years ago are not a problem for Collins because he views “days” in Genesis 1 as God’s workdays, not necessarily as the first six 24-hour days of the universe. Also, when looking at Genesis 1-11, Collins posits that there is a definite transition between this section and the rest of Genesis. From chapter 12 forward, the author seems to slow down and give more detail to the events listed. The story of Adam and Eve, then, provide the foundation for the rest of the Bible’s storyline by setting the stage in three key ways: 1) humankind is one family with one set of ancestors; 2) God supernaturally formed our first parents; 3) these headwaters of the human race brought about sin and dysfunction.

Finally, William Barrick of The Master’s Seminary makes the case for a young-earth view of creation. He contends that “[t]he biblical account represents Adam as a single individual rather than an archetype or the product of biological evolution” and that the rest of Scripture relies on this fact (197). He also argues that evangelicals should always hold the uniqueness of the Genesis record above scientific discovery or competing ancient Near Eastern materials. For Barrick, if one reads Genesis 1-2 as archetypal without reference to literal, material formation, one runs the risk of allegorizing the text. If one reads the passage in the old-earth model, there is too much credence given to modern evolutionary science. Instead, it should be read as special revelation from God to Moses about a universal mankind without needing extrabiblical confirmation.

In the section for pastoral reflections, Gregory A. Boyd of Woodland Hills Church in Minnesota explains that whether or not an historical Adam really existed, the Christian faith is secure because men like Lamoureux are compelled intellectually to argue against his existence and yet are “in good standing within the fold of the orthodox, evangelical faith” (265). Philip G. Ryken of Wheaton College and formerly of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania contends that Christians cannot understand the world or their faith without a real, historical Adam because his existence offers confidence that the Bible is God’s Word, explains man’s sinful nature and evil in the world, clarifies sexuality and familial relations, offers hope for justification and resurrection, and even advances missionary work.

Though this reader finds himself in stark contrast and disagreement with Lamoureux’s conclusions, he is perhaps the most thorough, articulate, and humble contributor to this volume. He is clearly

aware of the immediate skepticism that he will face; most notably, the question of whether or not he is a Christian. So, he shares an incredibly believable testimony of his faith in Christ and explains in detail how both science and his faith inform his conclusions. The Message-Incident principle that Lamoureux employs is highly problematic within the scope of biblical literature as a whole, but he applies it consistently and convincingly nonetheless. This is commendable in a debate forum.

Yet, while this reader finds himself in primary agreement with William Barrick, his contribution is the most frustrating. At times, his estimations soar as he defends the logical integrity and practical significance of believing the entire truthfulness of Scripture's claims. However, these are overshadowed by a tone that this reader and some of the other contributors to the book considered off-putting. Barrick too often resorts to unfair representations of the differing schools of thought while indicating that his view holds authority over all others. It is always refreshing to read a person whose convictions bleed onto the page, but such enthusiasm can be quickly dampened by tactless rhetoric. Such is the case here.

The breadth of this book is its strong suit. The views expressed represent the most common among evangelical Christians, and are promoted rather plainly from each vantage point. Further, the pastoral reflections are a refreshing touch for the practically-minded reader. The glaring weakness lies in the occasionally disjointed argumentation from chapter to chapter. This work could have benefitted from the editors assigning more concrete biblical passages to tackle. Though some obvious passages such as Genesis 1-3 and Romans 5 are discussed or at least mentioned, the contributors occasionally leave the reader without clear stances on the "problem" verses of the Bible dealing with Adam's historicity.

Four Views on the Historical Adam is a helpful and accessible addition to the growing field of historical Adam studies. The authors write and interact at length, allowing both the scholar and the first-time researcher to engage fairly with various textual analyses, scientific claims, and logical deductions. This is recommended for anyone interested in a primer on answering the question, did an historical Adam exist?

Brandon D. Smith

