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SCOTTISH BULLETIN OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

The scope of the *Bulletin* is broadly defined as theology, especially Scottish and Reformed, whether biblical, systematic-dogmatic, historical or practical, and Scottish church history. Articles submitted for publication should be sent to the Editor, books for review to Rutherford House (see below).

Contributors are free to express their own views within the broad parameters of historic evangelicalism. The opinions of contributors may not be assumed to be those of Rutherford House or the Scottish Evangelical Theology Society.

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EDITORIAL

An article in *Leadership* magazine suggests that 'postmodernism will only elevate the importance of Christian preaching... where the truth is proclaimed confidently' in a way which is both interesting, imaginative and interacts with people's lives. Yet the place of preaching in our modern culture is constantly being criticised. The Chambers dictionary defines preaching as 'giving advice in an offensive, tedious or obtrusive manner'. Preachers face the challenge of communicating the good news of Jesus Christ in the most culturally relevant method possible in order to change lives.

First and foremost we must be biblical. Yet, as we immerse ourselves in Scripture we will discover that Scripture communicates primarily by means of story. Expository preaching, which so often stresses the proclamation of propositional truth in order to instruct people, has often neglected the narrative sections of the Bible, which account for seventy-five percent of the Old Testament and the Gospels. The relevance of this to preaching has been grasped by Calvin Miller who points out that 'typical congregations nourished on years of television drama and popular video releases have been groomed to relate to the narrative sermon'.

The fact that people are used to picture and images within a television age implies that if we are to make connections between the biblical text and our world we must use illustrations and stories, not only to keep people's attention, but to earth the application of Scripture in daily living. Propositional statements may be essential for sound exegesis but preaching is more than bare instruction. Preaching is intended to inspire. Stories allow the preacher to make connection between the biblical text and the nitty-gritty happenings of our lives. We need to recapture the attitude of Jesus who 'did not speak to them except in parables'.

If we are truly biblical, then we will also follow the suggestion of writers such as Walter Brueggemann that there is, within the biblical canon, both testimony and counter-testimony to the message of God's grace. The story of the Bible is made up of many individual and corporate stories, some very positive in the way in which they speak of God, and others, with a darker tone, speaking out their own experiences of fearful faith, of experiencing God as hidden, of suffering without seeing any purpose or meaning in the experience. Our interpretation of the Scriptures

must listen to all these voices and allow the voices to speak into the experiences of members of our congregations who often struggle with issues of faith and doubt.

Our preaching will also be personal. Over a century ago Phillip Brooks said that 'a disembodied preacher cannot credibly proclaim the incarnate Christ'. The Psalter is one of the most personal sections of Scripture, where God has revealed himself to us through the everyday experience of his people, as they express their faith as well as their fear and indicate that the difficulties of daily life are part of their own spiritual pilgrimage. Let us remember that there are more Psalms of Lament in the Psalter than there are Psalms of Worship. Obviously the danger of emphasising the personal nature of preaching is that the pulpit becomes an ecclesiastical equivalent to a Ricky Lake show on Channel 4. However, if the preacher is not to become invisible six days of the week and incomprehensible on the seventh then our preaching must be an authentic expression of our own experience of the grace of God.

Thirdly, our preaching will be practical. Scripture is a rich resource of material, which is as relevant in the twenty-first century as it was in the first. The teaching of Jesus on issues of wealth and materialism or marriage and divorce are of immense importance to discipleship in our world. As preachers we need to work hard, not only in our understanding how the text of Scripture was interpreted in ancient Israel and the Christian communities of Asia Minor but how it is to be applied to the contemporary situation of Aberdeen, Alloa and Abbeyhill and make our application of Scripture explicit. Haddon Robinson makes this point well when he says that 'early in the sermon, the listeners should realise that the pastor is talking about them – application starts in the introduction not in the conclusion'. Only preaching which is biblical will be authentic but only relevant preaching can be classified as being biblical.

Fourthly, our preaching will be public and prophetic. A visit to Edinburgh will normally include a sightseeing trip down the Royal Mile, the road that leads from Holyrood Palace to Edinburgh Castle. Just below St Giles, the kirk of John Knox, there is the old *merket* cross – the place where people used to meet to gossip, to hear public proclamations, to witness public executions, to buy and sell their goods. Looking east you can almost catch a sight of the Royal Palace. Looking west you can see the back door to the new Scottish Parliament. Looking south you walk a few yards to the Law Courts. Looking north you are face-to-face with the City Chambers. Right in the heart of Edinburgh – old and new – the *merket* cross is positioned at the heart of the city.

One of the dangers of preaching exclusively within faith communities is that we engage in the in-house language of a ghetto that has few lines of communication open to the outside world. David Tracy speaks of the importance of affirming 'the authentically *public* character of *all* theology'. We preach to people who find themselves in the arena of public debate, locally, nationally and even internationally. We have the opportunity, indeed the obligation, to encourage them to see the impact of the truth of the gospel in their daily lives. This will give them the confidence that our talk about God can contribute to what is going on in their world and to the pressing issues of justice facing people in society today.

The Lausanne Covenant challenges churches to be 'deeply rooted in Christ and closely related to their culture'. It's a principle which we readily accept when we send missionaries to work in foreign cultures. They learn the language and customs of the people to whom they will minister and yet, it is a concept which we rarely take on board within our contemporary context. If the church is to communicate the good news of Jesus to our secular society we must make the connections, in our preaching, between the faith we profess and life in the world.

Finally, we must ensure that our preaching is pastoral in motivation. We are called to be vehicles of grace to hurting human beings. The words of Isaiah rush out from Jesus' mouth to our hearts: 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release for captives and recovery of sight for the blind, to let the broken victims go free, to declare the year of the Lord's favour.'

As preachers we are called to maintain a lover's quarrel with the Church. Martin Luther, in characteristic earthiness, said, 'The church is like Noah's ark, were it not for the storm without, we would be overwhelmed by the stench within.' The church, like all of us, is *simil justis et peccator*, simultaneously just and sinful, in the world and of it all at once. It is the fallible, tainted, crumbling, broken, blessed community of Christ's church. Yet it is Christ's church and he loved it so much that he died for it. Despite the way people may mistreat and misrepresent our ministries, if they know that in our preaching we truly love them, then they will be people who will believe in us, stand with us, and hold us close all along the journey.

MISSION AFTER CHRISTENDOM[1]
(FINLAYSON MEMORIAL LECTURE 2002)

DAVID SMITH, WHITEFIELD INSTITUTE, OXFORD

At the beginning of this third millennium the National Gallery in London mounted an exhibition of Christian art with the title 'Seeing Salvation'. In the introduction to the catalogue, the Director of the Gallery, Neil MacGregor, observed,

> All great collections of European painting are inevitably also great collections of Christian art. In the National Gallery, London, roughly one third of the pictures – and many of the finest – are of Christian subjects. This is hardly surprising, for after classical antiquity, Christianity has been the predominant force in shaping European cultures.[2]

However, MacGregor immediately goes on to acknowledge that while a substantial proportion of the pictures in the collection are Christian, 'many of our visitors now are not'. A growing awareness of this fact provided the motivation for mounting the exhibition since MacGregor realised that thousands of visitors, whether tourists belonging to non-Christian religious traditions, or Europeans who are no longer biblically literate, view these great canvasses uncomprehendingly and so focus their attention on the technical aspects of the art, rather than on the Christian *meaning* intended by the artists.

If the inability of many of the visitors to the National Gallery to recognise and interpret Christian symbols can be taken as evidence of the declining salience of the biblical story within the culture of the Western world, it is interesting to note that in the closing year of the twentieth century there was parallel evidence concerning the erosion of the other great meta-narrative which has shaped the culture of modern Europe, namely, that of the Enlightenment. Writing in the programme for the 1999 BBC

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[1] This lecture will appear in a revised form as the first chapter in a volume with the title *Mission After Christendom* to be published by Darton, Longman & Todd.

[2] Neil MacGregor, *Seeing Salvation* (London, 2000), p. 6.

Promenade Concerts, Michael Ignatieff pointed out that some of the great works to be performed during the season, including Beethoven's Choral Symphony and the 'Resurrection' Symphony of Gustav Mahler, could not be understood apart from 'the Enlightenment faith in human reason and endurance as the secular Providence of modern history'. However, living at the end of a dark century, Ignatieff said,

> We are no longer certain that we can believe such stories. There is enough barbarism close at hand to make us doubt that our species is marching together along a path toward civilisation. Indeed, in a Proms season of music devoted to the Ascent of Man... *it is easy to feel that we are listening to the music of our lost hopes and illusions, reaching us like the last light from extinguished stars.*[3]

Taken together these two turn-of-the-century witnesses reflect very clearly the unmistakable 'sense of an ending' that pervades the culture of the Western world at the present time. Ignatieff's jeremiad serves to confirm the conviction held by many thoughtful Christians that the Enlightenment project was built on wholly inadequate foundations. The bells which ring out at the end of Mahler's magnificent symphony may suppress secular *angst* for a few hours but they cannot disguise the fragile basis of the hope they seek to express, the desperate longing to feel that one has not 'vainly lived and suffered'. Michael Ignatieff acknowledges that even this limited, secular affirmation has become difficult in our own time and he wonders how we can discover resources to continue 'this grand musical tradition of affirmation that seems to leave the language of praise all used up?'[4]

In a cultural context like this questions concerning the future of the Christian mission are unavoidable since, whatever the precise nature of the connection between the modern missionary movement and the Enlightenment, it is clear that the great age of Christian expansion, the period described by Kenneth Scott Latourette as 'The Great Century' in the history of the Christian mission, occurred at precisely the time that European economic and political power was being extended across the world. Indeed, when Andrew Walls analyses Christian history in terms of six successive eras in which the Christian faith has been transmitted across major cultural barriers, he describes the period that has witnessed the modern missionary movement as *the age of expanding Europe*. During this phase, he writes, 'The population of Europe was exported to other

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3 Michael Ignatieff, 'The Ascent of Man?' in *BBC Proms '99* (London, 1999), p. 8 [emphasis mine].

4 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

continents and the dominance of Europe extended, until by the twentieth century people of European origin occupied, possessed, or dominated the greater part of the globe.'[5] Moreover, throughout most of this period Christianity was the professed religion of almost all European peoples with the result that mission became inextricably linked with the expansion of Western influence and civilisation.

However, the linkage between mission and European civilisation must be traced back long before the dawn of the modern era since the basic presuppositions underlying this model of mission came to birth with the emergence of Christendom. The arrival of Columbus in the New World in 1492 was without doubt an event of enormous significance, but rather than marking the commencement of what we might call an 'imperial' model of mission, it merely represented the attempt to extend that model beyond the confines of Europe *where it had held sway for centuries.* The origins of the concept of a Christian empire, sometimes denoted by the phrase *Corpus Christianum,* are usually traced back to Constantine or Theodosius and the conversion of the emperor was clearly a watershed event in the history of the church. In the words of the Swiss theologian Walbert Buhlmann, 'Having Christianized the Roman Empire from within, having become a state religion, having received privileges and lands, the Jesus-movement... became an institution. The open city placed on a mountain (Matt. 5:14) became a fortress, with walls and moats.'[6]

However, perhaps the crucial factor in the growth of a form of Christianity in which the profession of faith became bound up with the possession of territory is to be discovered during another great cultural transmission of the faith as vast numbers of Barbarian peoples from Northern Europe accepted Christian baptism. The cultural and religious background of these peoples was significantly different from that of Rome or Greece in that their traditional, primal religions made it impossible for them to distinguish the realms of the sacred and the secular. Thus was born the concept of a people united by a single body of belief and of Christianity as a territorial religion. From such obscure beginnings, Christendom grew and developed over a very long period of time to become a religious ideology that has proved amazingly resilient. While the Reformation led to the fragmentation of Christendom it retained many of its fundamental assumptions so that the *spirit* of Christendom has persisted across the centuries, reflected in phrases and slogans that still remain in use

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5   Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (Edinburgh, 1996), p. 21.

6   Walter Buhlmann, *God's Chosen Peoples* (New York, 1982), p. 67.

today to describe the task of evangelism and mission. Thus, when Western Christians deplore the refusal of public institutions to identify Christ with Christmas, or when Jehovah's Witnesses are treated with contempt or disdain, or even when evangelists in Northern Nigeria enter Muslim areas to announce a forthcoming 'Crusade', we realise that the shadow cast by Christendom is a very long one indeed.

Nonetheless, it is quite clear by now that this particular model of the Christian mission has lost its credibility and cannot survive. In fact, the erosion of the Christendom concept commenced as soon as the attempt was made to transmit the faith beyond the confines of its European heartlands. Thus, from the sixteenth century onwards, and with ever-increasing momentum during the period Latourette called the 'great century', a form of Christianity thoroughly acculturated within Europe 'had to extend its consciousness, its vision, and eventually its theology, to cope with the realities of the world beyond Europe'.[7] Christendom's division of the world and its peoples into two great blocs – *here* a culture shaped by the gospel; *there* a realm of ignorance and darkness (a categorisation that continued to inform the Western mind in various secularised reworkings) – has increasingly seemed to be incredible and unbelievable. In Buhlmann's words, 'until recently the world was divided in two: the church and the missions.... The church was the centre, the missions were its periphery. We had the model over here, the copy over there.' This schema will no longer work, he says, since we have witnessed a historic shift in which the 'centre of gravity' of the Christian movement has now been transferred to the Southern hemisphere.[8] Meantime, the barbarism, which has all too frequently disfigured the culture of Europe, combined with the steady and accelerating recession in the influence of Christianity in its traditional heartlands, makes it impossible to continue to claim that European civilisation remains a 'Christian culture'.

Clearly, in a context like this, many questions arise concerning the future of Christian mission. Let me pose some of them in rather stark language. Does not missionary talk of the *conquest* of the world sound extremely discordant and offensive in an age when people have become rightly suspicious of such terminology? Can we continue to talk of the *future* of mission in the language of the past, as though the world in which it must be done has not changed? And, given a culture in which

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[7]   Andrew F. Walls, 'Christianity in the Non-Western World: A Study in the Serial Nature of Christian Expansion', *Studies in World Christianity* 1 (1995), pp.1-25.

[8]   Buhlmann, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

institutional Christianity seems to be facing a supreme crisis and even the rumours of God are fading, where will we find the *resources* in personnel and funding to continue the kind of global enterprise we have associated with cross-cultural mission? These questions become urgent in the light of the findings of Wilbert Shenk that the study of the missionary movement since the 1920s leaves the impression that 'an ageing movement, increasingly unable to adapt to the times' has found its basic structures and assumptions rendered irrelevant and that 'with the end of the modern period in world history has also come the end of modern missions'.[9]

In a situation like this serious biblical and theological reflection on the future of Christian mission becomes an urgent priority. Indeed, just such reflection has been underway for some time now, boosted by the *magnum opus* of the late David Bosch, *Transforming Mission.* In this influential book Bosch attempted to describe what he called the 'Emerging Ecumenical Missionary Paradigm'. He acknowledged that we are living through a time of deep uncertainty and confusion not unlike previous periods in the history of mission when Christians have faced major change in the church and in the world. Bosch observed that such transitions are always difficult to negotiate:

> New paradigms do not establish themselves overnight. They take decades, even centuries, to develop distinctive contours. The new paradigm is therefore still emerging and it is, as yet, not clear which shape it will eventually adopt. For the most part we are, at the moment, thinking and working in terms of *two* paradigms.[10]

In the light of this comment I want to consider the actual or possible responses to this situation. How *are* Christians reacting to the current crisis in mission? Is it possible to begin to discern the contours of an emerging model of mission and, if so, what are its leading features?

CRISIS! WHAT CRISIS?

The first position I want to describe can be called the *'business as usual'* response. This reaction is found among Christians who have come to identify mission with one particular, passing paradigm. The conditional nature of any and all of our understandings of the missionary calling of the people of God is overlooked and one local expression of missionary

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[9] Wilbert Shenk, *Changing Frontiers of Mission* (New York, 1999), p. 165.
[10] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission* (New York, 1991), p. 349.

obedience and practice is elevated to the status of an unchanging absolute and invested with all the authority of divine revelation. To abandon *this* position, it is argued, is to renege on the call of Christ to obey the 'great commission'. To other people it seems obvious that the particular model being defended is creaking at the seams, yet those who cling to it cannot face the prospect of its demise and so live in a condition of denial.

I suggest that this response is widespread among Evangelicals and can be detected in a great deal of missionary literature. For example, the seemingly unending series of programmes and strategies for world evangelisation which were promoted in the approach to the year AD 2000 had in common a steadfast denial of the realities of Western secularisation, combined with an approach to the non-western world which was, at best, paternalistic, at worst, neo-colonial. Thus, the founder of the DAWN project (DAWN stands for 'Discipling A Whole Nation') tells us that this movement, which offers techniques designed to lead directly to the completion of the Great Commission and the end of the world, has swept across England, enthusiastically endorsed by the leaders of all denominations, including the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Church of England is said to have been a staid and static church in terrible decline before the adoption of DAWN strategies, but is now revived and planting a new congregation every week. The upshot of all this is, according to the writer, that God is 'anointing the Church in England to *get back to its historic role* as one of the leading missionary sending nations in the world'.[11] Any doubt that such sentiments amount to a desire to turn the clock back are banished when we read that the Church in England could 'return to its former colonies' and pioneer a new strategy in missions.[12]

It is difficult to know whether to treat such descriptions as simply naïve wishful thinking or wilful blindness, but whatever the explanation, we are clearly dealing with an approach that ignores both the challenge of mission in the modern West and renders invisible the emergence of what Buhlmann has called 'the Third Church' in the non-western world. Missiology of this kind involves an irresponsible flight from reality and a refusal to face the real challenge of discovering the true frontiers of the Christian mission in the third millennium.

However, it is important to notice that while the position just described may appear anachronistic, it is attractive to many Christians who find themselves confused and bewildered by the tensions and contradictions that exist in a time of transition. It is not easy to live between paradigms at a

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[11]   Jim Montgomery, *The End will Come* (Pasadena, 1997), p. 54.
[12]   *Ibid.*

point when the old model no longer works and the new one has not yet emerged. A strategy of mission that assures anxious Christians that nothing has really changed, that Christian conquest of the world remains assured, and that with one final push we can actually precipitate the end of all things and the return of the Lord, obviously has power to reassure the troubled. Thus, when a highly respected missionary strategist writes that the 'tide of the gospel has risen and flowed over two thirds of the earth, and is lapping at the one third where the final bastions and citadels of Satan's kingdom have yet to be broken down',[13] it is tempting to accept such an analysis since it confirms that nothing has really changed in the world and the inherited paradigm of mission can be retained. Sadly, analyses of this kind rest upon nineteenth-century assumptions that involve the presupposition that the contemporary West is an area *immersed* in the gospel tide, while peoples in the so-called 10/40 window are under satanic domination to a degree found nowhere else on the planet. The cities of Accra, Delhi and Beijing are thus classified as 'citadels of Satan'; London, Berlin, even Las Vegas, are not viewed as legitimate *missionary* territory since they are located in areas that have been 'evangelised'. Whatever else may be said about such an approach, it is difficult to see how it connects with the real world we know from daily experience at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

These comments are certainly not meant to impugn the integrity or sincerity of Christians who continue to operate within a fading missionary paradigm. Indeed, such people often reveal a concern for God's glory and a deep compassion for the world that would put many of us to shame and in these, and many other ways, their commitment demands imitation rather than rejection. Nonetheless, precisely *because* we share such a concern for the glory of God in a rapidly changing world, we are bound to engage in a search for a new paradigm of faithful, missionary obedience in the third millennium. There is an urgent need to break out from a situation in which the relics of the lost paradigm 'hold us hostage to the past and make it difficult to create a new paradigm'.[14] Meantime, as Loren Mead observes, many people react in this context with denial, depression and *anger:* 'I see it in the way people at all levels engage in civil wars or try to purge one another for one reason or another.'[15] Which alerts us to the fact that the

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[13] Patrick Johnstone, *The Church is Bigger Than You Think* (Fearn, Rosshire1998), pp. 215-16.

[14] Loren B. Mead, *The Once and Future Church: Reinventing the Church for a New Missionary Frontier* (New York, 1988), p. 18.

[15] *Ibid.,* p. 62.

time between paradigms is likely to witness increased stress within the Body of Christ and is a situation in which there is need for greater vigilance than ever if we are to maintain the unity of the people of God.

BACK TO BASICS

The second position I want to notice can be called that of the *radical revisionists*. As long ago as 1951 Max Warren noted that we were living through the end of an age and that in both East and West 'the old landmarks are disappearing'. Warren commented,

In this testing situation it is essential that the particular form of the missionary enterprise shall be scrutinized afresh to see what, if any, are the elements of its past organization that can with advantage be carried over into the future.... Beyond this it is surely necessary to go even further and to ask the direct question – *'Have we reached the end of the missionary age in any shape recognizably continuous with the past?'*[16]

In the middle of the twentieth century Warren had sensed that the changes taking place in the world were of such a profound and far-reaching nature that no mere tinkering with the structures of mission would suffice and he anticipated what we have come to know as a paradigm shift in the Christian mission. At the beginning of the third millennium it has become clear to many thoughtful observers that we have indeed reached the end of the era of modern missions and a growing chorus of voices can now be heard demanding a radically new approach. For example, the Canadian theologian Douglas John Hall wrote a book with the title *Christian Mission: The Stewardship of Life in the Kingdom of Death* in which he sought to articulate 'a new understanding of our mission' that relates Christian witness to the realities of a culture in which powerful nations have entered into a covenant with death. Hall described the inherited model of mission as one that was fatally flawed by the concept of 'conquering for Christ' and he proposed a root-and-branch rejection of this imagery. The question of Jesus, 'What does it profit one to gain the whole world and lose one's soul?' could be applied to the church: what if the church gained the world, in the manner intended by the church-growth missiologists, and, in the process, lost its soul? The equating of missionary success with the expansion of the church subverts a basic principle of the gospel since, Hall said, 'By such logic, Jesus' own mission must be regarded as a failure....

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[16] Max Warren, *The Christian Mission* (London, 1951), p. 103 [emphasis mine].

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But perhaps the logic of the cross must call into question the whole assumption that faithfulness to the mission means the expansion of the missionary community.'[17]

Douglas John Hall believes that the new paradigm of mission he is advocating would involve a *return* to an apostolic model of the church in which a 'disciple community' loses itself in the service of the world and bears costly and prophetic witness to the God of life in a world in thrall to the idols of death. In Hall's words,

> In the kingdom God is building in the midst of death's kingdom, systematic theology will not be queen, and the church will not be a great property-holding multinational, and Christian armies will not go off to glorious death.... All that... will exist for the church of the future only as the record of a bad temptation, rejected by Jesus and picked up by his church, which finally achieved little if anything of true significance thereby.[18]

There is much to be learned from works like this and it is impossible not to admire Hall's attempt to articulate a fresh vision for the Christian mission. His analysis of Western culture in the light of Isaiah 28:14-22, in which the nations refuse the God of life and enter into a covenant with death, is compelling. Moreover, he shows great courage in suggesting that 'many of the earth's billions today' regard North America as the source of the world's sickness and that this favoured continent may prove to be the vulnerable channel 'through which Sheol could one day spew its lava over the face of the green planet'.[19] In other words, far from being a region immersed by the truth of the gospel, *the Western world constitutes one of the supreme missionary challenges of this, or any other, age.*

However, there are dangers in this type of *revisionism* since it is possible that it leads beyond merely abandoning an outdated model of mission, to the loss of fundamental aspects of mission itself. It is, in other words, at the opposite end of the spectrum to the *conservationist* tactic discussed earlier. Hall's depiction of the received paradigm of mission as one characterised above all else by the motif of the *conquest* of the world in the name of Christ does scant justice to the records of humble and sacrificial service which fill the annals of missionary history. If after the holocaust, the entire heritage of cross-cultural missionary service must be repudiated (as Hall seems to suggest), what then happens to the coherence

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[17] Douglas John Hall, *Christian Mission: The Stewardship of Life in the Kingdom of Death* (New York, 1985), p. 18.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

of the Christian movement across the ages? It simply will not do to brand the entire effort with the charges laid against *conquistadores* and imperialists when the historical record reveals a far more nuanced picture. And while Hall's proposal that mission should in the future be focussed on 'the stewardship of life in the kingdom of death' merits careful consideration, we are bound to ask why he is so reticent about inviting people to *turn* from death and to *receive* the gift of life?

I am reminded here of the experience of the Gambian Christian convert from Islam, Lamin Sanneh. In an article entitled 'Christian Missions and the Western Guilt Complex', Sanneh recalls that when at the age of eighteen he approached an English Methodist missionary with a request to be baptised, he was invited to reconsider his decision! In this liberal Methodist tradition, he says, 'I first encountered the guilt complex about missions which I have since come to know so well after living for more than two decades in the West'.[20] Yet, as Sanneh points out, the stigmatising of the missionary movement as the religious agent of colonialism ignores the empirical fact that colonial power was 'irreparably damaged by the consequences of vernacular translation – and often by other activities of the missionaries'.[21] In other words, modern missions, whatever their failings and shortcomings, formed the agency by means of which indigenous languages and local cultures were preserved and non-western peoples were equipped with a transcendent source of authority which enabled them to critique racism and imperialism and recover their own sense of worth and value.

So then, if neither the conservative *business as usual* response, nor the *radical revisionist* approach to the present crisis in mission is adequate, what path should we take as we seek for a new model of the Christian mission? Describing the *search for the new frontiers of mission,* Wilbert Shenk comments helpfully,

> It is in the nature of mission always to seek the frontier where the struggle between faith and unfaith is most clearly and urgently drawn. The first essential of leadership, the one above all others with regard to mission, is to see the vision of the reign of God being established in these frontier situations and then to hold that before the church. All else is secondary.[22]

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[20] Lamin Sanneh, 'Christian Missions and the Western Guilt Complex', *Christian Century* 8 (1987), pp. 330-34.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 331.

[22] William Shenk, *Changing Frontiers of Mission* (New York, 1999), p. 183.

Most of the frustrations and dilemmas facing traditional missionary organisations and their supporters today arise from the fact that modern mission agencies came into existence in order to facilitate mission at frontiers far away in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The institutions and structures of mission designed to operate at these frontiers have remained in place at a time when the geographical, cultural and social location of mission has moved elsewhere. Not surprisingly, the traditional language used to report missionary activity often seems hollow and unreal. As Shenk puts it, *missions are today in search of mission*; agencies and institutions that once did pioneering work at the cutting edges of the Christian mission have too often been left facing in the wrong direction as the battle has moved on. In this situation they face a stark choice: either they engage in a radical re-formation, repositioning themselves to respond to the quite new challenges of the twenty-first century, or they are doomed to rapid and rather sad decline and extinction. A recent study of the crisis facing North American mission agencies concludes that unless they can break away from their essentially nineteenth-century, culturally modernist, mindset and embrace the new opportunities presented in the postmodern age, they will soon be known only to historians. Indeed, missions have need of penitence since they 'have infected a world church with the disease of modernity'. As a result, traditional agencies may be in danger of 'being judged unworthy to carry the mantle God once placed on North American missions'.[23]

SEARCHING FOR THE NEW FRONTIERS

The disappearance of the traditional frontiers of modern missions is, quite clearly, related to the two major changes that have occurred within the Christian world in the course of the twentieth century. On the one hand, the massive growth in the churches of Africa, Latin America and many parts of Asia make it impossible to continue to speak of these areas as 'mission fields' in the sense that this phrase was understood in the past. Consider just one example, which has a particular significance in missionary history, the case of China. The expulsion of Western missionaries from China following the Communist revolution created a crisis of confidence for the missionary movement as a whole and there was anxiety in Europe and North America concerning the viability of the Chinese church in this situation. Indeed, by the 1960s Western Sinologists

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[23]   James F. Engel and William A. Dryness, *Changing the Mind of Missions: Where Have We Gone Wrong?* (Downers Grove, 2000), p. 78.

had concluded that Christianity was doomed to die away in China because of its 'ineradicably foreign connections'.[24] And yet, something totally unexpected happened and scholars now talk about 'a flood of manifestations of the revival of religion, especially popular religion, which was nothing short of spectacular'. The number of Christians in China grew tenfold since 1949 and has been conservatively estimated at between twenty to thirty million. Even more significant is the fact that Christianity has now become a clearly identifiable Chinese religion 'and part of the Chinese social scene'.[25] Precisely in the absence of foreign missionaries, a process of genuine inculturation and translation took place, which resulted in the emergence of an independent Chinese church which, given the role China seems destined to play in the twenty-first century, is a phenomenon of incalculable significance.

What has just been described is, of course, one indication among many others of the emergence of what has come to be known as *world Christianity*. However, the transformation of the Christian movement worldwide has been made yet more complete by the fact that, just as the faith was expanding rapidly across the southern hemisphere, it went into freefall in its former heartlands, with the result that the previously secure base for mission began to crumble away. In Europe, and increasingly in North America as well, we are left with the shell of Christendom, while the majority of people find their spiritual needs met either by alternative religions, or in their devotion to the idols of a culture now dominated by economic values and symbols. Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon describe the tragedy of the kind of Christian response to this situation which involves a denial of reality and the refusal of mission:

> Like an ageing dowager, living in a decaying mansion on the edge of town, bankrupt and penniless, house decaying around her but acting as if her family still controlled the city, our theologians and church leaders continued to think and act as if we were in charge, as if the old arrangements were still valid.[26]

There is, however, another way of viewing this situation. It is possible to understand this moment in history as providing a unique opportunity to recover a truly biblical theology of mission and, in that process, to

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[24] Daniel H. Bays, *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Stanford, 1996), p. vii.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. ix.

[26] Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon, *Resident Aliens* (Nashville, Tennessee, 1989), p. 29.

rediscover not only the essential tasks of Christian theology, but also our own true identity as churches and as believers. Seen in this light, the collapse of Christendom and the emergence of the church as a truly multicultural community of faith represent not the end of mission, but the beginning of its latest phase, which may turn out to be the most amazing time in the long history of the Christian movement.

No one, I think, has better expressed the challenge which confronts the Western churches in this situation than the Cuban-American theologian Justo Gonzalez. In a remarkable study on the book of Revelation, which sets that work in the context of an age of cultural conflict similar in many ways to our own, he writes:

> The fact is that the gospel *is* making headway among the many tribes, peoples, nations and languages – that it is indeed making more headway among them than it is among the dominant cultures of the North Atlantic. The question is not whether there will be a multicultural church. Rather, the question is whether those who have become accustomed to seeing the gospel expressed only or primarily in terms of those dominant cultures will be able to participate in the life of the multicultural church that is already a reality.[27]

CONCLUSION

I want to conclude where we began, in the National Gallery in London. Interestingly, although the 'Seeing Salvation' exhibition was prompted by the awareness of increasing biblical illiteracy, the final room bore the title 'The Abiding Presence'. It contained a series of modern images of Christ, including famous canvasses by Holman Hunt and Salvador Dali and the sketches for the great tapestry of Christ in glory by Graham Sutherland, which hangs in Coventry Cathedral. It also included a huge canvass of Stanley Spencer's in which Christ is depicted carrying his cross through the artist's native village of Cookham in Berkshire. This painting was completed in 1920 when memories of the Great War were still fresh in people's minds. That terrible conflict, hints of which are to be seen in Spencer's painting, shattered both the belief that European culture was in some sense 'Christian' *and* the confidence of those who had trusted the process of evolution to ensure the continuing 'ascent of man'. In this situation, Spencer depicts a Christ who transforms a dark and despairing

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[27] Justo L. Gonzalez, *For the Healing of the Nations: The Books of Revelation in an Age of Cultural Conflict* (New York, 1999), p. 91.

world and gives hope and meaning to people in his village, including the most humble of folk. Spencer said that he had come to realise that the cross of Jesus made everything holy: 'The instinct of Moses to take his shoes off when he saw the burning bush was similar to my feelings. I saw many burning bushes in Cookham.' Perhaps one aspect of the emerging paradigm of mission will involve the discovery of burning bushes in unlikely places in our postmodern culture and the humble and grateful acknowledgement of the prevenient grace of God, which has always preceded the arrival of the ambassadors of Christ at every new frontier of mission.

WORSHIPPING BIBLICALLY

I. HOWARD MARSHALL, ABERDEEN

The term 'worship', as it is generally used in contemporary theological and ecclesiastical discussion, can refer to any of the following:

1. The activity of individual people in acknowledging the greatness of God as a superior being by appropriate attitudes and actions.
2. The activity of a group of people in doing the same thing.
3. By extension, whatever is done in a meeting of such a group.

These three definitions show that 'worship' may have a narrow sense of some kind of human activity that acknowledges God's greatness, or it may have a broader sense that encompasses all or some of what goes on in what we often call a church 'service'. Further, although the term can very properly be applied to the activity of an individual, it tends in practice to be used mostly for the activity of a group.

We thus have an umbrella term before us for investigation, and in this paper we shall consider it particularly from a biblical angle, by which I understand that we should be looking at how worship was understood and practised in the biblical period and what this investigation might have to say to us for our theology and practice. In view of the width of the subject thus opened up, attention will be focussed on the New Testament rather than upon the Bible as a whole.[1]

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[1] I first developed the thesis defended in this article in 'How far did the early Christians *worship* God?, *Churchman* 99:3 (1985), pp. 216-29. The major work on the subject is D. Peterson, *Engaging with God: A biblical theology of worship* (Leicester, 1992); the material is summarised in D. Peterson, 'Worship in the New Testament', in D. A. Carson (ed.), *Worship: Adoration and Action* (Carlisle, 1993), pp. 51-91, pp. 223-33, and more briefly still in D. Peterson, 'Worship', in T. D. Alexander and B. S. Rosner (ed.), *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Leicester, 2000), pp. 855-63. See also D. E. Aune, 'Worship, Early Christian', in *ABD* VI, pp. 973-89.

On worship in the Old Testament see H. H. Rowley, *Worship in Ancient Israel* (London, 1967); Y. Hattori, 'Theology of Worship in the Old Testament', in Carson, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-50; Peterson, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-54.

THE PLACE OF WORSHIP IN CHRISTIAN MEETINGS

In the New Testament the verb *proskuneo* (with the noun *proskunesis*) is the characteristic term used for worship. It comprehends the attitudes of submission, respect and reverence that may be expressed by bodily posture, such as kneeling (Mark 15:19) or bowing with one's face to the ground,[2] and by appropriate forms of words before somebody who is 'greater' than the worshipper. Such respect may be shown simply to a superior human being, such as a king or master (Matt. 18:26), or to a person respected because of their piety or some outstanding quality. Such an attitude is properly adopted towards God, and it is improper to display it towards something or somebody who is not entitled to it or is unworthy (*e.g.* an idol, Acts 7:43; Baal, Rom. 11:4; the devil, Matt. 4:9f. par. Luke 4:7f.). It may be shown towards a person who has superior powers, such as a reputation for healing diseases, without the supplicant knowing precisely who the person is or what their status is (Mark 5:6). Such remarkable powers may confirm that the person has a more than human status or ability (Matt. 14:33). So worship was offered to Jesus during his earthly life and immediately after his status has been confirmed by the resurrection (Matt. 28:9, 17; Luke 24:52). One important expression of worship is prayer, which may be the expression of thanks to a superior for his/her benefactions (Luke 17:16) or the expression of a request for such attention (Matt. 20:20).

One of the functions of religious festivals, or rather the principal function, is to facilitate the worship of God, and visiting buildings such as temples and the places where they are situated is specially important in this regard. This is because the God who is worshipped is deemed to be present in these places. They can be called 'holy' because of this; the temple is the 'holy place' (Acts 6:13) and Matthew in particular can refer to Jerusalem as the holy city (Matt. 4:5; 27:53; *cf.* Rev. 21:2, 10; 22:19 of the new Jerusalem).

An analysis of the New Testament material shows that activity of this kind occurs in three contexts.

1. Worship is offered to God on earth. While worship was especially appropriate in the temple, prayer could be offered to him anywhere, *e.g.* by

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[2]   Matt. 17:6 (Transfig.); 26:39 (Gethsemane); Luke 5:12 (Peter); 17:16 (leper); 24:5 (women at tomb before angels); 1 Cor. 14:25 (stranger in church); Rev. 7:11; 11:16; contrast with seeing the face of God, Matt. 18:10 (angels); Acts 2:28; 1 Cor. 13:12; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:6; Heb. 9:24; Rev. 22:4.

Jesus in Gethsemane (Luke 22:41) or by the disciples on the shore at Tyre (Acts 21:5), or wherever a person happened to be. There is a particularly important discussion in John 4:19-24 where the Jewish belief that God should be worshipped in Jerusalem and not elsewhere, such as on Mount Gerizim, is attacked by Jesus who insists that God is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and who disqualifies both Jerusalem and Gerizim as exclusive places of worship.

2. Similar activity is described as taking place in the presence of God *in heaven* or at the last judgement (Rom. 14:11). Revelation contains more uses of *proskuneo* than any other book of the New Testament (24, but 11 of these are of worshipping the dragon, the beast, demons, and an angel).

3. The term is used of worship or reverence shown to Jesus *during his earthly life*, especially by people seeking his help, but also by people who recognise his super-human status, and after his resurrection. There is also a significant prophecy in Philippians 2:9-11 of worship being offered to him by all creation.

The negative that is implied by this list of three contexts must be noted. It is quite remarkable that *proskuneo* is scarcely found outside the Gospels and Revelation. Cornelius falls at the feet of Peter, doubtless because he is a messenger of God, but God's messengers are not to be treated in this way (Acts 10:25). In 1 Corinthians 14:25 the outsider who comes into a Christian meeting and hears words of prophecy falls down on his face and worships God, saying 'truly God is among you'. But that is the one and only place where this verb is used for something that happened in a Christian meeting.[3]
We should perhaps not be surprised that the language of worship is not used in the New Testament for what went on in a Jewish synagogue. The

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[3] An analysis of other 'worship' vocabulary would confirm this finding. *Leitourge** is used only once of an activity in a Christian meeting (Acts 13:2) and is used to cover giving aid or service to fellow-Christians (Phil. 2:30) and missionary work as service to God (Rom. 15:16). *Sebomai* is used of the activity of Jewish proselytes and once by analogy of persons who convert to Christianity (Acts 18:13). *Latreu** is used of Jewish worship in Hebrews and of heavenly worship, and can be used both of Christian activities and of the Christian way of life. Similarly, the language of sacrifice is used of Christian meetings in Hebrews 13:15f. and 1 Peter 2:5 but also of the total response of believers to God (Rom. 12:1; Phil. 2:17). See more fully 'How far...', pp. 217-20.

characteristic activities of Jewish worship, principally the offering of sacrifices, were reserved for the temple. Perhaps, then, insofar as the early Christian meetings were modelled in part at least on the synagogue, it is equally unsurprising that the term 'worship' is simply not used for what regularly went on in them.[4] Nevertheless, prayer, which is closely related to worship, was a regular part of synagogue activity. The synagogue was pre-eminently a place where the law was read and expounded in the context of prayer (Matt. 6:5) and confession of Yahweh as the one God.

We have, then, the remarkable situation that the activity of Christians gathered together in their meetings is generally not described in terms of worship, despite the fact that we regularly use this word for our meetings in such phrases as 'morning worship', or we begin them in some traditions by saying 'Let us worship God'.

Confirmation of this conclusion may be gained by considering the names or self-descriptions used by Christians. The Christian group can be described in terms of its make-up as 'believers', 'disciples', or 'saints', terms which say important things about its characteristics; but the term 'worshippers' is not used as a self-description; only in Acts 18:13 is the verb used by outsiders trying to define the Christians by contrast with themselves.

Collectively the believers form the *ekklesia*, a term which arouses echoes of the body of citizens of a Greek city met together to transact their common business, but more importantly was used in the Old Testament to refer to the people of Israel in a somewhat idealistic sort of way as a company of people who could be gathered together, like a citizen-body, under their leaders. Alternatively they could have been called a *sunagoge*, like a Jewish meeting, but this term occurs only in James 2:2 for a Christian group. Neither of these terms calls up the word 'worship'. The significant point is that the believers meet together as the people of God.[5]

However, we must not ignore the significant fact that the Christian group is also described as a temple (1 Cor. 3:16f.; 2 Cor. 6:16). The temple is the locus of God's presence, and therefore it is where people meet with him. It is the place where sacrifices are offered to him, but in the New Testament the concept of sacrifice is spiritualised and understood to refer to the offering of praise and the doing of good to other people. Here the

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[4] It is true that proselytes were regarded as 'worshippers' (Acts 13:43), but this seems to be shorthand for 'worshippers of [the Jewish] God', the point being that they revered him rather than any other god.

[5] 'New Wine in Old Wine-Skins. V. The Biblical Use of the Word "Ekklesia"', *Expository Times* 84 (1973), pp. 359-64.

thought is probably of thank-offerings and perhaps the sharing of food with needy people (*cf.* the celebrations in the OT). Yet the language is used only rarely. Moreover, it does not become a technical term for an assembly of Christians in the way that the phrase 'in the meeting' is used (1 Cor. 11:18); there is no corresponding expression 'in the temple'. There is a very clear understanding that there is no material sacrifice in the Christian assembly. The death of Jesus is understood as a sacrifice, but the actual death took place at Calvary and is over and done with; and the offering of the sacrifice to God is envisaged as taking place before God in Heaven, at least according to Hebrews where there is the concept of a heavenly, spiritual counterpart to the earthly, physical tabernacle/temple. Thus the characteristic activity of a temple is not part of the picture, and therefore the metaphor is not developed.

Likewise, when Christians are described as priests, their priestly activity is understood as praising God and announcing his mighty works (Heb. 13:15f.; 1 Pet. 2:4-10). The latter activity appears to take place 'in the world' rather than simply to one another 'in the meeting'. Paul can refer to his missionary activity as 'service' to God, using the term that refers to priestly service (*leitourgia*, Rom. 15:16). But only in Acts 13:2 is the term applied to a specific activity within a Christian meeting. Here it is associated with fasting and by implication with prayer, and in this context prophets are active.

With the exception, then, of the limited use of the imagery of temple and priesthood to describe some aspects of Christian activity, we find that the language of worship is almost completely absent for describing the content and purpose of Christian meetings. What, then, did they do in their meetings and what was their function?

THE CONTENT OF CHRISTIAN MEETINGS

Our knowledge of what happened in a Christian meeting rests essentially on two passages, Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 12-14. In Acts 2:42 four elements characterised the common life of the first believers: teaching by the apostles, fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers. Only the second of these elements is problematic, since it is not clear whether it refers primarily to the sharing of possessions in some kind of common life or to spiritual sharing and participation.[6] There is also debate as to whether

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[6] In my commentary on Acts I held that it was 'more likely that here it refers to the holding of a common meal or to a common religious experience' (*The Acts of the Apostles*, Leicester, 1980, p. 83). There is, however, no

these four elements were the constituents of a Christian meeting or were simply four parts of their common life together and occurred at different times.[7] Although Luke is here describing the early life of the believers in Jerusalem, it may be presumed that these elements remained constant in Christian meetings as the church spread and developed elsewhere. The evidence makes clear that Luke saw these functions as continuing throughout Acts, and this is confirmed by other New Testament evidence.

So, for example, in Acts 4:23-31 there is prayer in a church meeting. In Acts 20:7-12 there is a lengthy piece of teaching by Paul followed by the breaking of bread, and in Acts 20:17-38 Paul speaks and prays. Again, in Acts 28 Paul teaches the people who come to him. In Acts 4:32-5:11 it would seem that the gifting of resources to the apostles and the distribution of them were done at meetings of believers. In Acts 6:1-7 it emerges that the apostles saw their 'service' as consisting in prayer and the 'service of the word', but the latter certainly included evangelism as well as teaching believers.

Outside Acts the sharing of possessions emerges in the material relating to the collection for the poor, and we may presume that the money was collected at meetings of believers (although 1 Cor. 16:2 does not mean that they brought it to church each Sunday). The breaking of bread is the focus in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11. 1 Peter 4:10f. confirms that there was a two-fold ministry of speaking and service.

As already noted, we should probably not draw too strict a line between a congregational meeting and the other activities of the congregation. When we read about the gifts of the Spirit and the various forms of ministry associated with them, it is quickly apparent that some of these would be more appropriately exercised in a meeting, while others would be more appropriate in other situations. So, for example, while prayer was carried on in the congregational meeting (1 Tim. 2), the elders would also visit the sick and pray with them (Jas 5). Ephesians and Colossians assume that believers will communicate with one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. The service of which Peter speaks would include charitable and helpful actions; such as the people who qualified to

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unanimity among commentators on the phrase, and I am less confident about its meaning than I used to be.

[7] I adopted the former view, *ibid.* See, however, D. Peterson, *Engaging*, 152. C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Edinburgh, 1994), Vol. 1, p. 162, argues that in this ideal description of the early church this is an unreal alternative; the church meeting was a focus of the church's life, and the same elements were found in both.

receive widows' benefit in 1 Timothy 5 had already been practising.[8] Similarly, in Romans 12 the activities of prophecy, service, teaching, encouragement, giving, 'leading' and showing mercy (*i.e.* charitable actions in general) are a mix of things done in and out of the congregational meeting, and Paul has not separated them into these two categories.

In the second main passage dealing with what went on in congregational meetings, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Paul gives sample lists of things that happened in the meeting. The sample in 1 Corinthians 14:26-33 includes people who 'have' a psalm, teaching, revelation, tongue, interpretation, prophecy to share with the rest of the congregation. These are understood to be forms of ministry and they are exercised for the good of the congregation. If we go back into 1 Corinthians 12, we find that here there are also listed: saying of wisdom; saying of knowledge; faith; gifts of healing; power to do mighty works; discernment of spirit[ual utterance]s; helping; guiding; some of these could be exercised outside the congregational meeting.

The Lord's Supper, already discussed in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11 as an integral part of the congregational meetings, is not mentioned here because the concern here is with gifts of ministry. Similarly, there was no need to mention baptism at this point. Clearly it took place in a gathering of believers, but we are not told whether it was done at what we might call a regular congregational meeting or at a special gathering for the purpose. It will be best to assume that there was a variety of practice: the first converts in any locality are likely to have been baptised publicly, and this is what Acts suggests.

And how was the gospel preached? Open-air preaching to whoever would listen was probably the common practice; special meetings in suitable premises were also held (school of Tyrannus, Acts 19:9). But were congregational meetings used for the purpose? Here there are two views. On the one hand, Robert Banks has painted an attractive picture, based on 1 Corinthians 14, of non-believers coming into a congregational meeting and becoming acquainted with Christianity.[9] On the other hand, Brad Blue has

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8   The list in 1 Tim. 5 is of actions that the widows were already doing and that constituted a claim for their recognition by the church. We may presume that they continued to do these things while receiving support from the congregation.

9   He wrote an illustrated booklet entitled *Going to Church in the First Century: An Eyewitness Account* (Greenacre, 1980), that describes a visit to a Christian meeting by an outsider; unfortunately it is out of print.

strongly insisted that there is no indication of an evangelistic purpose (or of evangelistic results) in the gatherings of believers in house-groups in Acts.[10] But since the congregational meetings clearly were open to non-believers and to the household in general, it stands to reason that there must have been an evangelistic slant; so, for example, if a householder became a Christian, the house-meeting must have been shaped to enable the rest of the household to appropriate personally the faith that it was assumed that they would adopt.

Illocution and perlocution

Why, then, has the term 'worship' come to be attached so tightly to Christian meetings as if that was the characteristic activity that went on in them? Earlier I referred to a distinction between a narrow and a broad understanding of worship. We can make this more precise by availing ourselves of J. L. Austin's insights into the use of speech.[11] Austin was concerned with the way in which we do things by speaking, and therefore his terminology can be used of actions as well as of speech. He draws a helpful distinction between the illocutionary and the perlocutionary functions of a locution or utterance. The former is concerned with what is being done in a particular example of speech, and the latter is concerned with the effects that may be produced. Thus, if a person says 'You are great' to God, then the locution is the saying of these words; the illocution is worship. But if I am saying 'Repent and believe the good news', then the illocution here is preaching the gospel to sinners, but the perlocution is that through the hoped-for effect of the preaching people will acknowledge God and in so doing I myself am rendering service and worship to God. So my narrow sense of the term applies where the action is worship at the illocutionary level, but the broad sense applies where it is perlocutionary.

My contention is that a great deal of what goes on in a Christian meeting is not worship in the illocutionary or narrow sense, but only in the perlocutionary or broad sense. Therefore, to describe a Christian meeting as being for the purpose of worship, as if that adequately accounted for what actually goes on, is misleading and may indeed be dangerous, because people tend to understand the term in its narrow sense and try to make everything fit in under that heading. This may explain, for

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[10] 'Acts and the House Church', in D. W. J. Gill and C. Gempf, *The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting* (Grand Rapids and Carlisle, 1994), pp. 119-222.

[11] J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words* (Oxford, 1962).

example, why in some ecclesiastical settings the sermon, which is clearly not worship directed towards God, may be relegated to a tiny space of time; in some cases, notably at communion services, it may be omitted altogether; it may also explain the way in which in many churches the pulpit is either non-existent or is placed at the side of the church rather than being placed, as in Reformed usage, right there in the centre. It may also explain why in some Presbyterian churches it is customary to call the list of hymns to be sung the 'praise list', as if the function of all the hymns was to address God in praise, whereas our hymns, like the Psalms, contain many that are addressed to the worshippers themselves to give them encouragement and teaching.

Instruction and teaching

Indeed, it is this last element which is of great importance. From the New Testament it is plain that Christian meetings were occasions for instruction of the congregation. We would expect this from the analogy of the synagogue. We have already noticed the importance of the Word in Acts. It is particularly evident from the Pastoral Epistles, where the congregation is pre-eminently a listening congregation: the primary task of Timothy and Titus themselves and of the elders is to teach, while the congregation listens. A wide vocabulary of 'teaching' words is used in these letters. Similarly in the Letter of James the main task of the congregation is to listen. But there is nothing different in principle here from what we find elsewhere. The letters of Paul and other Christian writers are meant to be read aloud in the meeting. Paul assumes that words of knowledge, wisdom, teaching, will be given in the meeting. Peter distinguishes between two forms of ministry, teaching and service, and both of these forms of charismatic activity are directed towards 'one another'. In Acts a similar distinction is made between the service of the Word (associated with prayer) and the service of tables.

Such activity is carried on by people who speak on behalf of God to his church, whether as prophets or teachers. So in addition to people speaking to God in the Christian meeting, there is this element of God speaking to people. Here a piece of evidence of great significance is the activity of travelling apostles and other 'brothers' (3 John 5-10); the brothers here are manifestly evangelists but at the same time they have a ministry in the congregation. If such people came to a church meeting the one thing that we can be sure happened was that they were invited to speak; probably their speaking was the high point of the gathering. The best-documented case is, of course, Paul himself. When he visits a Christian congregation the main thing that he does is evidently to talk to them, and the breaking

of bread and informal conversation are mentioned almost casually by comparison (Acts 20:11). Similarly, the sending of letters was a substitute for the actual presence and teaching of the apostle. The travelling ministry of preachers makes no sense if it was not central to the lives of the congregations visited.

Theologically, this makes good sense. It is a good biblical principle that what God says and does to us is more important than what we say and do to him. The central theme of Christianity is the action of God in Christ in saving us or establishing a covenant in which he takes the initiative. Our response to his initiative is not unimportant but it is clearly secondary to it. Consequently, to think of Christian meetings in terms primarily of our worship of God is to put what should be secondary into the primary position, and, as we have seen, to create the danger that the Word and action of God may be lost from sight or at least thrust into a corner. To think of a Christian meeting in terms of worship is to stifle the voice of God. Surely our Christian meetings should be patterned on the fundamental drama of redemption in which God acts and we respond: God speaks through his human agents and then the congregation respond to his Word.

Fellowship

Alongside teaching, a second element that is endangered by thinking of our Christian meetings primarily in terms of worship narrowly conceived, is that they may also lose their essential character as occasions of fellowship. This element is not perhaps as heavily emphasised in the New Testament as is the element of teaching and learning, but it is crucial. We need to ask why it is that Christians should meet together at all. After all, worship can be carried on by individuals on their own, and people can read the Scriptures or expositions of them on their own. But Paul's analogy of the body makes it clear that individual Christians have specific gifts of the Spirit for ministry,[12] and by implication they lack the gifts that other Christians have; therefore in a Christian meeting there is a sharing of the gifts and the body as a whole is strengthened and built up by the mutual sharing of the gifts; collectively we can do what we cannot do as individuals. Thus the members of the body act as channels of the manifold grace of God, each giving to others and receiving from others. In this way the body grows, and, as Paul makes clear elsewhere, it grows in love and unity. It is apparent that part of God's aim for the church is the creation of

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[12] Although we tend to call them gifts of the Spirit, in fact God the Father and the Lord Jesus are equally involved in their provision (1 Cor. 12:4-6).

a society in which people love and serve one another.[13] The Christian meeting is the occasion where this mutual help is focussed and concentrated.

This understanding of the Christian meeting as an occasion of fellowship should spell death for the one-man ministry, and even for the one-woman ministry; we are still woefully weak in enabling the gifts of all the people of God to be used. Even a church which had Paul as its apostle, and which therefore might be thought to need nobody else to speak, had this rich variety of ministry from the members of the body. And the fact that a Christian group has a William Still or a G. B. Duncan or whoever as its pastor should not be allowed to stifle the development of the gifts of the congregation.

I have spoken of the perlocutionary function of what goes on in the Christian meeting. Now there is no doubt that the overall purpose of these activities is that they lead to the glorification of God and to thanksgiving to him. This is explicitly the case in 1 Peter 4:11 and similarly there is Paul's desire for praise and thanksgiving to be given to God as a result of the ministry of his people to one another (2 Cor. 9:12-15).

But worship is not the only function of this kind. An important perlocutionary function is expressed in Paul's criterion for the value of what goes on in the Christian meeting, namely whether it is 'edifying', *i.e.* whether it 'builds up' the congregation, a term that refers to enabling their growth in faith, love, hope and other Christian characteristics (1 Cor. 14:1-12, 26). Paul is not necessarily saying that this is the only thing that should be going on, the only test of whether a meeting is fulfilling its purpose. His concern was that whatever was meant to help the congregation to grow should in fact do so and not simply help the individual who was speaking in tongues. This does not exclude other purposes. Nevertheless, it may be significant that it is this purpose which is the one that gets mentioned and not any others.

To sum up thus far: I have distinguished between the perlocutionary function of what goes on in a Christian meeting as worship, and the illocutionary functions which are very various. I am claiming that the problem with referring to the purpose of the meeting as being 'worship' *simpliciter* is that it says remarkably little by way of definition of the meeting since we can rightly say that 'worship' should be the perlocutionary function of all that we do in every part of our lives; but at

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[13] For an understanding of the church against the pattern of the Trinity see M. Volf, *After Our Likeness. The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, 1998).

the same time the danger of using the term is that we may think worship is the illocutionary function of all that we do in the meeting, whereas we have seen that the New Testament scarcely ever describes what goes on in a Christian meeting in these terms and that much goes on, and should go on, which is not 'worship', but 'teaching', 'fellowship', and so on.

'WORSHIP' IN THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

With all that clearly stated, we now have a context in which we can focus on the element of 'worship' in the narrower sense and explore it a bit further. A case can be made that in regard to both Christian meetings and personal religion the concept of worship is displaced and replaced by a variety of other terms which are expressive of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, petition, glorification. There is not a lot of worship as such in the sense of simply bowing down in awe before God, but there is a lot of prayer and praise.

Fear and reverence

In pagan religion asserting the greatness of a god or goddess is found: 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!' (Acts 19:27, 28, 34, 35; cf. Simon in Acts 8:9f.). Similarly, Mary can assert the greatness of God (Luke 1:46; cf. Acts 10:46; Titus 2:13), and people may be impressed by the greatness of God seen in his mighty acts (Luke 9:43; 19:17); Paul longed to see Christ 'made great' by what he did (Phil. 1:20). Greatness belongs to God and 'the greatness' can be used as a circumlocution for him (Heb. 1:3; 8:1; Jude 25).[14] Nevertheless, in contexts of worship the greatness of God as such tends to be taken for granted, and the emphasis falls more upon his love and his mighty acts of salvation and negatively upon his judgement.

The vocabulary of attitudes to God includes the element of 'fear'. Fear is the appropriate reaction in the face of displays of divine power and supernatural happenings, even when these displays are salvific (Luke 2:9; Acts 2:43), but especially divine judgements (Acts 5:5, 11). So in Colossians 3:22 fear of the Lord is a motive for Christian behaviour and is positively commended in 1 Peter 1:17; 2:17; 3:2, 15 (cf. 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:21; Phil. 2:12). To live as a believer is to 'walk in the fear of the Lord' (Acts 9:31), and yet to be a believer is to be released from the old fear (Rom. 8:15). Such fear, however is part of an individual's personal

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[14] Cf. Matt. 5:35. God's deeds are 'great', Luke 1:49; his 'day' is great, Acts 2:20; Rev. 6:17. 'Great' is a favourite word in Revelation, applicable to all kinds of things, both good and evil, divine and demonic.

relationship with God; it does not figure specifically in the normal life of a congregation, since hopefully Acts 5:1-11 and 1 Corinthians 11:27-32 refer to abnormal occasions. John can emphasise that there is no place for fear within a relationship of love (1 John 4:18). Fear should not be a problem for those who do good but only for the evil (Rom. 13:8); but an element of fear may remain because we are never sure that we may not be doing evil or be in danger of falling into temptation. A Christian relationship with God should take away that fear because there is now no condemnation, and yet a respect for God must remain lest we fall back into sin.

Obeisance
Bowing the knee or putting one's face on the ground are the typical postures of obeisance. They can be used literally or also figuratively, the latter sense being probable in Ephesians 3:14 in a description of prayer. However, alongside these uses we also have a number of references to people seeing the face of God in Heaven (Matt. 18:10; Heb. 9:24; Rev. 22:4), and Paul regards this as the perfection of that which we now enjoy only in part (1 Cor. 13:21; 2 Cor. 3:18; *cf.* 4:6). Just as Christ appears for us, so we too have boldness to appear before God in prayer and have open access to him (Rom. 5:1; Heb. 4:16). Consequently, there is the paradox that both forms of speech are appropriate to stress different aspects of our relationship to God, but it is the thought of confident approach to God which is uppermost and more characteristic of New Testament faith.

Prayer
The activity of confident prayer is clearly much more characteristic of what people do in the New Testament than fear and dread. By contrast with 'worship' here we have a word-group whose usage is spread fairly evenly across the New Testament. Praying is speaking to a God who is spiritually there rather than direct address to a being who is present in some other kind of way. It is practised both personally and in the Christian congregation.

For our purpose we should note that in the Pauline letters we often have prayer-reports in which the writer tells us what he prays about when he does pray, and it may well be that as he wrote the words he was in fact praying them. The language of Paul's prayer reports tends to be that of thanksgiving and petition/intercession, and he calls his readers to intercede for him.

A rare report of an actual prayer in a congregational meeting is found in Acts 4:24-30. The language is interesting in that it is worshipful; it begins

by acknowledging the sovereignty, creative power and revelatory activity of God and makes this a basis for a confident appeal to God for action.

Prayer in Acts is pre-eminently petition to God, whether it is concerned with the pray-ers own needs or is offered on behalf of other people for their needs; thanksgiving is of course not unknown (Acts 16:25!), but it is much less frequent.

Already here we see a widening out from worship as the expression or acknowledgement of the greatness of God to prayer as human speech addressed to God which may contain this element of acknowledgement, but moves on to thankfulness and petition.

Praise and confession

Confessing what God does to the world is a form of praise (1 Pet. 2:9). Acts 2:11 is significant because here speaking in tongues is a form of expressing the mighty acts of God in a way that can be understood by the people at large. In the Christian meeting speaking in tongues appears to edify the speaker but not the listeners unless it is explained; it is commonly assumed that it was a form of praise, where a person is so overcome by the grace of God that human words do not suffice to express the resultant emotions. The references in the letters to singing (*psallo*) are to expressions of joy and thanksgiving (Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Jas 5:13), and thus have a prayer quality.

Praise was characteristic of the first Christians (Acts 2:47), and specifically included both Jews and Gentiles (see Rom. 15:11, where it is the result of being part of God's people). It is a perpetual attitude in Hebrews 13:15. The frequent use of *eucharisteo* in the letters reflects the language and mood of actual prayers in the congregational meeting. The verb *eulogeo*, is used both of God 'blessing' people and also of humans blessing God, an expression which varies in meaning between thanking him for something (like food) or saying that he is blessed, which means that he is to be thanked.[15] This language is used in the letters and probably reflects actual prayers (Rom. 9:5; 2 Cor. 1:2; *et al.*).

Such praise is the fundamental recognition of God as giver and sustainer of life, which sinners withhold (Rom. 1:21) and hence it is a key term in prayer. It is, therefore, evoked by the benevolence of God rather than simply by his greatness and power.

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15 On occasion the passive adjective is a statement of his actual bliss – *cf.* use of 'The Blessed' for God (Mark 14:61).

Doxology

A specific form of glorification is found in the doxological elements in which the worthiness of God is acknowledged for what he is and what he does.[16] There are some 18 such statements in the New Testament.[17] Such doxologies punctuate the epistles. They are also found in three places in Revelation (Rev. 1:6; 5:13; 7:12) alongside other statements in which God or the Lamb are addressed in terms that are broadly worshipful (Rev. 4:8, 11; 5:9f., 12, 13; 7:10; 11:15, 17-18; 12:10-12; 15:3f.; 16:5f., 7; 19:1f., 3, 4, 6-8). It is significant that these statements occur in the context of remarks that worship and thanks are being given to God and a specific command to do so (Rev. 19:5). One way of worshipping God in Heaven is to say a doxology.

It has been suggested that the worship offered to God in Revelation is patterned on, or reflects, what went on in early Christian meetings. This suggestion needs to be made more precise. On the one hand, it is clear that the statements in Revelation tend very often to be contextually appropriate and specific and would not be appropriate in an ordinary Christian meeting. They are composed for the occasion. On the other hand, it would seem equally likely that there was corresponding activity in the Christian meetings, as the occurrence of the doxologies in the epistles demonstrates.

Glorification

The overall aim of Christian activity is 'to the glory of God' (2 Cor. 8:19); as we have noted, a lot goes on in the Christian meeting and the lives of Christians which is not the glorifying of God as such but which has as its ultimate aim the glorification of God.

1. God's mighty acts of salvation and healing promote his glory (Rom. 15:7; 2 Cor. 4:15) and cause people to glorify him (Luke 2:14, 20). Glorifying God is closely linked to fearing him (Rev. 14:7), thanking him and praising him.

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[16] A Jewish parallel may be seen in the way in which in the Rabbinic literature a mention of God is often accompanied by a kind of doxology: 'the Holy One – Blessed be he!'.

[17] I. H. Marshall, 'Romans 16:25-27: An Apt Conclusion', in S. K. Soderlund and N. T. Wright (ed.), *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (Grand Rapids, 1999), pp. 170-84.

2. The ultimate purpose of what believers do as individuals is to glorify God (1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; Eph. 1:12; Phil. 1:11); even what they experience in suffering should lead them to glorify him (1 Pet. 4:16).

3. The aim of much that believers do is to cause other people to ascribe glory to God (Matt. 5:16; 2 Cor. 9:13; 1 Pet. 2:12). Other believers glorify God when they hear of Paul's conversion (Gal. 1:24). Even the Word of God can be glorified as it successfully proceeds through society (2 Thes. 3:1).

4. The immediate purpose of missionary work is to make converts, but the ultimate aim is the creation of a people composed of Jews and Gentiles together who glorify God with one voice (Rom. 15:6). Glory is given to him in the church (Eph. 3:21).[18]

CONCLUSION

This rapid survey shows that the activities of believers in their meetings did include an important element of praise and glorification of God. Although there are significant elements of reverence and acknowledgement of God's greatness and power, nevertheless the accent falls overwhelmingly on praise, thanksgiving and confident petition. It is therefore a fair conclusion that, despite the lack of evidence for describing early Christian meetings as occasions for worship, nevertheless worship in this narrow sense was a part of what went on.

Consequently, my main thesis in this paper, namely that worship in the narrow sense is not the only activity in Christian meetings, must not be misinterpreted to suggest that praise and prayer had little or no place in them.

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[18] In this paper I have concentrated attention on what might be called the practice of Christian meetings and have not discussed the theology of the relationship to God thus expressed. Consequently, so important a matter as that all that Christians do in their meetings is done 'through Jesus Christ' or 'in the name of Jesus' has not been given the attention that it deserves. See D. Peterson, *Engaging*, pp. 238-46.

CULTURE & WORSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

The Collins English Dictionary defines the two words in my title as follows:

Culture

'1. The total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge, which constitute the shared bases of social action. 2. the total range of activities and ideas of a group of people with shared traditions, which are transmitted and reinforced by members of the group.'
[C15: from Old French, from Latin *cultura* a cultivating, from *colere* to till.]

Worship

'1. To show profound religious devotion and respect to; adore or venerate (God or any person or thing considered divine). 2 (tr.) To be devoted to and full of admiration for. 3. (intr.) To have or express feelings of profound adoration.'
[Old English weorthscipe, from WORTH + -SHIP.]

The words capture both the size and scale of this subject. Put side by side like this, they also point to the tensions resulting. Culture: *the total... shared* dimensions of assumed norms of behaviour in a particular society or group. Worship: *profound... devoted to... full of admiration for* – in other words, the whole of your life, lived in relation to God. You can see how they tread the same ground; if the derivation *cultura* is right, they till the same soil.

We are familiar with theological explorations of the relationship between culture and worship. The most famous is Richard Niebuhr's, who distinguished five different yet overlapping attitudes: from Christ against culture[1] to Christ the transformer of culture. His has for some time been

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[1]   Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York, 1951). In between, Niebuhr

the starting-point for theological exploration. The Lausanne Covenant of 1974 put it more simply:

> because man is God's creature, some of his culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because he is fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic.[2]

The Willowbank Report of 1978 brought it rather closer to home for our churches:

> No theological statement is culture-free. Therefore all theological formulations must be judged by the teaching of the Bible itself which stands above them all. Their value must be judged by their faithfulness to it as well as by the relevance with which they apply its message to their own culture.[3]

By the same token we have immediately to concede that experiences of worship are also not culture-free; their value must be judged by faithfulness and relevance in the same way. This is at the heart of our exploration. How does the everlasting Word engage with ever-changing human cultures? How do those who are persuaded to follow the everlasting Word express their following when they meet together? Where may we find help in the tensions that result? First, we will reflect with 1 Corinthians on the priorities that should shape such a conversation. Along the way, we will note the work of four current writers: Graham Cray, John Drane, Marva Dawn and Don Carson. We will identify four areas of concern, and conclude with three examples of a local church seeking to engage its surrounding cultures in worshipful ways.

I CORINTHIANS

Someone has said when there's a controversy in church, 'raise a bigger one'. 1 Corinthians is full of controversy as Paul battles to lift the horizons of these Christians and their leaders beyond their local squabbles

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considers the Christ of culture, Christ and culture in synthesis, and Christ and culture in paradox.

[2] *New Dictionary of Theology* (Leicester, 1988), p. 183 – article on Culture by K. Bediako. See the comment on putting this more inclusively in my section on 'Language', note 26.

[3] *Ibid.*

to the bigger issues. When we survey our own current, complex church scene, we hear the same message. Facing the twin trends of massive and continuing decline in membership and attendance[4] and real growth in some churches, the focus of attention continues to be how local church life – and specially, regular church services – can enable us to relate to our culture and provide a platform for engagement.

Paul's introduction to 1 Corinthians provides a valuable framework for worship. In 1:1-3, he writes to a Christian community, *the church of God*, in a particular place and culture, *Corinth*. Immediately, we recognise his expressive, excessive world as similar to our own: a culture of freedom and self-promotion, marked by competitive consumerism. It is postmodernity before its time.[5] These Corinthian Christian communities are primarily identified on one hand by what the Lord has done for them (*sanctified in Christ Jesus*), and on the other by their calling (*called to be holy* – a word capturing both their relationship with God and their manner of living). As a counter to their self-contained, autonomous view that the local is all, Paul will constantly remind them of their connectedness to the wider Christian scene (*together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*). As to Christian leadership, he will constantly have to contrast his own style with that of their local leaders, and will constantly remind them of his partnership with them as he alerts them to the very serious issues they face (*Paul... Sosthenes... the church of God in Corinth... our Lord Jesus Christ*).

As he surveys a shockingly compromised, divided church, and responds to the questions and criticisms they have sent him, he makes a deceptively simple declaration of what really matters: *Jesus Christ, and him crucified* (2:2). A whole world of complications follow, as anyone who has tried to preach 1 Corinthians systematically knows. We encounter Jewish longing for miracles and Greek desires for ever more impressive wisdom; we move from the tensions of marriage and singleness to the management of legal disputes, conduct at meetings; and we hear of bizarre practices like baptism for the dead. In the words of one of our tabloids, 'All human life is here' – and the gospel engages with it.

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[4]   A vital distinction in Scotland if we are to be honest about our figures for church involvement.

[5]   Anthony Thistelton, *How to read 1 Corinthians*, writing in *From Athens to Jerusalem* (the journal of RTSF) 3:3 (Spring 2002). Thistleton goes on to say: 'The mind-set at Corinth is closer to our own day than it is to many of the intervening centuries.... Paul never doubted the creative power of the God of the cross and resurrection to transform it.'

Along the way, we are grateful for Paul's challenges to this church, for they prove to be exactly his challenges to our churches. Fragmenting, argumentative Christian groups are challenged to be churches united around gospel foundations; chaotic and competitive meetings are challenged to reflect the God of both order and Spirit-given variety; self-centred and self-serving approaches to worship and life are challenged to place their trust in the weakness of the cross and the ordinariness of the church. Throughout, we are assured that God is at work through Jesus Christ and by his Spirit, and that God's purposes for both church and world will be achieved.

CONTEMPORARY WRITERS

Graham Cray[6] describes our current culture under four headings, with clear pointers for our response. It's worth noting that the western culture is described is an increasingly global phenomenon, reflecting trends in sports, clothing, commerce and media.

First, it is a culture marked by the prime value of personal choice. It is a consumer culture: 'I shop, therefore I am.' It is both addictive and anaesthetising, resulting in a shift in focus from the future to the present. We may wish to respond by giving choices of styles and shape of services and music, about which more later; we will certainly want to present a focus on the past and the future in order to make sense of the present.

Second, the culture reflects a search for identity: 'Just as consumerism promises happiness but creates a culture of disappointment, so contemporary culture promises freedom, but creates instability.'[7] What is the story we'll tell ourselves about ourselves? Where have we come from, where are we going, and who are we? We have the Bible's big story to tell in answer, if – and it's becoming a bigger 'if' – we can find ways of getting a hearing in order to tell it.

Third, the culture prides itself on flexibility: if the only fixed point is what others think of us and how they see us, we must keep moving. It is therefore marked by temporary allegiances and communities. We have a range of communities to offer, taking a much longer, more committed and permanent view; and we want to point people to the Lord, who is himself *the same yesterday, today and for ever* (Heb. 13:8).

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[6]   Graham Cray, *Postmodern Culture and Youth Discipleship* Grove Pastoral booklet 76 (Cambridge, 1998). A fuller treatment of world cultures is David Burnett's *Clash of Worlds* (Eastbourne, 1990).

[7]   *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

Finally, it is a culture of uncertainty under a bombardment of information. 'Human life and development is portrayed as trying to control a runaway lorry. Risk and uncertainty are the realities of everyday experience.'[8] Elsewhere, Cray speaks of life once being like a train journey: once you got on, you knew the destination. Now, it's more like a car journey, where every junction presents a decision.[9] We offer the possibility of certainty about God revealed to us in Jesus Christ. We also offer the reality of continuing pastoral care, for 'In the new cultural landscape pastoral care is perhaps the most important means of mission.'[10] Like Paul in 1 Corinthians 9, we seek to come alongside, with all the resulting complications.

Three of John Drane's recent books are highly stimulating as they look at the interface between culture and worship. *Faith in a Changing Culture* was followed by *Cultural Change and Biblical Faith* and *The McDonaldization of the Church.*[11] He builds on Paul's approach in 1 Corinthians 9;[12] and the unusual and often unnoticed word *katangello* in 1 Corinthians 11:26, which describes how believers proclaim the Lord's death through the Eucharist.[13] Drane is always challenging the separation between worship and evangelism, appealing instead for integration, so that both sides of the coin are visible at once. Worship is encounter; worship is evangelism. In some ways, Drane restates the pioneering ministry of the Anglican evangelist David Watson, whose Christian Celebrations aimed to be 'shop-windows' of living, attractive Christian faith, and were the precursor of some of our community and cell-church models.

Most strikingly Drane rails against standardising worship: *McDonaldization* is his application of the sociologist George Ritzer's thesis that rational systems have come to dominate. 'Put in a nutshell, the Enlightenment-inspired process of rationalization, which identified the highest human good with efficiency, predictability, quantification and control... has led to a devaluing of the human spirit and a heightening of...

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[8]   *Op. cit.*, p. 16, reflecting on Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990).

[9]   Address to the Evangelical Alliance National Assembly, Cardiff, November 2001.

[10]   *Op. cit.*, p. 19, quoting Paul Goodliff, *Care in a Confused Climate* (DLT 1998), p. 11.

[11]   John Drane, *Faith in a Changing Culture* (London, 1994); *Cultural Change and Biblical Faith* (Carlisle, 2000); *The McDonaldization of the Church* (London, 2000).

[12]   *Faith*, p. 109.

[13]   *Faith*, p. 114.

personal alienation.'[14] The scandal is that our churches have done exactly the same. In a world of choice and change, our churches – and, I might add, not only Episcopalian ones who pride themselves on having set liturgies – have stubbornly continued to offer only standard fare. And generations of spiritual seekers[15] have gone elsewhere.

On the basis that 'Worship is all that I am, responding to all that God is'[16] Drane's appeal is for variety tailored to cultures. That may be Club Church in Edinburgh[17] or Church for the Homeless in Cambridge, churches in pubs or theatres; even Chaplaincies to Nursing Homes and local Shopping Centres might fulfil his descriptions. In West and South East Edinburgh, local churches are talking and praying together as we seek to respond to retail, business, and residential housing developments around us. We accept that not every existing church will be able to respond; we recognise in honesty that many will not wish to; yet we're looking for permission to plant a springboard of support through both prayer and finance. We're also realising that talking about churches or even congregations may not in the first instance be helpful: the terms carry too much freight, too great a weight of history. Better to speak of groups who will aim to minister and witness in appropriate ways, thus allowing maximum freedom and imposing minimum limitations.

Marva Dawn writes acutely and with passion, pointing us in a different direction. *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down* and *A Royal 'Waste' of Time*[18] are sharp critiques of churches which been trying to engage culture to the point where she feels they have been giving the gospel game away. Her appeal is for Churches to be both alternative and parallel to their world:

> We gather together in worship to speak our language, to read our narratives of God at work, to sing the hymns of the faith in a variety of styles, to chant and pour out our prayers until we know the truth so well that we can go out to the world around us and invite that world to share this truth with us. In our worship, we are formed by biblical narratives that tell a different

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[14] *McDonaldization*, though the page eludes me...

[15] Movingly described in *McDonaldization*, chapter 4.

[16] *Faith*, p. 120.

[17] Peter Neilson, *A Theology of Entertainment and Leisure* (SETS conference, 2001) describes this initiative.

[18] Marva Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: a theology of worship for the turn-of-the-century culture* (Grand Rapids, 1995); *A Royal 'Waste' of Time – the splendour of worshiping God and being church for the world* (Grand Rapids, 1999).

story from that of the surrounding culture. Since we thereby come to know the truth that sets us free, we are eager to share that truth with our neighbours; thus our worship must equip us for that mission with a deep sense of the extravagant splendour of God. Rather than being 'a vendor of religious goods and services' that cater to people's tastes, the Church is called to be 'a body of people sent on a mission.'[19]

Those seeking to be such counter-cultural communities and get ready for such an engagement may find 'worship wars' breaking out. The shock waves after she describes these in her first book led her to write: 'It seems that conflicts over worship are presently a universal ecclesial plague.'[20] She believes we are called to learn afresh what true worship means. Her desire is to see worship centred on God, with God both object and subject, for only thus will it be subversive of contemporary cultures.

It is robust writing, so much so that Drane describes Dawn as 'an incredibly angry person'.[21] Her chapter headings show how strongly she emphasises worship as a shock to our comfortable systems, a counter-cultural experience: 'Worship ought to kill us', 'Worship is not a matter of taste', and 'Do they really want such banality?'

Undoubtedly planning, preparing and presenting Christian meetings is very hard work – what Dawn calls 'the harder way'.[22] It is the way ahead, for it is the way of the gospel, the way of the cross. Don Carson recognises the same hard work. He begins by reflecting on the variety of cultural responses he encounters at international seminars, and concludes:

It's all great fun when it only lasts for a few days. But months and months of a new culture can be very wearing. And in a sense, that is what is going on even within America, or any other Westernized industrialized country. The pace of change is so fast that different generations are clashing with each other almost like competing cultures. For example, the radically different tastes in music that divide many congregations at the moment are, in part, culture clashes. And it is not easy to be wise. Some wag has said that the last seven words of the church will be, 'We've always done it this way before.' On the other hand, I have some sympathy for the position of C S Lewis, who maintained that he could put up with almost any pattern of corporate worship, so long as it did not change too often. His point is that mere novelty is in fact distracting. The deepest and best corporate worship

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[19] *Royal*, pp. 334-5

[20] *Royal*, p. 4.

[21] *McDonaldization*, p. 166.

[22] *Royal*, chapter 25 – initially applied to questions of musical presentation.

takes place when the forms are so familiar you never see them and can penetrate the reality. But try explaining *that* at your next church meeting.

Ultimately, there can never be peace and progress · on these and many related matters unless all sides carefully listen to the others and humbly resolve, while making a case, never to stand on their own rights. That is the way of the cross. It is the very lifeblood of those involved in cross-cultural outreach.[23]

I would only add the observation that the generations are multiplying: it's not just time spent in another culture, but the sheer variety of other cultures we're encountering which can be both exhilarating and exhausting. In my own limited experience, most issues surrounding the shape and flavour of church worship are pure culture. The resulting debates and divisions are symptoms of very particular and deeply held views of what is appropriate to do in a church context, and what are appropriate ways of expressing worship. In a culture of choice, the ultimate weapon is for people who disagree simply to leave. We who teach Scripture believing we are equipping God's people to grapple with these issues must regularly teach one another how to disagree in godly ways and, like Paul, to move to the bigger controversies.

All our writers accept the challenge of a biblical framework, working from principles of incarnation, atonement and transformation. All sketch our postmodern, Western culture as increasingly interactive, expressive, tactile, image-based, and choice rich. All long that we worship and honour God in the very broadest senses, allowing every dimension of our lives to be touched and changed by the gospel. All therefore challenge us at four levels:

WORD AND IMAGE

It is a commonplace to speak of the shift from a word-based world to one dominated by image and impression. Drane urges us to go with this, constantly appealing to us to recognise the richness of scriptural images. Dawn apparently rejects the culture of images in preference to word alone. Yet they would both agree that the key is to allow Scripture to speak on its own terms. Jesus' own teaching is full of illustrations and stories; Paul's own writing is rich with pictures and images. One post-Easter series we enjoyed was called 'Images of the Cross' – reflecting on the battlefield,

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[23]   The Cross and Christian Ministry – an exposition of passages from 1 Corinthians (Leicester, 1993), pp. 129-30.

courtroom, hospital, relationship and prison.[24] Previously, we had explored pictures of the church: organs in a body, the vine and the branches, partners in a marriage, stones in a building, sheep in a flock, a healing community, soldiers in an army.

Cray and Drane urge us to harness rapid changes in communications, and some are slowly learning to make use of video projection, Powerpoint and the like. We are not yet using them much beyond reinforcing the spoken word, and we're aware there's another altogether different stage to come. If we learn to use images in biblical ways we will want to be careful in our use of visual graphics, recognising that Scripture takes its images from human experience and allows its images to nestle in the imaginations, memories and minds of its hearers.[25]

LANGUAGE

We are accustomed to deep feelings aroused by efforts to make Christian language more inclusive. Paul's philosophy in 1 Corinthians 9 is clear, as is its application in this area: we must still work at this, if only to remove some of the more obvious stumbling-blocks to enquirers so as not to distract them from focussing on Jesus Christ.[26]

We know there are many traps on the way. Don Carson poignantly examines the furore over the publication of an inclusive language NIV in America.[27] As he reviews the challenges of Bible translation and observes the reality of Bible rage, he confesses 'this is not the sort of book I like to write'. In the debate as it surfaces in the Episcopal churches I inhabit, there is a continuing confusion between language about God and language

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[24] 'Images of the Cross': 1 Corinthians 15:50-58, Romans 3:21-31, Isaiah 53:1-12, 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2 and Mark 10:35-45 respectively.

[25] The handling of the cross is instructive as we contrast our interests with the Bible's. Whilst we need some help to understand its dynamics (death by suffocation, for example) and its universal shame, we may be drawn more to the mechanics and emotive aspects. It is noticeable that the Gospel writers seem not to go here.

[26] Reflecting on the Lausanne Statement of 1974 quoted earlier (note 2), nothing would be lost by making this inclusive, perhaps along these lines: 'because people are God's creatures, some culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because people are fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic.'

[27] Don Carson, *The Inclusive Language Debate – a plea for realism* (Grand Rapids, 1998).

relating to people. There is need for a constant challenge to distinguish these two.

More significant is the need constantly to check our use of words, especially in the way we speak about worship. Marva Dawn has a chapter on this, considering words like 'contemporary, Lent, Advent, hymn, song, reform'; elsewhere she urges us to think of other ways of speaking about 'going to church'. Strangely she avoids the biggest word of all: worship. As we noted at the start, both worship and culture are all-consuming and all-pervasive terms. Neither must be allowed to become localised – so that we worship at 10.30 on a Sunday morning. Romans 12:1-2 challenges this misunderstanding of the term worship, but it constantly resurfaces. So much conversation and writing, even whilst acknowledging this, reverts to a localised use of the language. We notice attempts to put it right when worship leaders (as they're called) speak about moving in to a time of musical worship; but the sound system seems geared to suggest that music is the most important item in the service, and the music leader assumes when they play, 'we'll really worship.' It remains the default understanding of many congregations and ministers. It is a constant challenge in the language we use, and none of us is blameless: 'Let us worship God'; 'We meet for morning worship'; 'Now we move out from our worship to our world.' Perhaps we could sponsor a counter-trend, naming our meetings after their content as we praise, pray, hear God's Word or share communion.

A return to Paul's theology of meeting together would help us. According to 1 Corinthians 11-14, we meet to hear from God and to encourage one another. The meeting is clearly led by responsible leaders, and yet is participative, interactive, contributive, involved, expressive, governed by the Word. We are repeatedly told, in a variety of words, that the purpose of meeting is edification, upbuilding, and equipping. Above all, what we do is open to outsiders and impressive to them of the sense that God is here amongst these people.

PREMISES

Though we may dream of it, not all of us have the advantages of Renfrew St Stephens in Glasgow. One stormy St Stephen's night the huge spire fell in, destroying both roof and floor. Quoted in the video *Church Without Walls*, it in fact became a church without roof or floor, and gave the opportunity for complete remodelling.[28] Taking this church's life back to

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[28] A number of other comments have played with the application of this

first principles has allowed a new model to emerge – or we should say, to re-emerge, as it echoes the Reformation principles of a community centred on God's Word.[29] In the new St Stephens the congregation gather around a central pulpit, font and table, learning, welcoming and feeding together.

Like the poor, the challenge of remodelling church buildings is always with us. In a world where most hotels refurbish every four or five years, churches take rather longer. That may be because we are very slow to face the issues; or we discover that the buildings we have inherited are not as solid as we thought and major work is needed below the ground or in the main structures to produce a lasting improvement; or we have to work harder to persuade members because we rely largely on individual giving. Yet it is also because we take a longer view. On a recent tour of local churches, our church leaders were impressed by the quality of building being done and the desire that it should last for a very long time. As we work towards refurbishing, we want to take opportunities to remodel and do something beyond what a growing raft of public building regulations say we have to. Our aim is to provide God-honouring, good quality, long-lasting, flexible facilities, benefiting not this generation and the next, but many to come, building for perhaps a one-hundred year time frame.[30]

I suspect few of us would be bold enough to follow in the steps of one Los Angeles congregation. John Drane tells a delightful story of their harassed minister running out of time as he prepared a seeker-friendly service; he asked one of his congregation to 'make the building welcoming'. In so doing, literally by accident, the church made a vital discovery:

> What he had in mind was a little tidying up of the entrance, maybe a few extra lights, some floral displays, and so on. What he found when he arrived for the service was that the woman he had asked to do the job had taken him at his word, and the entire church had been remodelled so as to be more welcoming. She had assembled a collection of sofas and easy chairs

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theme: critics of *Church Without Walls* have even dubbed it a 'Ship without Sides'.

[29] As my non-Church hobby, I sing Barbershop. Much of our singing is done for church women's' groups (to my chagrin; I wanted to sing to get to meet people beyond church!). Acoustically, what this Episcopalian has come to call 'sideways' churches are the most striking examples of the congregation on three sides, gathered around the pulpit, table and font.

[30] Visits to Colinton Parish Church, Greenbank Parish Church, and St Andrew's Blackadder in North Berwick were hugely stimulating for our church leaders.

borrowed from her friends, and the main sanctuary had been entirely cleared of the traditional rows of seats, in place of which was a series of round tables, accommodating maybe a dozen people at each. Because the leaders arrived too close to the time of the event, there was no way they could restore 'normality' to the church building – which was just as well, for they soon realized that this was exactly what they needed if they were to be able to relate effectively to one another, let alone to the people they were seeking to reach from the outside.[31]

They left it like that.

LEADERS

The Los Angeles example is a challenge to those who lead churches. Whilst we constantly seek to build and maintain a biblical framework for thinking about premises, music, worship and so on, most of our church events have opened up only to the extent that we allow other people to do some of the things ministers do. Drane describes this as the 'theatre' model of church.[32] We have not, in most mainstream churches at least, found ways of allowing Paul's contributive principles (1 Cor. 14:26ff.) to shape our regular meetings. Drane complains that the real issue is control: a refusal on the part of leaders (mostly ministers) to let God be God and trust his people to minister as God has gifted them.

Our writers have been stimulating, acute and passionate. We've read these and other books in our small Staff meetings, and realised this is the point where all this gets personal. Challenges come so thick and fast one wonders where to begin, and reactions to changes can be so strong it's easy to feel overwhelmed. They say you can tell when ministers stop growing by looking at our bookshelves: when did we stop reading? When did we last buy? Perhaps you can also tell when this all proves too much by noting when we settle for what we have, and stick there. Even John Drane admits we cannot 'go for it' all at once. We have to choose our targets. How might some of this look in local church terms?

It is striking that a number of those who write about worship spend much time in laying biblical foundations; a number also end their books by describing sample worship events.[33] Others – like the ever-stimulating

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[31] *McDonaldization*, pp. 95-6.

[32] *Faith*, p. 116ff.

[33] David Peterson, *Engaging With God – a biblical theology of worship* (Leicester, 1982, Epilogue); Tex Sample, *The Spectacle of Worship in a*

Grove Booklets – give us a constant stream of examples of how things might look. It's vital to remember that all churches began from very small numbers, that all decisions were hard-fought, and that all changes were achieved one step at a time. What steps might we take?

I conclude with three simple suggestions from St Thomas's for you to consider:

OPTIONS FOR ADULTS

For a long time we tried various all-age activities. Family services, with everyone together for the whole service, are always in danger of being too long – although adults often comment on what they gain from the talks. For some time, we experimented with Learning Together events which were like a Holiday Club on a Sunday morning. The grinding of teeth was almost deafening, and the work involved in finding exercises, questions and ways of learning from Scripture in mixed age groups exhausting. When we moved to age groups, things went slightly better. Last summer it dawned on us that whilst we generally do young people's work quite well, the one thing we never do is give adults choices.[34] So was born 'Options'. After a time of praise and prayer we move into groups: children's groups meet together and stay in the main room (the best equipped and most spacious area, with music and visual equipment available); those who wish to hear a sermon go to another hall; those who would like to look at the same passage in small groups go elsewhere; and there's a room for those who would like to investigate an issue arising either from the passage or from the season. Topics have included GM foods at Harvest, the second coming of the Lord at Advent, fasting at the beginning of Lent, and the gifts of the Spirit at Pentecost, and we have used where possible the skills and involvements of members of the congregation. It's been a huge step forward for us.

WORK NETWORKS

As a matter of theology we've increasingly realised that most of the 'you's in the New Testament are plural; our hope is that when we meet together we will find ourselves recovering Christian perspective and community.

Wired World – electronic culture and the gathered people of God (Nashville, 1998 – chapter 11: An Illustrated Worship Service).

[34] Partly due to our own thinking, and partly to Nigel Lee of the Whitefield Institute in Oxford, who suggested the idea in his Whitefield Lecture *Rumours of Resurrection?* in the summer of 2001.

We're also seeing that Christians are called to witness out there, not 'in church' alone. The first example of people being filled with the Spirit comes in Exodus 31, as Bezalel and Oholiab make fittings and furnishings for the Tabernacle. We therefore encourage the congregation to see their life and work as their ministry and seek God's presence and equipping for it. We now have a regular Saturday morning group of business people meeting from 8 to 9.30am for a simple breakfast. We call it TGI Monday.[35] We realise we are now part of a nationwide network of similar groups, served by a range of support groups, all aiming to shift the focus of Christian ministry away from church meetings to the workplace. It is one of the most significant shifts in recent years, and has provided a real challenge to Sunday meetings: does what we do when we meet together bear any relation to what our members have to do during the rest of the week?

PRESENTATIONS

These have been our attempts to present the gospel beginning with themes or issues, using drama, film, music, readings and a talk. We called our equivalent of seeker-friendly style events 'presentations'. We used mostly contemporary rock music, although on one notable occasion we used classical music and considered the recklessly brilliant life of Mozart.

Lives, magazine themes and films are all good places to start. Peter Weir's films are fascinating.[36] Weir is a storyteller interested in life's central issues – death, nature, friendship, freedom, spirit. Is there a reality beyond our surface existences? What then should we do?

> In the usual Weir movie, middle-class and WASP characters are driven by forces they don't understand and encounter something inexplicable and mysterious, usually from another culture (the Amish, a Frenchman, a near-death experience, a loving embrace from a non-actor, the East, and so on). Through this experience, the inadequacy of white, Western culture is made

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[35] The title is from Mark Greene's book *Thank God it's Monday* (London, 1994). Greene's stimulating work is invaluable and continues as he leads the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC).

[36] *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, 1975; *Gallipoli*, 1981; *Witness*, 1985; *The year of Living Dangerously*, 1982; *The Truman Show*, 1998; *Dead Poets Society*, 1989; *Green Card*, 1990; *Fearless*, 1993.

clear. The mysterious confronts the individual, for which the typical, rational patterns of understanding prove ineffective.[37]

In short, Weir's films aim to awaken a sense of wonder – of otherness. They

> Harken back to the seminal description of the sacred in Rudolf Otto's *Idea of the Holy*. In that book, Otto argues that there is a *mysterium* due to the presence of the Other which has two defining characteristics: it is *tremendum* (awe-inspiring and frightening) and *fascinans* (compelling and desirable).[38]

Admittedly this works at the level of what we would call general revelation; nonetheless these are experiences of the sacred, and potential stepping stones to the gospel.

In our presentations, we had to work hard at the balance between striving for excellence[39] and being authentic, which was our way of saying we would build what we could do around who we have and what gifts they bring. By far the greatest challenge was whether the congregation would bring or even invite friends. We realised they needed to experience a Presentation for themselves before they would invite; most did not invite; and some simply stayed away on those days. These have proved very hard work. For now, our explorations have moved to an evening service slot once a month; we realise others are doing this much more deliberately and successfully than we.

Ultimately, these are theological issues, and bring us back to Paul's Corinthian convictions with which we began. Do we believe that God has given us the resources we need to be his church here and now, at this time and in this culture? Do we believe in the God who speaks when we are faithful to his Word, whatever the flavour of the music and the style of the event? Do we trust in the God whose Word touches every dimension of our lives?

In a postmodern era, all cultures are valid: if I am a 50s early rock fan, or a Bristol Rovers supporter, I can be so unashamedly. How much more, if we believe these things about God, may we do whatever we do unashamedly and unapologetically, always looking to hold together around what really matters and to engage with the worlds around us.

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[37] Robert K. Johnston, *Reel Spirituality: theology and film in dialogue* (Grand Rapids, 2000), p. 183.

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] As we understand the Willow Creek model demands.

THE THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF ADOPTION
II: A RATIONALE

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Why has the subject of Adoption – so rich and fertile in fine thought and
feeling, so susceptible also of beautiful theological treatment – been so
little investigated and illustrated? ... Certain it is... that a good treatise on
Adoption – such as should at once do justice to the fine theology of the
question, and to the precious import of the privilege – is a desideratum.

Hugh Martin, *Christ's Presence in the Gospel History*

In the first of these articles[1] there was drawn a detailed sketch of the
theological history of adoption that covered the creeds, confessions and
relevant writings of the church. The purpose of the article was not only to
continue the small but growing chorus of those realising the historic
neglect of adoption, but also to document in the greatest detail to date
those resources that hold the key to the recovery of the doctrine.

It would be wrong to presume, however, that all who have followed the
argument so far are as impressed as I am by the evidence for the neglect of
adoption. Let those readers presently unconvinced (yet sufficiently
interested) undertake a personal perusal of the church's writings. In doing
so it will be seen how little there is of the familial tenor of Scripture and
how normative the omission of adoption has been from the theological
discourse of the church and the academy. How often, for instance,
theologians pass from the discussion of justification to that of
sanctification without any reference to adoption! This is especially
astonishing when seen in the works of Presbyterian, Congregationalist and
Baptist theologians familiar as they are no doubt with the order
justification, adoption, sanctification as found in the eleventh to thirteenth
chapters of the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) (WCF),[2] the

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[1] Tim J. R. Trumper, 'The Theological History of Adoption, I: An Account',
    The Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology 20 (2002), pp. 4-28.

[2] As also in the Shorter and Larger Catechisms. See Questions 33 to 36 of the

Savoy Declaration (1658) and the Baptist Confession (1689) respectively. Even where adoption is included in the discussion of soteriology, treatments of it often betray the fact that the church has invested little rigour in understanding the doctrine comparative to that expended in the formulation of other doctrines. Most commonly, it is assumed that New Testament authors other than Paul wrote of adoption – even though they do not use his distinctive term *huiothesia* (found only in Rom. 8: 15, 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). Moreover, in later Calvinistic treatments it is presumed that the doctrine is to be understood (often exclusively so) in terms of the application of salvation (*ordo salutis*) rather than its history (*historia salutis*).

Those readers unconvinced by the argument so far may also gain benefit from a contemplation of those reasons that may be proffered as an explication of the neglect of adoption. Although these could be variously enumerated and perhaps added to over time, what follows is the first attempt that we know of to draw together in any substantive way the major reasons why adoption's theological history has been as it has. I am indebted to those authors who have shared – albeit in passing – their insightful opinions on the matter, as will be evident. What is important here, however, is not the nature of the *rationale* but the fact that there is one at all. This puts the onus on those doubting the neglect of adoption to explain away the following historico-theological facts.

Accordingly, the purpose of this second article is to support the account already given of the doctrine's history. If it can be plausibly explained why adoption has not received the attention it was due then we may be able to lay finally to rest the alternative assumptions that either it has not been neglected or that the sparseness of literature on the subject merely reflects adoption's relative unimportance in Scripture.[3] With all this in mind, we now turn to what the evidence suggests are the two major reasons for the

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Shorter Catechism and Questions 69-75 of the Larger Catechism.

[3] I have raised this possible objection before. See 'The Metaphorical Import of Adoption: A Plea for Realisation, I: The Adoption Metaphor in Biblical Usage', *SBET* 14 (1996), p. 131. There, and in the following article 'The Metaphorical Import of Adoption: A Plea for Realisation, II: The Adoption Metaphor in Theological Usage', *SBET* 15 (1997), I sought to provide an answer by stressing (as the titles suggest) the metaphorical importance of adoption in Scripture and theology. In this series of articles, by contrast, the aim is to answer the same argument on the grounds that whatever the import of the doctrine there is solid evidence that points to the church's negligence in failing to expound it (*cf.* 'The Theological History of Adoption, I: An Account', p. 6.

neglect of adoption: The church's preoccupation with other disputed doctrines and the propensity of some of her theologians to turn a blind eye to adoption when found theologically convenient to do so.

(I) PREOCCUPATION WITH OTHER DISPUTED DOCTRINES

Consistently throughout ecclesiastical history, the church, in both her pre- and post-Reformation phases, has been so taken up with disputes involving doctrines other than adoption that there has been little time or inclination to shape a constructive formulation or exposition of the doctrine, let alone to integrate it fully into the theology of the church.

From the Fathers on there is evidence that this was the case. In the previous article we quoted Edward McKinlay's comment that 'The failure to consider, and adequately to develop along satisfactory lines, the doctrine of adoption, can be traced back to the early Fathers of the Church.' He continues: 'No doubt it can be plausibly argued, that the Fathers were preoccupied with questions of greater weight – questions of *real* grace, rather than questions about *relative* grace – questions such as the true nature of the Word made flesh, or the relations of the Trinity within the Godhead.'[4] Such seems to have been true, for example, of the Adoptionist controversy of the seventh and eighth centuries where discussions of christology stopped short of the soteriological implications to which they pointed.[5]

According to Louis Berkhof, Bishop Felix of Urgella, the real champion of the Adoptionist cause,

regarded Christ as to His divine nature, that is the Logos, as the only begotten Son of God in the natural sense, but Christ on his [*sic*] human side as a Son of God by adoption. At the same time he sought to preserve the unity of the Person by stressing the fact that, from the time of his [*sic*]

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4   'The relation of incarnation to atonement in the Christology of R. S. Candlish and its contribution to the development of Scottish Theology' (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh), 1966, p. 106.

5   K. R. Hagenbach, *A History of Christian Doctrines*, vol. 2, Clark's Foreign Theological Library, New Series, vol. 3 (Edinburgh, 1880), p. 267. See also R. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*. Zweite Hälfte: *Die Dogmengeschichte des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit* (Erlangen und Leipzig, 1898), pp. 13-15.

conception, the Son of Man was taken up into the unity of the Person of the Son of God.[6]

Felix's doctrine, Berkhof explains, was founded on a view of the distinction of Christ's two natures that implied a differentiation between each mode of sonship: the one supported by scriptural passages referring to Christ's inferiority before his Father, the other by the fact that the sons of God by adoption are called the brethren of Christ (Rom. 8:29). Urgella was successfully opposed, however, by Alcuin – the English monk and most prominent adviser to Charlemagne. In his later refutation of the errors of Adoptionism he reasoned that no father could have a son by both nature and adoption. This line of argument prevailed and Adoptionism was rejected at the Synod of Frankfurt in 794.

While necessary, the Synod's decision seems to have brought to an end all interest in the parallel notion of the believer's adoptive sonship. Regrettably the soteriological implications of the doctrine of Christ's Sonship were not followed up in the aftermath of the controversy. The pity of this is that the same issues were to emerge again much later during the 1860s' Candlish/Crawford debate of the Fatherhood of God. How their discussion of the connection between Christ's relation of Sonship and the believer's (whether by participation (Candlish) or analogy (Crawford)) could have benefited from earlier light on the matter![7] In the event, however, the Candlish/Crawford debate was just too historically detached to derive help from the Adoptionist controversy.

A more familiar example of the same phenomenon is found in the Protestant Reformation – one of three eras during which, according to John McIntyre, soteriology became the subject of substantive and protracted discussion.[8] With the exception of the Lord's Supper no doctrine came in for greater dissection at that time than that of justification, but the attention that it received was costly for adoption. As Candlish incisively put it:

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6   L. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, reprint ed. (Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA, 1985), p. 111.

7   For a lengthy summary of the debate see my doctoral dissertation, 'An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption in the Calvinistic Tradition' (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2001), ch. 8.

8   J. McIntyre, *The Shape of Soteriology: Studies in the Doctrine of the Death of Christ* (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 15-25. The eras he has in view are the Anselmic and Reformation eras, as well as the period stretching from the nineteenth into the twentieth century, 'the catalytic agent' of which was 'the ethicising of the attributes of God' (*ibid.*, p. 22).

> The Reformers had enough to do to vindicate 'the article of a standing or falling church' – justification by faith alone; to recover it out of the chaos of Popish error and superstition; and to reassert it in its right connection with the Doctrine of the Absolute Divine Sovereignty which Augustine had so well established. Their hands were full.[9]

Or, as Candlish's contemporary, the Scottish pastor-theologian Hugh Martin (1821-1885), similarly observed: 'On Justification by faith we have abundant and most precious authorship; for around that doctrine and privilege the great battle of controversy has raged. But the conquerors seem to have paused, exhausted or contented with the victory.'[10]

Certainly this was true for Luther. Although J. I. Packer makes the somewhat cavalier claim that 'Luther's grasp of adoption was as strong and clear as his grasp of justification',[11] J. Scott Lidgett comes closer to the truth when he notes that even when commenting on the *locus classicus* of adoption, Galatians 4:1-7, Luther deals more with redemption from the law than with the Fatherhood of God:

> Salvation is not conceived by Luther prevailingly under the form of realised and completed sonship, but as redemption, forgiveness, acceptance, confidence, and freedom, especially this last.... Luther speaks much here of the gift of the Spirit, of faith, of redemption, of freedom from the law of sin and death, of being heirs of God. All these blessings cluster for him around the gift of the Spirit of adoption. He speaks of the filial cry of believers, but he gives no exposition of the meaning of sonship, as the form, above all others, which the Christian life assumes. The freedom, confidence, and sense of heirship, which are so vital to Luther's experience and so closely consequent on sonship, engage his attention, rather than the nature of the relationship, which is their source.[12]

Similarly, the Scottish theologian William Cunningham was of the opinion that:

> Luther applied very fully the true scriptural doctrine of justification to all the corruptions of the papal system which were *directly* connected with it,

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9 R. S. Candlish, *The Fatherhood of God: Being the First Course of the Cunningham Lectures*, 5th ed. (Edinburgh, 1869), p. 192.

10 H. Martin, *Christ's Presence in the Gospel History*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh, 1865), p. 80fn.

11 J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 1975 ed. (London, 1988), p. 255.

12 J. Scott Lidgett, *The Fatherhood of God in Christian Truth and Life* (Edinburgh, 1902), pp. 251-2.

but he did not do much in the way of connecting the doctrine of justification with the other great doctrines of the Christian system.[13]

Writing more generally of Lutheranism, George Hendry is even more explicitly critical:

> There has sometimes been a tendency in Protestant theology, especially in the Lutheran Church, to lean too heavily on the doctrine of justification. This is understandable in view of the decisive importance of the doctrine at the Reformation. But the fullness of the gospel is too rich to be compressed into the framework of this doctrine alone. For when God extends his grace to us in Jesus Christ, he not only releases us from our guilt, he also receives us into his family; and the one thing cannot be separated from the other without the risk of serious misunderstanding. The doctrine of adoption is sufficiently important to merit treatment alongside the doctrine of justification.[14]

When we turn to Calvin the picture is more complicated. As alluded to in the previous article, Calvin has a most rich understanding of adoption.[15] In fact, it is fairly certain that he is *the* theologian of adoption. Notwithstanding, for whatever reasons (and they were probably theologically valid),[16] Calvin's decision (if conscious decision it was) to forego the discussion of adoption in a separate chapter or section of the *Institutes* was to have a lasting negative impact on the subsequent theology of later Calvinism. As it was the neglect of adoption between the mid-seventeenth and early-nineteenth centuries contributed to the later Calvinistic indifference to anything Calvin might have had to say of adoption, but such indifference was made easier by the obscurity of the pervasive manner in which he dealt with adoption. Even had they been interested in searching out Calvin's thoughts on adoption they would have been hampered from interpreting accurately his understanding of the relative importance of justification and adoption if their yardstick had been the bare

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[13] W. Cunningham, *The Reformers and Theology of the Reformation*, first published 1862 (Edinburgh, 1989), p. 337. *Cf.* S. B. Ferguson, 'The Reformed Doctrine of Sonship' in N. M. de S. Cameron and S. B. Ferguson (eds), *Pulpit and People: Essays in Honour of William Still on his 75th Birthday* (Edinburgh, 1986), p. 81.

[14] George S. Hendry, *The Westminster Confession for Today: A Contemporary Interpretation* (Richmond, VA, 1960), p. 141.

[15] See 'An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption in the Calvinistic Tradition', *op. cit.*, chs 1-4.

[16] The possible reasons I have discussed elsewhere (*ibid.*, pp. 42ff.).

fact that he devoted eight chapters of the *Institutes* to the explication of justification and none to adoption. With the renaissance in Calvin studies, however, we are learning that the ascertaining of the importance of a doctrine for Calvin is determined not by the number of chapters allotted to its discussion but how pervasively it is referred to throughout his work. When this is borne in mind doctrines such as union with Christ and adoption (which is one of its most colourful expressions) appear far more crucial to Calvin than a perusal of the contents page of the *Institutes* suggests.

Calvin's enthusiasm for adoption must not be allowed, however, to downplay the general Protestant soteric preoccupation with justification. While regrettable we must be fair and acknowledge that this myopia is understandable given the circumstances of the Reformation. Between 1530 and 1570 Protestants had to fight a tenacious rearguard action in defence of the *sola fide* nature of justification. They were united on the doctrine's three essential elements: First, that justification is a forensic doctrine entailing God's declaration of an individual as righteous in his sight, thereby granting him a change of status; second, that justifying righteousness, as it was called, is the alien righteousness of Christ external to man, but imputed to those who merely receive it by faith; and third, that the external act of justification is distinguished from sanctification or regeneration, which is the internal process of renewal within man.

Before long, however, the papacy convened the Council of Trent (1545-63). According to McGrath, the real significance of the resultant decrees lay in the amount of attention given over to a positive exposition of the Roman understanding of justification.[17] As is well known, it was agreed, *contra* to the Protestant position, that justification refers to the Christian existence in its totality and therefore includes regeneration and adoption; that is, the sinner's pardon and acceptance, as well as inner renewal. Significant for the present argument, however, is the fact that the anathematising of the Protestant understanding of justification kept the reformers and their successors alert to the need at least to emphasise if not defend the doctrine at all costs.

Later the Puritans inherited this defensive stance as can be seen from a comparison of chapters 11 ('Of Justification') and 12 ('Of Adoption') of the WCF. Whereas the Westminster Confession's chapter on justification runs to six paragraphs, the seminal chapter on adoption, being the shortest

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[17] Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification – From 1500 to the Present Day*, first published 1986 (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 69-86.

in the confession, has but one. The contrasting lengths of these chapters is explained not only by the amount of attention accorded the doctrine during the Reformation but also by the additional *via negativa* statements required arising from the controversies with Rome. Hence the relevance of Schaff's observation that creeds and confessions not only include that which is 'fundamental and sufficient', but also 'such points... as have been disputed'.[18]

While inheriting this defensive stance the Puritans also had cause to maintain it.[19] Whereas the reformers had fought against an external threat from Rome, the Puritans had to ward off challenges to the free grace of justification from within Protestantism itself. These came in the form of Arminianism and Neonomianism. By teaching that Christ's death accomplished merely the possibility of immunity from the payment of sin's penalty, Arminianism not only undermined the efficacy of the atonement, it also rejected the view that faith is wholly God's gift. In actuality, though, Arminianism was just too unsubtle to win over many Puritans. In any case, with the exception of John Goodwin they were without an able exponent.

Neonomianism, by contrast, had the advantage of Richard Baxter's patronage. Baxterianism, as Neonomianism was otherwise known, taught that God is the governor and the gospel a legal code. Whereas God enacts a new law by virtue of Christ's righteousness, it is the believer's righteousness that produces obedience to the new law through faith and repentance.[20] By teaching the necessity of a double righteousness Neonomianism sought to wrest justification from its grounding in Christ's imputed righteousness so as to prevent the doctrine from degenerating into Antinomianism.

The merit of Neonomianism came under close scrutiny in the protracted Crispian controversy of 1690-99. Beginning with Baxter's vehement written and spoken opposition to the republication of the said Antinomian

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[18] *The Creeds of Christendom*, edited by P. Schaff and revised by D. S. Schaff, 6th ed. reprinted from the 1931 ed. (Grand Rapids, MI, 1990), vol. 1, p. 4.

[19] In what follows I am indebted to J. I. Packer. He lists pride, spiritual frivolity, satanic hostility, natural religion, as well as aberrant theology as the bases of the fear-induced defensive mentality of the Puritans (*Among God's Giants: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life*, Eastbourne, 1991, pp. 196-9).

[20] Under this scheme 'faith', explains Packer, 'is imputed for righteousness because it is real obedience to the gospel, which is God's new law' (*ibid.*, p. 207).

sermons of Tobias Crisp (1600-43) in 1689-90,[21] the acrimony and confusion created by the controversy succeeded in preoccupying Presbyterians and Congregationalists alike with issues germane to the Neonomian/Antinomian divide: regeneration and conversion, the nature of Christ's death and the imputation of his righteousness to the elect, the nature of the covenant of grace, the free offer of the gospel and the sins of the elect.[22]

Whatever light was given forth by the controversy, it is clear that heat was more in evidence, and although John Locke could surely speak for many in recalling how the controversy had led him 'into a stricter and more thorough inquiry into the question about justification',[23] the controversy neither resolved the broader issues nor did it further soteriological discussion beyond the realm of justification. Commenting wisely on the effect of the Crispian controversy and the general fractious spirit of the late seventeenth century, Toon writes:

> Harsh controversy always seems to have the unfortunate effect of forcing most contestants logically to develop their thought to conclusions which they really never intended to reach. If this is so, heated theological controversy (as against 'dialogue') is very dangerous; Biblical doctrine is not capable of being reduced into any finally neat and fully tidy system since it contains seemingly irreconcilable elements – *e.g.* predestination and free will. Any human, dogmatic, doctrinal system must of necessity emphasise certain Biblical doctrines to the virtual exclusion of, or inadequate reference to, others. Therefore, Christian charity should teach theologians to live peaceably with their brethren who hold different views.[24]

The controversies of the age explain, then, why it is that the Puritans generally did not accord adoption quite the focus it obtained in the Westminster Standards. In fact, the place of adoption in the Westminster documents has largely hidden from view its widespread disappearance from the theology of the later Westminster tradition. This point is worth making, for criticisms levelled against Westminster Calvinism because of its legal tone generally do not do justice to the distinction (which, granted, is one of degree) that may be made between Westminster Calvinism (that

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[21] Peter Toon, *Puritans and Calvinism* (Swengel, PA, 1973), pp. 87-9.

[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 93-6.

[23] Cited by Victor Nuovo in John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity as Delivered in the Scriptures*, reprint from 1794 ed. (Bristol, 1997), p. x.

[24] Toon, *Puritans and Calvinism*, p. 100.

is, as found in the Standards) and Westminster theology (that is, as found in the trajectory of the tradition). Nonetheless, it is true to say that theologians of the Puritan era sent out signals relating to the importance of adoption as mixed as those of Calvin.

Meanwhile, such had been the preoccupation with justification that even when it was not being defended it so came to dominate Reformed soteriology that adoption was bound to suffer. Even those Puritans who allocated adoption a distinct *locus* in their theological work, for instance, nevertheless tended to deny the doctrine a distinctive meaning. Edward Morris notes, for example, that in the theologies of John Owen and Thomas Watson, adoption was 'not so much a separate or added benefit as an integral part or feature of justification itself – a presentation in the language of Owen, of the blessings of justification in new phases and relations; or in the phrase of Watson, a concomitant of justification'.[25]

No one contributed more to adoption's loss of a distinctive meaning, however, than the continental theologian Francis Turretin (1623-87).[26] Inquiring as to the nature of the adoption given *in* justification Turretin explains that adoption is but 'the other part of justification... or the bestowal of a right to life, flowing from Christ's righteousness, which acquired for us not only deliverance from death, but also a right to life by the adoption with which he endows us'.[27] This view, however, would not have had the impact it did were it not for the widespread and longlasting influence of Turretin's *Institutio Elencticae Theologiae* in Reformed

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[25] E. D. Morris, *Theology of the Westminster Symbols: A Commentary Historical, Doctrinal, Practical on the Confession of Faith and Catechisms and the Related Formularies of the Presbyterian Churches* (Columbus, OH, 1900), p. 450.

[26] 'The Reformed Doctrine of Sonship', *op. cit.*, p. 83; *cf.* Erroll Hulse, 'Recovering the Doctrine of Adoption', *Reformation Today* 105 (Sept.-Oct. 1988), p. 10.

[27] F. Turretin, *The Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 2, trans. G. M. Giger and ed. J. T. Dennison Jr (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1994), p. 666. See also 'The Reformed Doctrine of Sonship', *op. cit.*, p. 83, and R. S. Candlish, *The Fatherhood of God*, p. 158. Thornton Whaling is incorrect then to say that 'Turretin recognizes the central place of adoption in the application of redemption' ('Adoption', *Princeton Theological Review* 21 (1923); p. 234). R. A. Webb on the other hand rightly claims that Turretin 'sinks [adoption] well-nigh out of sight' (*The Reformed Doctrine of Adoption* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1947), p. 17).

universities and seminaries from the late seventeenth to the nineteenth century:[28]

> The majority of Reformed teachers followed their great textbook master in this sad omission, thus removing much of the central Biblical picture of family relationship from the theological curriculum. None can doubt that this narrowing down of the crucial relationship of redeemed humans to the Holy God into only forensic terms (crucial as the forensic element is to the Gospel) impacted the preaching of their students into a more legal, and less familial direction.[29]

No one followed the Genevan theologian on adoption more closely than the nineteenth-century Southern Presbyterian, Robert L. Dabney (1820-98). By Dabney's day justification had emerged from the heat of controversy and had been more positively expounded by Jonathan Edwards' sermons on justification by faith (1734) and by George Whitefield's evangelistic appeals to the masses to be right with God. Although a crucial biblical doctrine, it was the popular expositions of justification combined with the profile the doctrine gained in the preceding controversies that ensured the setting in stone of the soteric centrality of justification. Thus, by the time Dabney came to follow Turretin there appeared nothing unusual in his comparative dismissal of adoption.

In his 903-page volume on systematic theology Dabney has a mere 22 lines on the doctrine, which he justifies by reference to Turretin. Turretin, he argues, 'devotes only a brief separate discussion to it, and introduces it in the thesis in which he proves that justification is both pardon and acceptance'.[30] Ironically what Dabney was seemingly unaware of was that

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[28] Writing in 1881 Robert Duff observed that 'Turretin has been accepted for two centuries as an authoritative teacher in the Christian Church, and... the doctrines he defined and upheld are those which distinguish much of the evangelical theology of the present time' ('Theologians of the Past – Francis Turretin', *Catholic Presbyterian* 5 (Jan.-Jun. 1881), p. 372). *Cf. Reformed Theology in America*, ed. David F. Wells, vol. 3, Southern Reformed Theology, first published as part of *Reformed Theology in America: A History of its Modern Development*, Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985 (Grand Rapids, MI, 1989), pp. 19-20.

[29] Kelly, 'Adoption: An Undeveloped Heritage of the Westminster Standards', *Reformed Theological Review* (Australia) 50 (Sept.-Dec. 1993), p. 112.

[30] R. L. Dabney, *Systematic Theology: Syllabus and Notes of the Course of Systematic and Polemic Theology Taught in Union Theological Seminary, Virginia*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis, 1878; facsimile reprint ed., Edinburgh, 1985), p. 627. He also cites John Owen's position.

even as he was consenting to Turretin's underestimation of the importance of the adoption there were voices on both sides of the Atlantic calling for the end to such dismissals of the motif.[31]

In summarising the first reason for the neglect of adoption it is worth observing how appropriate it is that a motif that so readily highlights the importance of fraternal love has escaped the acrimony that has marred the discussion of other biblical doctrines. That said, we also recognise that doctrinal development regularly occurs in the cauldron of debate, for which reason it is not difficult to see how the development of adoption has been stunted by both the absence of the intense scrutiny that frequently accompanies controversy,[32] and the long-term shaping of the agenda subsequent to doctrinal disputation. The Southern Presbyterian, John L. Girardeau, made this point well:

[The] subjective apprehension of objective truth may be increased in intensity, in scope and in adequacy. It is needless to observe that its growth, in the history of the church, has largely depended upon the challenge of acknowledged truth by errorists, by the conflict of theological views, and by the thorough-going discussion which has for these reasons been necessitated. In this way the church's knowledge of the doctrine of the Trinity, of sin, and of justification has been cleared up, matured and crystallized. To the precisely formulated statements of these truths it is not to be expected that much that is either novel or important will be added.

The same, however, is not true of the doctrine of adoption. It has not been made the subject of much controversy, nor has it received the didactic exposition which has been devoted to most of the other topics included in the theology of redemption. Its importance has been to a large extent overlooked, its place in a distinct and independent treatment of the

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[31] R. S. Candlish, *The Fatherhood of God*, p. 151.

[32] The same is generally true of the Fatherhood of God. Crawford writes: 'The Fatherhood of God, whether in relation to all men as His intelligent and moral creatures, or more particularly in relation to those who are "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," has hitherto been in a remarkable degree exempted from the speculations and controversies of theology. No heresies of any note have ever arisen with respect to it. No schisms or bitter contentions have been occasioned by it. A comparatively small space has ordinarily been allotted to it in our articles of faith and systems of divinity' (*The Fatherhood of God considered in its general and special aspects and particularly in relation to the atonement with a review of recent speculations on the subject*, 2nd ed. revised and enlarged with a reply to the strictures of Dr Candlish (Edinburgh and London, 1867), p. 1; cf. p. 2).

covenant of grace has been refused, while leading theologians have differed in regard even to its nature and its office.[33]

In the light of this, 'ought it not rather to commend the subject of Adoption, that it may be treated apart from controversy? Certain it is', Martin continues, 'that a good treatise on Adoption – such as should at once do justice to the fine theology of the question, and to the precious import of the privilege – is a desideratum.'[34]

(II) THEOLOGICAL INCONVENIENCE

There is strong evidence to suggest, secondly, that the neglect of adoption is attributable to the way in which certain theologians have apparently turned a blind eye to the doctrine. This, of course, could not have been possible were it not for the fact that adoption has no secure place in theological discourse anyway. The omission of, say, justification or sanctification would be simply too obvious, for which reason the attempt itself is somewhat inconceivable. Not so in the case of adoption. But why would any theologian think it politic to suppress such a winsome pastoral doctrine? If the same were true of the doctrines of Hell or predestination, we could perhaps begin to understand, but the doctrine of adoption, surely not? As unlikely as it seems, this appears to have been the case in at least three instances. Of course, eternity will tell the precise motives involved, although it is difficult not to draw certain conclusions from looks to varying degrees very much like the repression of adoption.

The first example suggests that adoption was found to be inconvenient due to its close connection to predestination. Nowhere is this nexus more obvious in Scripture than in Ephesians 1:4-5, which text was – for Calvin at least – the *locus classicus* of the doctrine of predestination: 'In love the Father predestined [or pre-horizoned (*proorisas*)] us for adoption [*huiothesian*] through Jesus Christ.' By giving priority to this text over, say, the teaching of Romans 9 Calvin signified his concern that

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[33] *Discussions of Theological Questions* (Harrisonburg, VA, 1986), pp. 428-9. The fact that Girardeau wrote these words subsequent to the Candlish/Crawford debate and probably without knowledge of the Scheeben/Granderath contention testifies to the comparative insignificance of these localised encounters *vis à vis* the importance of the great trinitarian, christological and soteriological upheavals of church history (*ibid.*).

[34] H. Martin, *Christ's Presence in the Gospel History*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh, 1865), p. 80fn.

predestination be utilised for pastoral purposes; for he understood that in Ephesians 1 predestination highlights the fact that the gospel begins with grace, involves adoption, and leads to glory.

By contrast, John Wesley appears to have repressed adoption (although strangely not in his piety) seemingly because of its connection to predestination. Although Wesleyan Methodists (and Calvinistic ones for that matter)[35] happily emphasised in their devotional lives the Fatherhood of God and knew, apparently, an abundant measure of the Spirit of adoption,[36] for whatever reason Wesley excised every reference to adoption from his revision of the Shorter Catechism.[37] This astonishing move is difficult to account for, especially when we remember that the neighbouring doctrine of assurance was a distinctive feature of Wesley's teaching and contributed in no small part to the Methodist emphasis on the Spirit of adoption.

In attempting to explain Wesley's thinking we can but offer conjecture. He may have felt, for instance, that there were no words in human language that could adequately express what the Holy Spirit works in the children of God. Yet this would not explain why he banished from his revised catechism one of the few biblical models given us for this very purpose. After all, adoption is an essential cause of the believer's confidence before God.[38] Alternatively, Wesley may have been attempting to cast justification and sanctification into bolder relief. Most probable, however, is the suggestion that he was seeking to side-step the close connection between adoption and the decree.[39]

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[35] See 'The Theological History of Adoption, I: An Account', *op. cit.*, pp. 24-5.

[36] J. Scott Lidgett, *The Victorian Transformation of Theology*. The second series of Maurice Lectures delivered at King's College, London, Lent term, 1934 (London, 1934), pp. 52-3.

[37] See John Wesley's 'Revision of the Shorter Catechism', *The Banner of Truth Magazine* 47 (March-April 1967), p. 24. This is reprinted from Wesley's *Revision of the Shorter Catechism* (Edinburgh, 1906). Questions and answers to numbers 7, 8, 20, 31, 34 are eradicated. Numbers 14, 21, 30, 32, 35, 36, and 37 are altered.

[38] John Stoughton, *History of Religion in England, from the Opening of the Long Parliament to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 6, *The Church in the Georgian Era*, new and revised ed. (London, 1881), p. 119.

[39] Robert C. Monk, *John Wesley – His Puritan Heritage: A Study of the Christian Life* (London, 1966), pp. 57-8. For more on adoption see also p. 86 and the appropriate references in Colin W. Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (London, 1960).

Whatever the truth of the matter, Wesley's action, which signalled a dichotomy between his theology and his piety, must have contributed at some level to the apparent Methodist indifference to the theology of adoption. Intriguing it is that the same Wesley who excised adoption from his revision of the Shorter Catechism could nevertheless speak eloquently of the Spirit of adoption: 'By the testimony of the Spirit I mean, an inward impression of the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God, that Jesus Christ has loved me and given Himself for me; and that my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.'[40]

Wesley's approach contrasts sharply with that of his contemporary and critic, the Baptist (some say hyper-Calvinistic Baptist), John Gill (1697-1771).[41] Gill, who, we noted in the first article, allotted a separate section on adoption in Book Six of his *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, understood adoption to be rooted in what he called an internal act of God. As opposed to God's external acts, the internal acts are those done in eternity past and include the union of the elect with God, their justification and adoption.[42] In thinking aloud of these acts, Gill reasoned:

I know not where better to place them, and take them into consideration, than next to the decree of God, and particularly the decree of election: since as that flows from the love of God, and is in Christ from everlasting, there must of course be an union to him so early: and since predestination to the adoption of children, and acceptance in the beloved are parts and branches of it, Eph. I. 4, 5, 6, they must be of the same date.[43]

Thus, at conversion, the elect merely realise that their adoption into the family of God occurred in eternity past.[44]

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[40] Stoughton, *History of Religion in England, op. cit.*, p. 119.

[41] P. Toon, *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity 1689-1765* (London, 1967), p. 98.

[42] See also Book Two (Gill's *Body of Doctrinal Divinity* in his *Body of Divinity*, reprinted from the London ed., 1839 (Atlanta, GA, 1950), p. 172, pp. 201ff.). Assuming Toon is correct, the distinction between the internal and external acts of God was common to hyper-Calvinists of the first half of the eighteenth century; the former including predestination, eternal union, eternal adoption and eternal justification (*The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism*, pp. 108-11). In connection with adoption, however, Toon only makes reference to Gill's *Body of Divinity* and John Brine's *Motives to Love and Unity*.

[43] Gill, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

[44] Toon, *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism*, p. 124.

Whatever the rights or wrongs of Gill's conclusion (the matter does not concern us here), the contrast between Wesley's ambivalence about the theology of adoption and Gill's desire to emphasise the divine sovereignty in salvation is clear. Sadly, Calvinistic Methodists do not appear to have compensated for Wesley's approach. To have done so would not have necessitated a locating of adoption in eternity past, anymore, for instance, than it did for Calvin.[45] Instead, Calvinistic Methodists were, like their Wesleyan counterparts, limited in their interest in the theology of adoption. Accordingly their passivity in this regard helped contribute to the shaping of the lopsided soteriology that increasingly characterised the theology of the later Calvinistic tradition.

The second example we have in mind takes us from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century and from England to Scotland. By the early decades of the nineteenth century the time was ripe for a backlash against the predominant legal understanding of the gospel espoused by Westminster Calvinists. Among those influential in yearning and pushing for a paradigmatic shift towards a more familial understanding of the gospel was Thomas Erskine of Linlathen (1788-1870). His appeal, being part of a personal megashift from an early Calvinism to a final Universalism, involved ironically the abandonment of his early (and somewhat unusual) emphasis on adoption.[46]

The earliest Erskine mentions adoption is in his introductory essay to Richard Baxter's *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* (1824).[47] The following year he wrote an introductory essay for the Collins edition of the *Letters of*

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[45] See 'An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption in the Calvinistic Tradition', *op. cit.*, ch. 2.1.

[46] All this is documented in Part Two of 'An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption in the Calvinistic Tradition', *op. cit.*

[47] Richard Baxter, *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*, with an introductory essay by Thomas Erskine *Esq.*, 1824, pp. xxxii-iii (no other details are given). In this essay Erskine regards God's family as consisting of those adopted in Christ. The adopted possess an assurance that in suffering with Christ they shall also be glorified together with him. This glorification is earnestly anticipated for it dawns with the full manifestation of the privileges of the sons of God. Erskine recognises, then, the eschatological tension of Paul's theology. Although family members have already received the charter of adoption, which authorises them to speak to their heavenly Father, they nevertheless wait for the adoption, the redemption of their bodies. 'There is,' he says, 'but one joy and one adoption; but they contain the principle of infinite expansion and enlargement.'

Samuel Rutherford.[48] Again, he expresses a familial understanding of the gospel but within the full range of its juridical elements.[49] This time, however, he mentions adoption but the once:

> A restoration to spiritual health is the *ultimate object* of God in His dealings with the children of men. Whatever else God hath done with regard to men, has been subsidiary, and with a view to this; even the unspeakable work of Christ, and pardon freely offered through His cross, have been but means to a further end; and that end is, that the adopted children of the family of God might be conformed to the likeness of their elder brother, – that they might resemble Him in character, and thus enter into His joy.[50]

Later, in a letter dated 11 November 1832, Erskine mentions but in passing the Spirit of adoption.[51] Later still he writes: 'I may observe here, that it was not merely to prove his love, and his readiness to make a sacrifice, that God gave his Son to the world; but because he desired to make the world *sons of God.* The gift of the Son was the gift of *sonship*; the only-begotten Son is the Fountain of adoption.'[52]

From this reconstruction it becomes increasingly apparent that with the passing of the years Erskine's use of the adoption motif became evermore infrequent the closer he drew to Universalism. This is ironic, for the reverse would have been assumed. Not so, however. Once Erskine's final

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[48] *Letters of the Rev. Samuel Rutherford*, with an introductory essay by Thomas Erskine, *Esq.* 3rd ed. (Glasgow, 1830), pp. v-xxvi.

[49] *Ibid.*, pp. x-xi.

[50] *Ibid.*, pp. xii-xiii; *cf.* John B. Logan, 'Thomas Erskine of Linlathen: Lay Theologian of the "Inner Light"', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 37 (1984), p. 24. He also speaks in brief of some of the implications of adoption. He writes, for instance, of 'the rights and immunities of God's family [which] consist in possessing the favour of God, in approaching to him at all times as our Father, in enjoying what he enjoys, in rejoicing to see his will accomplished through the wide range of his dominions, and in being ourselves made instruments in accomplishing it' (Introductory essay to *The Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, p. xv; *cf.* p. xvi).

[51] *Letters of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen*, vol. 1 (1800-1840), edited by William Hanna (Edinburgh, 1877), p. 276.

[52] *The Doctrine of Election and its Connection with the General Tenor of Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh, 1878), p. 232. See also his comments on Rom. 8:12-25 (*ibid.*, pp. 238-42). It is interesting here in that while he gives the AV translation of verse 15 which uses the term 'adoption', his own scant comments are coined in terms of sonship.

work *The Spiritual Order* (hereafter *SO*)[53] was published all mention of adoption is gone. It is not difficult to see why. If all humanity have continued to be filially related to God even subsequent to the fall, wherein lies the need to be adopted? There is none! In Universalism adoption becomes superfluous. Reflecting on the tensions of the nineteenth century, James Matthew noted that:

> If all men are already, as men, God's children, and have always been so, it needs no adoption to make them so; if universal Fatherhood is a fact, and not a fiction, and by consequence if there be universal Sonship naturally belonging to all men, there is and there can be, so far as we can understand it, no such thing as Adoption. Adoption is, *per se*, a denial of such universality....[54]

Erskine gradually excised adoption from his theology by substituting the motif for a more general concept of sonship that did not have to imply the idea of entrance into the state, let alone a forensic understanding of the process. That is, by referring to sonship he could espouse an exclusively familial Universalism without the forensic overtones of the adoptive act.

Erskine's treatment of Romans 1-9 in *SO* gives some clues as to how he managed to change his theology.[55] By foregoing close exegetical scrutiny of the biblical text, he was able to make assertions about it without actually quoting it on more than a few occasions. Even when drawing on a passage that mentions adoption (such as Rom. 8:14-15) he succeeded in avoiding its implications of redemptive sonship. This he achieved, first by translating *huiothesia* more generally as 'sonship',[56] and then by omitting any reference to Paul's use of *huiothesia* in Romans 8:23 or 9:4.

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[53] *The Spiritual Order and other Papers Selected from the Manuscripts of the late Thomas Erskine* (Edinburgh, 1871).

[54] James Matthew, 'The Doctrine of Sonship and the Sonship of Believers', *The Theological Review and Free Church College Quarterly* 2 (1886), p. 25.

[55] *SO*, pp. 100-230.

[56] What is especially interesting about this is that earlier in *The Doctrine of Election* Erskine had quoted Romans 8:15 straight from the Authorized Version where *huiothesia* is rendered 'adoption' rather than 'sonship'. However, even then his flight to Universalism was all but complete, which explains the fact that his scant comments are coined in terms of sonship and not adoption. Furthermore, whereas in *The Doctrine of Election* Erskine had referred to Christ as the 'Fountain of adoption', in *The Spiritual Order* the epithet is exchanged for the more general phrase the 'Fountain of sonship' (*cf. The Doctrine of Election*, p. 232 and *SO*, p. 232).

As subtle as these changes are they were set against the backdrop of Erskine's *a priori* abandonment of sound hermeneutical and exegetical principles. Instead of the hard graft of Spirit-led exegesis he favoured a semi-pelagian confidence in humanity's 'inner light' as capable of witnessing to the objective authority of Scripture. Looked at closely, this involved his wresting of the authority of truth from the Holy Scriptures, placing it alternatively in the personal assurance of its discernment; namely, the inward facts of spiritual consciousness and the outward facts of life. Thus, reliant on experience (without – it may be noted – any mention of the aid of the Holy Spirit),[57] Erskine saw no reason to prove his universalistic assumptions from Scripture. Rather Scripture merely confirms what humanity already recognises, namely, that God is our Father. This position, however, is self-defeating. While humanity retains the knowledge of God (Rom. 1:21), our natural estrangement from our Creator means that we do not retain the knowledge of God as Father. In any case, there are many whose 'inner light' cannot help but regard Erskine's final Universalism as both a clear distortion of Scripture – symptomatic of which is his suppression of the very doctrine that continues to make Universalism biblically and theologically untenable – and a denial of experience.

Thirdly, and perhaps most curiously, we come to our own day and the so-called 'new perspective on Paul'.[58] Although seminally influenced in its present form by Krister Stendahl, E. P. Sanders and James Dunn, for many the new perspective has become inextricably linked with the more popular influence of N. T. ('Tom') Wright.[59] Without wishing to be unfair to him, it is in his writings that we find what looks like either one of the more incredible examples of the oversight of adoption or one of the more wilful

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[57] *SO*, p. 84.

[58] For brief but helpful introductions to the present debate see Colin G. Kruse, *Paul, the Law and Justification* (Leicester, England, 1996), pp. 35-53. Also accessible are John R. W. Stott's prefatory comments in his commentary on Romans (*The Message of Romans: God's Good News for the World*, The Bible Speaks Today Series, first published 1994 and reprinted (Leicester, 1996), pp. 24-31).

[59] As is increasingly recognised, talk of what James Dunn labelled a new perspective on Paul warrants a twofold qualification. First, the new perspective is not really about Paul. It is about first century Judaism. Secondly, the perspective is not really new. See Peter Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective*. With an essay by Donald A. Hagner (Downers Grove, IL, 2001), pp. 33ff.

instances of its suppression. Certainly, by drawing attention to this issue it may be possible to introduce to the current debate a fresh perspective that has the advantage of not only addressing constructively one of the major concerns of the new perspective from a standpoint of classical Protestant orthodoxy, but also of highlighting the strategic doctrinal and apologetic role that adoption can play in biblical and historico-theological discussions.

Wright's understanding of Justification is laid out succinctly in his chapter, 'Justification: The Biblical Basis and its Relevance for Contemporary Evangelicalism'.[60] There he expounds the doctrine first from the Old Testament and then from the various perspectives of the New Testament – the Gospels and Acts, Paul (Gal., Phil., Rom.) and other authors. Two features stand out: his communal or familial definition of justification and his silence about adoption, which, taken together, give the appearance that he has completely sunk adoption into justification, yet without any notification that that is in fact what he has done.

'Justification', says Wright, 'is God's declaration that certain people are within the covenant', meaning that, 'those who believe the Gospel are in the right, are members of the covenant family'.[61] Driving this communal understanding of justification is a rejection of the individualistic definition ('How can a man be right with God?') that generally characterised the reformers' understanding. The basis of this alternative definition is rooted in the view that justification is not a subject in its own right, but part of the larger picture of God's covenantal purposes for his people. This Wright traces back not only to the Old Testament but to Jesus and to Paul: 'For Paul, as for Jesus, the salvation of the individual is set in the context of God's redefinition of Israel, his call of a worldwide family whose sins are forgiven in the blood of the new covenant.'[62]

With profuse mention of the covenant family it is a mystery that Wright defines entrance into it exclusively in terms of justification. One would have expected the clear Pauline teaching on adoption to be essential to his understanding of the covenant family. After all, adoption has its own

[60] See Tony Baker, George Carey, John Tiller, Tom Wright, *The Great Acquittal: Justification by Faith and Current Christian Thought* (London, 1980), pp. 13-37.

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 15. This definition has remained unchanged with the passing of the years: '"Justification" is the doctrine which insists that all those who have this faith belong as full members of this family on this basis and no other' (*What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?*, Grand Rapids, MI and Cincinnati, OH, 1997, p. 133).

[62] 'Justification', p. 21.

distinct term (*huiothesia*), context, and climactic use in three of Paul's major epistles (Eph. 1:4-5; Gal. 4:4-5 and Rom. 8:22-23). It is bewildering, then, and probably not a little significant to discover that not once does Wright refer to adoption, not even in his expositions of Galatians and Romans. In a manner reminiscent of Erskine's treatment of Romans 8, Wright mentions sonship, citing Romans 8:14-17 as well as Galatians 4:1-7 in the footnotes,[63] but does no justice to adoption itself.[64]

Nowhere does Wright's silence on adoption become more deafening than when he states that, 'Romans 8 points to the crowning glory of Paul's doctrine of justification'.[65] That it may do, but it is as feasible to argue that the crowning glory to which Romans 8 points is the adoption for which the whole created order groans (8:17-23). Thus it may be valid to argue that in the context of Paul's thought it is not justification that declares that the believer is within the covenant family, it is ultimately adoption!

This unique response to the new perspective is not without its implications. First, it demonstrates how strategically important a grasp of the history and theology of adoption can be. In this instance, a modest knowledge of the glaring contradiction between the place of adoption in biblical soteriology and its profile in historical theology goes a long way to exposing the inadequacies of the present debate. The fact that Wright can redefine justification so that it covers the terrain occupied in the best Protestant formulations by both justification and adoption, yet without the faintest mention of adoption, is as great a cause of bewilderment as those responses to Wright that harp on about the classical Reformation understanding of justification without the slightest acknowledgement of the validity of Wright's point; namely that the Protestant statements on justification were in fact too often exclusively individualistic and lacking the communal implications implied in the Scriptures by Paul's doctrine of adoption.

What proponents from both sides of the debate need to be aware of, therefore, is how their respective positions have been distorted by their lack of attention to adoption. On the one hand, Wright's definition of justification does no justice to the apex of Paul's soteriology. On the other hand, the forgetting of the importance of adoption has rendered orthodox Protestants ill equipped to counter effectively Wright's redefining of

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[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 26 and 116.

[64] The same complaint can be made of *What Saint Paul Really Said*, pp. 95-133.

[65] 'Justification', p. 27.

justification. Only once both sides have done justice to the Pauline teaching on adoptive sonship in Romans 8, Galatians 3-4 and Ephesians 1 may we see, in this respect at least, a coming together of the two sides of the debate.

Secondly, and in a similar vein, as valid as Wright's protest against an overly-individualised gospel may be, we discern in the new perspective the oft-repeated but infrequently recognised pattern that characterises the cut and thrust of theological debate; namely, that a protest may be valid even when its solution is invalid. This, we have argued, is the case with Wright's definition of justification. For all the warrant of those traditional (and critical) responses to the new perspective, there has been to date a failure to recognise the kernel of truth in the protest; which is that the gospel terminates (in an immediate sense) not on the forgiveness of a sinner's transgressions but on his or her entrance into the family of God. To agree that Wright has a valid point here is a far cry, however, from conceding all to the advocates of the new perspective. A more constructive approach to the challenge of the new perspective would involve recognising up front what little justice Protestant orthodoxy has done to this biblical truth. This would not only entail a greater awareness of the importance of adoption in the *corpus Paulinum* but also the utilisation of the apostle's doctrine so as to remedy Wright's ill-defined understanding of justification.

Thirdly, in formulating a more constructive response to the new perspective much help may be gained from none other than John Calvin. Thus, while we heed Wright's advice to return to the New Testament,[66] we cannot jettison the opinions of Calvin, the theologian of adoption *par excellence* and one of the best exegetes of the past. To do so would be to move towards the very historico-theological detachment that has led proponents of the new perspective to the ellipsis of adoption and the overly hasty and sweeping application of their controversial findings to the Reformation debates.

Wright need not be overly concerned with our appreciation of Calvin's exegesis of the New Testament. After all Calvin's rich understanding of soteriology teaches us that in principle, even if not in the details, Wright's emphasis on the covenant family is a healthy corrective to the typical classical treatments of justification which have consistently isolated the doctrine from the communal orientation of adoption. Nevertheless, Calvin's understanding of the biblical relationship between justification and adoption is much to be preferred to Wright's redefining of

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[66] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

justification.[67] This is, first of all, precisely because the reformer does justice to adoption whereas Wright does not.[68] Calvin's understanding that justification is the 'main hinge on which religion turns'[69] presents no difficulty to his understanding that the 'grace of adoption... bestows salvation entire'.[70] By contrast we cannot help but notice Wright's ellipsis of adoption in his discussion of justification:

> The people of God are an historical and visible family, demonstrating their historical nature in the sacraments and in that continuity of ministry, in the context of life under the Word of God, for which the later writings of the New Testament show so much concern. Justification is not an individual's charter, but God's declaration that we belong to the covenant community. If we are not taking that community seriously, we have not understood justification.
> ... [I]f justification declares that the believer is a member of the covenant community, that community itself is called to live as the family who accept one another in love.[71]

And more so:

> If justification is God's assurance that those who belong to the Messiah are indeed members of his covenant family, then the whole of the New Testament is all about justification – which is, after all, what we should

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[67] When Wright says 'I have no desire, as some appear to have, to play down the value of our Reformation heritage: but I believe we are most faithful to the Reformers when we go back to the New Testament and see whether we can understand it even better than they did', I am gladdened, but simply disagree that, on the issue of the relationship between justification and adoption at least, he has understood the New Testament better than Calvin (*ibid.*).

[68] See once again 'An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption in the Calvinistic Tradition', *op. cit.*, chs 1-4.

[69] 'Ut meminerimus praecipuum esse sustinendae religionis cardinem' (*Inst.* III.xi.1 [*CO* 2 (30): 533]). In his sermon on Luke 1:5-10, Calvin says of justification that it is 'the principle of the whole doctrine of salvation and of the foundation of all religion' (cited François Wendel, *Calvin*, London, 1963, p. 256).

[70] *Calvin's Tracts and Treatises*, vol. 3, translated from the original Latin and French by Henry Beveridge, historical notes and introduction to the current edition by T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh, and London, 1958), p. 275 [*CO* 7 (35): 619] as was cited in the previous article p. 19.

[71] 'Justification', p. 36.

expect from a book whose collective title indicates that it is the documentation of the new covenant.[72]

Secondly, we note in passing that Calvin's more biblical approach suggests *contra* the hasty and therefore somewhat naïve advice of the proponents of the new perspective that the benefits of the Reformation are best left intact.[73]

Bearing these two factors in mind, it is by no means clear to this author at least that the new perspective contains any benefits for those adhering to a fully Calvinian understanding of soteriology (that is, adoption included), even if its protest carries a timely message to Protestants in general. The questions of first-century Judaism apart, had advocates of the new perspective a better knowledge of Calvin, they may have found much of their protest answered from Geneva. In Calvin we find due emphasis on the covenantal setting of the gospel, the fundamental importance of union with Christ (so countering the accusation that the imputation of Christ's righteousness is a legal fiction), and the fully worked out corporate or communal application of the gospel. Accordingly, there is a strong case for arguing that Wright's protest is resolvable within the traditional categories of soteriology – justification, adoption, sanctification – so long as full justice is done to the believer's membership of the household of God. Arguments may persist about vital details such as imputation,[74] but Calvin's doctrine is so hedged around from accusations

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[72] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

[73] While affirming with Wright the sadness of the frequent petty-mindedness of the divisions of the visible church, one wonders from more recent comments of his whether he is now as adamant about the value of our Reformation heritage: 'Paul's doctrine of justification impels the churches, in their current fragmented state, into the ecumenical task. It cannot be right that the very doctrine which declares that all who believe in Jesus belong at the same table (Galatians 2) should be used as a way of saying that some, who define the doctrine of justification differently, belong to a different table. The doctrine of justification, in other words, is not merely a doctrine which Catholic and Protestant might just be able to agree on, as a result of hard ecumenical endeavour. It is itself the ecumenical doctrine, the doctrine that rebukes all our petty and often culture-bound church groupings, and which declares that all who believe in Jesus belong together in one family.... The doctrine of justification is in fact the great *ecumenical* doctrine' (*What Saint Paul Really Said*, p. 158).

[74] Writing of 1 Cor. 1:30, Wright states: 'It is the only passage I know where something called 'the imputed righteousness of Christ,' a phrase more often found in post-Reformation theology and piety than in the New

of a legal fiction that at face value there is merit to the conclusion that the so-called new perspective is, by comparison with Calvin's soteriology, another valid but seemingly aberrant protest against the loss of a familial understanding of covenant (and adoption, we may add) in classic Protestant theology.

CONCLUSION

Further research may yet reveal other examples of how adoption has proven theologically inconvenient. It is not difficult to see, for instance, how the doctrine could impinge on the feminist agenda. After all, it is certain that an appeal for a greater emphasis on the Fatherhood of God (particularly with its appropriation of the language of '*Abba*') and the adoption of sons (with Paul's play on the union of the Son (*huios*) and the sons (*huioi*)) is contrary to the feminist clamour for maternal references to God and gender-neutral language for the believer's status in the divine-human relationship.

Although an investigation of the impact of the feminist agenda on the discussion of adoption lies beyond the scope of this essay, and not wanting to end on a polemical note, it is nevertheless apparent that the feminine metaphors used in Scripture for God as well as some of the female orientated denotations of filial status (notably Paul's use of *thugateras* in 2 Cor. 6:18) have proved insufficient to satisfy feminist demands. Where Scripture continues to serve as the dictum for theology, however, these expectations will inevitably remain unmet.

In the meantime we conclude this two-part study with the hope that enough has been accomplished to stimulate the sort of serious discussion beneficial to the recovery of adoption. If the entire theological history of adoption teaches us nothing else it certainly warns us that success cannot be guaranteed. Ironically history is demonstrating that the ongoing transition towards a more familial understanding of the gospel has itself become a significant factor in the thwarting of the recovery of adoption. As our study has shown, those favouring the substitution of the traditional legal model for a more contemporary familial model too consistently show scant regard for the biblical and theological categories available.

Testament, finds any basis in the text. But if we are to claim it as such, we must also be prepared to talk of the imputed wisdom of Christ; the imputed sanctification of Christ; and the imputed redemption of Christ; and that, though no doubt they are all true in some general sense, will certainly make nonsense of the very specialized and technical senses so frequently given to the phrase "the righteousness of Christ" in the history of theology' (*ibid.*, p. 123).

Accordingly, the appropriate desire to give adequate expression to the familial aspect of the gospel becomes a rather political attempt to underplay its forensic core. In response, conservatives, sensing that the emphasising of the familial is but a throwback to Victorian liberalism, only exacerbate their frequent failure to reflect the New Testament's balancing of the juridical and familial by failing to draw upon the familial categories available in Scripture.

Thus, our study of adoption's history raises serious methodological, hermeneutical and exegetical questions for both conservatives and liberals alike. More open-minded liberals would do well to consider how it has been possible for the paternity of God to prevail over his justice without the commensurate development of adoption – the very means in Paul's understanding by which those once enslaved can enter upon a filial relationship to God their Father. The more conservative would do well to ask themselves what they hope to gain in the defence of orthodoxy by merely banging the forensic drum if all their efforts pay but lip-service to the New Testament emphasis on the Fatherhood of God and the sonship/childhood of his people.

Presently there are some hopeful signs for the recovery of adoption. Certainly the theological history of the doctrine contrasts markedly with the more recent growth of interest in the theme of sonship in biblical studies.[75] If things are to improve, however, the historical and systematic theologians (whether conservative, liberal or neo-conservative/neo-liberal) must take the present opportunity to play their part. There is a decreasing excuse for not doing so. Knowledge of some of the more crucial resources in the annals of historical theology is now available. These need to be utilised if the doctrine is to be integrated into the everyday theology of the church. What benefits could await the neglected study of soteriology and the Spirit-given understanding of the Christian self in relation to Father-God were adoption to be at last recovered by the church. We dare not hold our breath, but then we dare not give up hope either.

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[75] See 'The Metaphorical Import of Adoption: A Plea for Realisation, I: The Adoption Metaphor in Biblical Usage', *op. cit.*, p. 131 fn. 10.

REVIEWS

Across the Spectrum: Understanding issues in Evangelical Theology

Gregory A. Boyd & Paul R. Eddy

Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002; 287pp., $18.99; ISBN 0-8010-2276-2

Some twenty-five years ago, Bridge and Phypers' book comparing and contrasting paedobaptism with believers' baptism[1] made use of a dialectical approach which was new for many, but very exciting and helpful. More recently, another IVP book which used this method successfully, skilfully edited by Wayne Grudem, handled the delicate issue of miraculous gifts.[2] To appreciate arguments ranged against one's own point of view is to gain a deeper understanding and a stronger faith.

Boyd and Eddy's volume uses a similar method to handle a range of issues over which evangelicals differ: inerrancy or infallibility of Scripture, sanctification, eternal security, baptism and so on.

The eighteen chapters are structured in a similar fashion, starting with an introductory story-type paragraph which purports to suggest situations in which the difference of opinion might arise, but as the book develops they start to grate: 'Jordan was overjoyed when he noticed the Bible that the new employee, Grace, had placed on her desk in the cubicle next to his' (p.193). Boyd and Eddy wrote their book 'specifically for evangelical college students' (p.6) and so the need for this contextualisation is not as obvious as it might be for a more general public.

Each chapter then locates its core issue in a more general philosophical framework, so the Genesis debate, for example, mentions naturalism, pantheism and panentheism, helpfully contrasting each one with the Christian view. In the early parts of the book especially, notably the chapters on biblical inspiration and divine providence, college students will find valuable points of reference, but one weakness is a

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[1] Donald Bridge and David Phypers, *The water that divides: The baptism debate* (IVP, 1977).

[2] Wayne Grudem (ed.), *Are miraculous gifts for today? Four views* (IVP, 1996).

failure adequately to mention postmodern ideas which are so prevalent today, and which college students in particular would be most likely to encounter.

The heart of each chapter is an outline of the biblical arguments supporting each view. As Don Carson brilliantly revealed,[3] evangelical theology is sometimes rather less rigorously biblical than is imagined, so Boyd and Eddy's approach is refreshing and stimulating. The debate on Hell, in which the traditional 'unending torment of the wicked' view is set against annihilationism, stands out: brevity (a dozen pages or so) adds to the force of the argument, as point after point is succinctly made in favour of one view and then the other.

This is a book not only for college students, but also for reasonably well-read lay people, and certainly preachers and ministers. It offers an intellectual work-out to refresh those whose thinking has gone stale; it sums up the main arguments so as to introduce each issue to new students; at the close of each chapter a balanced bibliography suggests around ten books which develop the arguments further.

The late Professor Wally Robson of Edinburgh University used to tell his students, 'Most of the best books are short.' He would have been proud of this one.

Eric Foggitt, Dunbar Parish Church

Groundwork of Christian Spirituality
Gordon S. Wakefield
Epworth Press, Peterborough, 2001; 145pp., £11.95; ISBN 0 716205459

This is Gordon Wakefield's last book, finished just before his death. It is written in a pleasant, readable style but evidences of great learning and sustained reflection abound. The treatment is largely historical but many comments are made on the relationship of these issues to contemporary life and faith.

An introductory chapter discusses the question 'what is spirituality?' Here is a fascinating, yet tantalisingly brief, comment on the relationship of spirituality to culture and geography. Thereafter, Wakefield traces spirituality from the New Testament to the present day in a series of crisp chapters.

Chapter 1 on the New Testament confines itself to the spirituality of Jesus as revealed in the Gospels. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 cover the medieval

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[3] D. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Baker, 1984).

period with interesting discussions of allegory, monasticism and mysticism. Useful overviews of Augustine and Bonaventure are included.

Chapter 5 is called 'The Reformation' and covers Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross as well as Luther and Calvin. The brief comments on Richard Baxter are helpful and illuminating.

Chapter 6, which ranges from the 18th century to the present day, is inevitably sketchy, although it is surprising to find how thin is the section on Methodism from this distinguished Methodist.

The concluding chapter briefly outlines the kind of spirituality Wakefield believes to be appropriate for the 21st century. This he sees as inevitably relating to other faiths; thoroughly ecumenical; involved in action and a communal rather than individualistic spirituality.

The book is certainly helpful as an introduction and taster or as a useful overview for those already familiar with what is an ever-expanding field. There are, however, in my view, some serious weaknesses.

Wakefield, while he defines spirituality, nowhere clearly relates that to the redeeming and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Similarly, in the chapter on the New Testament, he makes little reference to the death and resurrection of Christ. The absence of any engagement with the New Testament letters further reduces the value of the chapter.

Similarly, the virtual neglect of the Old Testament is a major problem. This is the more surprising because on p. 10, Wakefield emphasises the foundational and seminal nature of the Hebrew Scriptures for Jesus himself. Something at least on the Psalter would have enormously strengthened the biblical foundations of the book.

A book on spirituality is always going to reflect the author's own emphasis. For this reviewer the book is somewhat weak on evangelicalism: a mere three pages (96-98). John Stott does not rate a mention, although his book on 'The Cross of Christ' as well as 'I believe in Preaching' gives the authentic flavour of evangelical spirituality. Likewise the Charismatic movement is given only the briefest of mentions. Something on the songs and hymns of the various renewal movements would have been very helpful.

The massive influence of C. S. Lewis on Christian thinking and imagination is nowhere mentioned, although the Narnia stories must have profoundly shaped the spiritual lives of many.

The book is useful but it must be read with discernment and supplemented by more comprehensive studies.

Bob Fyall, St John's College, Durham

The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions
Bruce M. Metzger
Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI, 2001; 190pp., £11.99; ISBN 0 8010
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Bruce Metzger is a man with an obvious love and passion for the Bible.
His entire career has been spent in the closest possible proximity to the
Bible, teaching New Testament at Princeton. His reputation is well
deserved as a populariser as well as a scholar.

This recent book is a survey of the Bible in translation. There are two
parts in the book. The first smaller section surveys the ancient versions
of the Bible. This section is divided into a chapter dealing with the
ancient versions which were made for the use of Jews, the Septuagint and
the Jewish Targums. The second chapter comments on versions intended
for Christian leadership like the Syriac, Latin and Coptic versions. The
second section is a survey of the English versions, at breakneck speed,
from Wycliffe and Tyndale to *The Message*.

It is a well-written book for those of us who love 'the big picture'. It
is a reflection of Metzger's scholarship and familiarity with the subject
matter that he is able to condense an evaluation of 60 specific versions
within the confines of a short book.

Metzger has a gift in making the complex accessible to the non-
technical reader. His description of the rise and fall of the Septuagint is
both masterly and informative. This is illustrated in his account of how it
began as a flagship project facilitated by the high priest at Jerusalem and
ended with it being compared to the golden calf! Metzger tells the story of
Jerome who defended his Latin translation against detractors, calling them
'two legged-assess', and persons who 'think that ignorance is identical to
holiness'. Clearly, lively polemic regarding translation attracted as much
emotive language in 404 AD as today.

The section on English translations is divided up into genre. It
includes helpful chapters on 'Revision after Revision', 'Simplified, Easy-
to-Read Versions' and 'Paraphrases of the English Bible'. The section on
the King James Bible is especially helpful. Metzger points out that the
KJV was not entirely new but 'steered a course between the Puritan and
Roman versions'. He claims that the credit for the vocabulary should go
to Tyndale but Coverdale is responsible for 'melody and harmony'.

His comments on the NIV are limited to a basic account of the
translation philosophy and a history of the various editions of the
translation. There is a note about gender inclusive language but his
approach is to state facts rather than to critique. He deals with other

lesser-known translations including 'The Readers Digest Bible', which he rates highly; he was the general editor!

The book ends with a comment on *The Message, which* he describes as an attempt at 'transculturation'. One cannot help feeling that in Metzger's opinion it does not mark the high water mark of Bible translation.

Scholars will be disappointed in what will be, for them, basic revision but the average reader will be informed, thrilled and even amused at the story of the translation of the greatest book ever written.

David C Meredith, Smithton-Culloden Free Church, Inverness

Christianity & Western Thought: Volume 2, Faith and Reason in the 19th Century
Steve Wilkens & Alan G. Padgett
InterVarsity, Downers Grove, 2000; 436pp., $29.99; ISBN 0-8308-1753-0

This is the second volume of a proposed three-part series on the history of Christianity and Western Thought. The first volume, by Colin Brown, was published in 1990, and the fact that it has taken a further ten years for the second one to appear is partly the result of a delay caused by Brown's withdrawal from the project, but also bears witness to the thoroughness with which the present authors – both professors at Azusa Pacific University – have continued the task which he started.

Though the sub-title might imply some kind of apologetic purpose, this book has more of the style of a survey, expounding the ideas of key thinkers in the period under review. The nineteenth century was of course a time of enormous intellectual and political ferment, characterised by new notions in just about every field of human endeavour. So we are introduced here not only to philosophers such as Kant, Hegel, or Mill, but also to social scientists like Weber, not to mention the likes of Darwin, Freud, and others in the fields of the natural and human sciences – as well as key movements such as Romanticism, Pragmatism, Transcendentalism, and so on. Along the way, there are excursions into the world of theological study, including some discussion of the various quests for the historical Jesus, the rise of 'liberal' theology, and its counterpoint in the Princeton School, showing how the cultural movements of the day influenced and interacted with the development of Christian thinking and practice. In other words, there is something about most things and people. Indeed, that must be the book's main strength.

Its authors certainly display a canny ability to summarise enormous amounts of material, and to present it in a succinct and easily digestible form. In that sense, it might be compared to a dictionary of people and their ideas – and it could certainly be used in that way as a reference tool, for its indexes and footnotes are as extensive as its breadth of subject-matter. But it goes beyond the presentation of disconnected information, for the book is written in a narrative style which effectively traces the story of the nineteenth century from beginning to end – and, indeed, forward into the twentieth century, and the rise of Nazism. Moreover, it does it all with the same kind of flair and energy that characterised the people it describes – whose ideas the authors regard as the adolescent phase of contemporary western culture: 'The time came when it had to end, but it was fun and exciting while it lasted.'

Who is it for? Well, it will certainly provide a broad-brush perspective for anyone coming to this period for the first time, as well as offering a useful summary of significant ideas and people for those who need succinct and easily accessible information. It contains the kind of things that professional scholars often taken for granted – and therefore never bother to explain – but which can make all the difference between understanding and confusion for other people. It can be warmly recommended not only to students, but also to anyone else looking for reliable information, presented in an engaging manner.

John Drane, University of Aberdeen

Christianity in England from Roman Times to the Reformation. III: From 1384 to 1558
Kenneth Hylson-Smith
SCM, London, 2001; xxii+354pp., £19.95; ISBN 0 334 02848 5

This third and apparently final volume in Hylson-Smith's series deals with the period in English Church history with which an evangelical will most readily empathise, from John Wycliffe and the Lollards to the final official triumph of the Reformation on the accession of Elizabeth I. It is attractively produced and easy to read, carrying a weight of scholarship with a smooth accessible style.

Several aspects of Hylson-Smith's account were quite striking to the reviewer. First, he gives a high profile to the continuing influence of Lollardy after Wycliffe and on into the early Reformation period. Despite their relative smallness of numbers, the Lollards emerge in this book as an underground movement which possessed great vitality and powers of

endurance. Hylson-Smith sees them as part of an ongoing stream of 'evangelical' protest which blossomed more fully in the Reformation, standing in essential continuity with it and helping to pave its way.

Hylson-Smith's interpretation of the English Reformation itself as two Reformations, a spiritual one running in uneasy parallel with a political one, is eloquently stated. This has long seemed to me the right view. I warm very much to Hylson-Smith's insistence that the Reformation in England had already begun spiritually with the White Horse Inn group and the work of Tyndale, some years before Henry VIII's political Reformation commenced. Once the Henrician reform was under way, Thomas Cromwell stands out as a surprisingly evangelical figure in Hylson-Smith's narrative.

Hylson-Smith's discussion of the modern debate on the state of late medieval Catholicism in England is very helpful. The claims and counter-claims about how well-rooted in popular piety the pre-Reformation Church was, or how well-run its parishes and monasteries were, he dismisses as basically irrelevant to the real issues as perceived in the sixteenth century. The Reformers did not criticise the English Church over these issues; their critique was of a different order:

> They objected to the absence of a freely available Bible in the vernacular. They believed that priests should be allowed to marry, and the church was wrong in refusing them this right. They strongly opposed the mediatorial role which the church had given to priests, and wanted them to be primarily pastors and preachers... the reformers wanted communion in both kinds for the laity. They demanded an end to the whole cult of saints, relics and pilgrimages, the removal of all images from churches, and an end to ornate dooms and church decorations. They insisted that the mass should be abandoned in favour of a service of communion, with no hint of sacrifice in it, and that all the unfortunate and false beliefs and practices that flowed from the doctrine of transubstantiation should be jettisoned. Such a list greatly contrasts with what is commonly taken as the standard by which to assess the shortcomings of the early sixteenth-century church; but these are the kind of things which needed remedying, according to those evangelicals who championed the Reformation and helped to see it through (p. 274).

A few oddities in Hylson-Smith may be noted. His chapter on the European context of the English Reformation is brilliant but perhaps misplaced; it is really a monograph on the Continental Reformation *per se*. The great early English Reformer John Frith mysteriously becomes William Frith most of the time. And the cover of the book inexplicably

sports a very fetching picture of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, a seventeenth-century aristocrat well outside the book's timeframe.

These, however, are the tiniest spots in a vast blazing sun. The book is heartily commended.

Nick Needham, Highland Theological College, Dingwall

Encountering the Book of Psalms: A Literary and Theological Introduction
C. Hassell Bullock
Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI, 2001; 266pp., £19.99; ISBN 0-8010-2245-2

This textbook is the first I came across in the new and expanding Encountering Biblical Studies series, and I must admit that my initial impressions were not favourable. I dislike 'coffee-table' books, and here is what purports to be a textbook, but with numerous line-drawings, even some photographs, and a wealth of tables and sidebars with interesting shading effects. (Some volumes in the series even come with a CD-Rom of supplementary material.) Surely this is an exercise in which form has triumphed over substance so that the book is too reader-friendly to be of much use pedagogically.

Not at all; my fears were quite misplaced. This is a methodologically self-conscious series and in a publisher's preface its intellectual and attitudinal goals are listed. The book itself is carefully crafted to achieve its aim of introducing college students to the theological message and practical significance of the Book of Psalms. Each of the 14 chapters of the book starts with an outline of its contents and a list of objectives, and concludes with a set of study questions that are helpful for reviewing material. The book begins with a discussion of the hermeneutics of the Psalms, including a brief introduction to the structure of Hebrew poetry and also a review of the structure of the Book of Psalms and its editorial seams. The next section considers the place the Psalms have had in worship and faith over the centuries, before concluding with a more detailed analysis of the different literary and theological types of psalms in nine chapters: psalms of praise, lament, thanksgiving, trust, psalms of the earthly king and of the heavenly king, wisdom psalms, psalms of torah, and the imprecatory psalms.

The author writes from an evangelical perspective and provides a balanced and sensitive coverage of the issues raised, neither ignoring modern scholarship nor making unwarranted concessions to it. He

exhibits a comprehensive grasp of his material, including gems such as Alexander Montgomery's sixteenth-century metrical version of Psalm 1 and a discussion of current questions regarding the male perspective to be found in the wisdom psalms (and wisdom literature in general).

I have no hesitation in recommending this volume to a student beginning the study of the Book of Psalms. It provides a comprehensive introduction that is up-to-date and challenging. And, yes, those line drawings do help. Two little pictures clarify the difference between a *nevel* and a *kinnor* more than a thousand-word discussion on ancient lyres. Furthermore, this book does have value outside its academic remit. As a refresher course in the theology of the psalms it will stimulate much thought and provide new perspectives for preaching and pastoral care.

John L. Mackay, Free Church College, Edinburgh

Revival Sent From God: What the Bible Teaches for the Church Today
Raymond C. Ortlund Jr
Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 2000; 246pp., £9.99; ISBN 0-85111-534-9

This book is divided into two sections, one dealing with 'What God can do' and the other, much shorter section, with 'What we must do'. The volume ends with an appendix in the form of an extract from the works of Francis Schaeffer entitled 'The Persistence of Compassion'.

As the title indicates, Ortlund's aim is to make clear the biblical teaching on the subject of revival, but to do so in a manner that stimulates a longing within the contemporary church for a renewed awareness and experience of the divine presence and blessing. The author writes well and with passionate conviction, with the result that this book provides compelling reading. Here is a sample: 'Let's stop being so timid. Let's trust God so much that we follow his Word without qualifying it to death.' His illustrations are similarly vivid: too many people in the churches today are said to be like the mummified body of the philosopher Jeremy Bentham, wheeled out annually at the board meeting of University College Hospital in London and proclaimed 'Present but not voting'!

Despite the promise implicit in the sub-title of this volume, that it will offer a biblical theology of revival, Ortlund very largely limits his discussion to Old Testament texts and even here tends to assume rather than demonstrate the connection between the prophetic statements cited

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and the modem concept of 'revival'. His treatment hardly deals with the realities of a post-Christendom world and when he quotes a poem by his mother which includes the line, 'The savage hugs his god of stone and fears descent of night' we may perhaps ask whether this book relates properly to a world passing through rapid change – not least in relation to the growth of Christianity in the non-western world?

Despite these reservations, I found myself challenged by this work and by the author's evident longing for a renewed sense of the divine grace and mercy in the experience of the church today. His balance between the divine and human aspects of revival is exactly right and the book is studded with observations that stimulate thought, action and, above all, prayer.

David Smith, Whitefield Institute, Oxford

Losing Our Virtue: Why the Church Must Recover Its Moral Vision
David F. Wells
Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1998; 228pp., £9.99; ISBN 0-85111-577-2

Losing Our Virtue is the third book in a trilogy, the earlier books being *No Place For Truth* (1993) and *God in the Wasteland* (1994). In this volume Wells perceptively traces the development of modernity through the shifting patterns of our language: from the language of virtues to the language of values; from the language of human nature to the language of self-consciousness; from the language of guilt to the language of shame. The new language of modernity is not value-free; it defines who we are and how we think of ourselves and reveals the altered landscape of our souls. Linguistically impoverished, postmodern man finds it increasingly difficult to think in moral categories and is no longer able to understand himself as a moral being. Sin, understood in relation to God, has become for him a conceptual impossibility.

Such has been the insidious influence of modernity that the capacity to speak about sin in relation to God is also being lost in the evangelical church. Wells discerns two kinds of spirituality in contemporary American evangelicalism: 'classical spirituality', which understands sin in relation to God and salvation in relation to the cross, and 'postmodern spirituality', which understands sin in relation to the self and salvation in relation to therapeutic technique.

However, despite the fact that modernity has erased the language of moral accountability we are still moral beings: 'Throughout the fabric of

life... are woven the threads of moral consciousness.' (p. 147) Thus, postmodern man finds his experience shot through with ambiguity, an ambiguity he no longer has the conceptual tools to understand. This contradiction, ultimately the contradiction between creation and sin, becomes the opportunity for an apologetic suited to the postmodern world.

Wells argues that the exploration and explanation of these ambiguities offer the Church its best entrée into the postmodern world. The reality of our sinful condition thus 'becomes the Church's most powerful apologetic weapon. The postmodern world has destroyed logic, dispensed with history, discarded meaning, but deep within itself, as a Trojan horse, is its betrayer' (p. 177). Our conscience is, as Luther learned, inexplicable in the absence of God and inconsolable apart from his grace. This is an apologetic which recognises that 'The ally of faith is not culture but creation, not the ethos and trends of modernity, but the stubbornly present *imago Dei*' (p. 191).

Sadly, however, much of the evangelical church does not see that understanding sin in biblical terms unlocks many of the painful dilemmas of life that would otherwise remain closed and inexplicable. Hence the challenge of the book: is the church 'willing to break with the cultural habits of the time and propose something quite absurd, like recovering both the word and meaning of sin?' (p. 199).

Losing Our Virtue is clear and readable, rigorously documented, with copious footnotes, index and a valuable bibliography. Wells interacts with a wide range of social criticism and provides a valuable insight into the nature of modernity. It will repay much re-reading. This reviewer hopes that the suggestions for an apologetic for the postmodern world will be developed in another volume and looks forward to the trilogy becoming a quartet.

David M. White, St Columba's Parish Church, Kirkintilloch

Is there a meaning in this text: The Bible, the reader and the morality of literary knowledge
Kevin J. Vanhoozer
Apollos, Leicester, 1998; 496pp., £14.99; ISBN 0 85111 463 6

Professor Vanhoozer's book represents a significant step forward in the formation of a coherent Christian response to Post-modernism. Its aim is to defend the Bible from the hermeneutic of deconstruction, which teaches that meaning does not exist in the text prior to the reader's activity. Such

a philosophy, according to Vanhoozer, 'is slowly draining Western culture of its very humanity'. This book's intended readership extends to all serious students of the Bible and will provide a useful apologetic tool to all Christians concerned for the authority of God's Word. It approaches the subject from an unashamedly Christian perspective, using Trinitarian theology as the basis for all human communication and authorship. Vanhoozer founds his own hermeneutic upon Augustine's famous quote '*credo ut intelligam*' (I believe in order to understand).

The book is divided into two sections. The first highlights the impact of the philosophy of deconstruction upon author, book and reader. In such a philosophy 'the author is dead. The author as subsequent subject has been undone, exposed as a metaphysical, rhetorical and ideological construct.' The first section leaves us in the pit, but looking up!

The second section reconstructs the author, book and reader. It is divided into three chapters. The first chapter resurrects the author by helpfully describing him not as sovereign over or a slave of, but a citizen of language. Vanhoozer's definition of meaning as communicative action also lays the philosophical foundation for his own hermeneutic. The second chapter redeems the text. I found this chapter especially interesting particularly in its discussions on literal meaning as literary meaning, the use of commentaries, and biblical interpretation. In the latter discussion, Vanhoozer christens us '*homo interpretans*', a being for whom interpretation is properly basic. Professor Vanhoozer recognises our 'cognitive malfunction' as being responsible for varied and erroneous interpretations. He highlights genre as being determined and uses different kinds of map as an illustration of each genre's truth claim. The third chapter reforms the reader by asking how we should read the text – as creators or discoverers, 'overstanding' or understanding? Vanhoozer describes 'interpretive virtues', highlighting the importance of hermeneutic realism held together with Christian discipleship.

Professor Vanhoozer's conclusion, 'The Hermeneutics of the Cross', encourages both humility, in that we need to be reminded that interpreters can get it wrong, and conviction, in that whilst 'absolute knowledge is not a present possession, adequate knowledge is'.

Professor Vanhoozer's scholarship is of the highest standard. He critically evaluates deconstruction seeking 'neither to bury Derrida [deconstruction's main proponent] nor to praise him, but to understand him'. Vanhoozer's resource base is wide and well marshalled. His understanding of Christian theology, historical and modern philosophy and literature allows him to build a convincing defence of biblical authority. The book is easy to use, with notes and references at the end of

each chapter and a complete bibliography and subject index at the end of the book. *Is there a meaning in this text* is not light reading – every word has been carefully selected and every sentence is pregnant with meaning. Deconstruction is a complex philosophy but Vanhoozer does not shirk in his dialogue with it.

   Is there a meaning in this text commends a hermeneutic which finds the middle way between relativism and absolutism, scepticism and dogmatism and between sloth and pride. Careful reading and study of this book will yield the worthwhile fruit both of a deepened understanding of hermeneutics and restored faith in the authority of Scripture.

Colin Dow, Free Church of Scotland College

A World History of Christianity
Edited by Adrian Hastings
Cassell, London, 1999; xiv+594 pp., no price given; ISBN 0 304 70438 5

History, like economic structures, is going global, and the history of the church, a worldwide phenomenon *par excellence*, is following suit. This history of Christianity is truly planetary in its scope as well as taking in the whole of Christian history since its beginnings. The editor of this volume, who alas recently died, was one of the handful of scholars with the credentials to undertake such a venture. Formerly Professor of Theology at Leeds, Adrian Hastings trained for the Catholic priesthood in Rome and served as a missionary in Africa. He was the author of the standard works on the history of Christianity in twentieth-century England and in sub-Saharan Africa over the centuries. He was himself the writer of two chapters in this book, one on Latin America and another on the early period of expansion from 150 to 550 AD, bringing out illuminating themes such as the way in which doctrinal conflicts were influenced by the desire of Alexandria to avoid domination by the upstart Constantinople. His background, however, does peep through at times, as when he assumes that the words of Jesus to Peter about building the church apply to him rather than to his utterance. This boldness contrasts with the extreme care of the author of the previous chapter on Christian origins, Martin Goodman, to banish all presuppositions, leading him to refer to 'reports' of the resurrection rather than the reality. The book contains some really powerful chapters, as attractive as they are authoritative. One is the study of Africa by Kevin Ward of the University of Leeds, who is thorough and up-to-date without losing readability.

Another is the clear treatment of North America by R. B. Mullin of the General Theological Seminary, New York, who, unusually, gives full space to Canada. And a third, by David Hilliard of Flinders University, Adelaide, is a particularly well-digested survey of Australia and the Pacific, revealing the astonishing fact that only seven years after the introduction of the faith to Samoa in 1830, nearly every village had a chapel and roughly half the population was under Christian instruction. The weaknesses of the volume are that it is extraordinarily uneven in its treatment of themes and in its academic referencing. Two chapters, on Byzantium and the Reformation, are so political in emphasis as to neglect the evolution of church life on the ground. Another, on Western Europe since the Enlightenment, is so intellectual in its coverage as to ignore the social history of the churches entirely. The medieval European chapter centres on England at the expense of Italy and most other lands. There are no footnotes in three chapters and they are thin in two others, but in several of the rest they are ample. In addition some technical terms are inadequately explained ('Gnesio-Lutheranism' on p. 268 is the prime instance) and, inevitably, there are a few errors. This is a noble undertaking, but it is not quite the careful survey of the whole world's Christian history that it might have been.

D. W. Bebbington, University of Stirling

John Stott : The Making of a Leader
Timothy Dudley-Smith
Inter-Varsity, Leicester, 1999; 513pp., £14.99; ISBN 0-85111-757-0

In this first volume of a two-volume work, Timothy Dudley-Smith gives us a well-written, credible and likeable pen portrait of the low church Anglican who may well go down in history as the most influential British churchman in the second half of the twentieth century.

John Stott was born in 1921 into an upper middle class home in central London. Although his father, a Harley Street specialist, was a humanist, his mother retained the Lutheran piety of her childhood and taught John and his two sisters to go to church [All Souls!], read the Bible and say their prayers.

John Stott came to a living faith at sixteen years of age, while attending Rugby. John Bridger, a fellow pupil, invited him to the Christian Union where E. J. H. ['Bash'] Nash, of Scripture Union, presented the challenge of Pilate's question 'What must I do with Jesus?' As a result John 'opened the door' to Christ.

His early discipleship under Nash inspired a strong spiritual discipline, and throughout his life his practice has been to rise early [at 6.00 and even 5.00 a.m.] to spend time alone in Bible meditation and prayer. When serving on the Committee of the CU as an undergraduate in Cambridge, he exasperated his fellow committee members by leaving meetings for bed at 9.30 p.m.!

Involvement in the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union greatly strengthened John's faith. 'I sometimes wonder on what particular scrapheap I would be today,' he wrote almost half a century later, 'if it had not been for God's providential gift of the UCCF.'

On being called to the Christian ministry, Stott moved from Languages to Theology. Although he found the divinity school 'entirely liberal in its orientation', he maintained his evangelical position ultimately because he was convinced it was true. In 1945 he was ordained a deacon to serve in the parish of All Souls, Langham Place and St Peter's, Vere Street.

In 1950 he became Rector at All Souls and adopted five criteria: the priority of prayer, expository preaching, regular evangelism, careful follow-up of enquirers and converts, and the systematic training of helpers and leaders. These became the foundation of what was to become one of the most influential ministries of the twentieth century, extending to every continent through travel and writing.

Over and above his careful expository ministry, John Stott has set an example in many ways: his pastoral care for individuals and astonishing memory for names and circumstances; his observation of a QUIET day every month to think through, pray over and prepare for difficult and challenging issues; his commitment to creating institutional agents of change in the church; his ability to defend the gospel rigorously with the minimum of *odium theologicum*; his recognition that the hallmark of evangelicals is not so much an impeccable set of words as an *a priori* resolve to believe and obey whatever Scripture may be shown to teach.

In this volume covering John Stott's first four decades, Timothy Dudley-Smith's massive research yields hosts of fascinating facts. A few examples: David Jenkins was John Stott's 'fag' at Rugby; Tam Dalyell [then a student] heckled Billy Graham during his 1955 Cambridge University mission; as a young curate Stott tramped the streets *incognito* to discover what life meant for London's homeless; and at age seventy he named Martyn Lloyd-Jones as one of the seven people who influenced him.

The wide reading of *The Making of a Leader* is likely to help to make many more.

Fergus Macdonald, Edinburgh

The Good Doctor. Philip Doddridge of Northampton – A Tercentenary Tribute
Alan C. Clifford
Charenton Reformed Publishing, 8 Le Strange Close, Norwich, NR2 3PN; 2002; 319pp., £9.95 + £1.60 p&p from publishers; ISBN 0 9526716 3 8.

Most of us are acquainted with Philip Doddridge the hymnwriter ('O happy day', 'Hark the glad sound!') and may have heard of *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, but there our acquaintance ends. This unfortunate situation has been happily remedied by Dr Clifford in his fine 'Tercentenary Tribute' (Doddridge lived from 1702 until 1751). The author is thoroughly conversant with the historical background and moves easily among the evangelical leaders of the eighteenth century, though his analogies between Wesley *et al.* and the Viennese composers, or the brass section of the symphony orchestra, strike one as a little odd.

It must be said that Dr Clifford is no disinterested chronicler; he is passionately engaged with his subject. Doddridge emerges as an attractive personality who achieved much in his comparatively short life, as a minister of the gospel and principal of the famous Dissenting Academy at Northampton. The early chapters explain how he was called to these tasks, and describe the theological and social milieu in which he operated, when much of English nonconformity was tainted with Deism and Arianism. There are interesting sketches of the pacific Isaac Watts and the fiery Thomas Bradbury. Another chapter is given over to an engaging account of Doddridge's exceedingly happy marriage, and there is a full appraisal of his educational theories and how they affected the management and curriculum of what became 'the most famous of the nonconformist seminaries'. Doddridge's spirituality, pastoral gifts and views on church polity come under skilful review.

Philip Doddridge, though a courageous man, was nothing if not eirenic; he found party spirit repugnant and was concerned to pursue a 'middle way' between the extremes of his age, believing that charity was an essential component of orthodoxy. This inevitably led to his being accused of theological indifferentism, and of maintaining a fraternal attitude to those whose theology was suspect. Spurgeon was kinder: Dr

Doddridge was 'sound' but 'not always judicious'. Dr Clifford mounts a forceful, and successful, defence of Doddridge's orthodoxy, notwithstanding his policy on non-subscription. And we are assured (in an opportunistic-side-swipe) that in his attitude to Roman Catholicism he would not have concurred with the views of Drs George Carey, John Stott and James Packer!

Dr Clifford devotes a chapter to an expert analysis of Doddridge's hymns and their subsequent modifications. And scattered throughout the book are some fascinating and enlivening details. Who would have thought that Doddridge could lecture on Applied Mathematics and was an advocate of smallpox inoculation, or that Richard Doddridge Blackmore (1825-1900), of *Lorna Doone* fame, was a direct descendant?

We have spoken of Dr Clifford's sympathetic engagement with his subject. The discussion of Doddridge's theological views becomes an advocacy of the author's own ideas which are apparently co-incident, viz, his 'Baxterian' or four-point Calvinism. The subject is vigorously addressed in a series of appendices. Dr Clifford takes issue with the 'misleading discussion' of Professor Donald Macleod and others, maintaining that the views of Doddridge represented 'a return to Calvin's balanced biblicism'. In successive appendices the link with Doddridge becomes increasingly tenuous, and by the time we reach Appendix V, 'Lloyd-Jones on the Atonement', we have surely strayed rather too far.

The book is attractively produced, with well-chosen illustrations which evoke the flavour of the period. It is confidently recommended to all lovers of eighteenth-century church history.

Robert Thompson, Belfast

The Gospel to the Nations; Perspectives on Paul's Mission
Edited by Peter Bolt & Mark Thompson
IVP/Apollos, Leceister/Downers Grove, 2000; 448pp., £16.99; ISBN 0-8511-469-7

This book is a collection of 23 essays commissioned in honour of Peter T. O'Brien, Vice Principal of Moore Theological College, Sydney. Contributors to the volume include some of today's foremost evangelical scholars. The collective theme of the work is Paul's mission to preach the gospel to the Gentile world.

The book opens with an appreciation of its honorand then divides into four sections. The first section explores the Old Testament background to Paul's mission. Graeme Goldsworthy devotes his attention to biblical theology and the shape of Paul's mission, William Dumbrell looks at Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant in Galatians 3:1-14 and Andrew G. Shead discusses the new covenant and Pauline hermeneutics. The second and largest section deals with various aspects of Paul's mission as developed in the Pauline letters and in the book of Acts. Moisés Silva writes on Paul's mission according to Galatians, Ralph Martin on theology and mission in 2 Corinthians, David Wenham on Paul's knowledge of Jesus' life and teaching according to Luke, Howard Marshall on Luke's portrait of the Pauline mission, Scott Hafemann on the role of suffering in the mission of Paul, Richard Longenecker on priorities and *adiaphora* in Paul's dealings with opponents in his mission, David Robinson on Gentile circumspection in the divine economy, Don Carson on Paul's mission and prayer, David Peterson on maturity as the goal of mission, Colin Kruse on ministry in the wake of Paul's mission, and Andreas J. Köstenberger on women in the Pauline mission. The next section is concerned with the world into which Paul's message was proclaimed. Michael Hill considers the relationship between theology and ethics in the letter to the Romans; Paul Barnett writes on Jewish mission in the New Testament period and specifically in the time of Paul; Bruce Winter examines some of the dangers and difficulties which Paul's mission faced; Edwin Judge explores the impact of Paul's gospel on ancient society; Richard Gibson discusses Paul's evangelisation of the Stoics; Peter Bolt compares and contrasts Paul and Plutarch on the issue of divine anger. The final section deals broadly with the reception of Paul's message in history and in contemporary theology and contains an essay on the uniqueness of Christ, Chalcedon and mission by Robert C. Doyle, and a piece on the place of Paul in modern systematic theology.

As a whole, this volume is an important addition to scholarship on Paul's mission. Many facets of the topic are examined: Old Testament influences on Paul, the apostle's own understanding of his mission and his various reflections on it, the relation of Paul's mission to the ministry of Jesus, Paul's missionary practice, the social and cultural context of Paul's work, *etc.* Various perspectives are brought to bear on the subject, though surprisingly the perspective of missiology is not among them.

Of the many essays, this reviewer found those under the heading of the world of Paul's mission the most illuminating. Each makes a contribution in its own right. Bruce Winter's essay, for example,

challenges the popular view, sometimes linked to Galatians 4:4, that conditions in the world of Paul's time were ideal for the spread of the gospel. He highlights the immense logistical difficulties, travelling hazards, political dangers and cultural barriers that Paul's mission had to negotiate. Winter's essay cautions us against idealising a particular era of Christian mission, whether the Pauline era or more recent periods in history of mission. As he points out, there has never been a golden age of mission. The missionary task may have been different for previous generations and for Paul himself, but it was not easier.

This book will be of value both to those interested in the scholarly study of Paul and to those with an interest in mission.

Edward Adams, King's College London

The Second Disruption: The Free Church in Victorian Scotland and the Origins of the Free Presbyterian Church
James Lachlan MacLeod
Tuckwell Press, East Linton, 2000; 250pp., £20.00; ISBN 1 86232 097 7

In this study of the origins of the Free Presbyterian Church, Dr MacLeod carefully documents the steady accumulation of the combustible materials into which the notorious Free Church Declaratory Act of 1892 was thrown, with such calamitous results.

MacLeod's thesis is that in late Victorian Scotland there were four main currents flowing into the maelstrom which eventually engulfed the Free Church. To each of these currents, which he identifies as, The Changing World; Response to Biblical Criticism and Darwinian Science; Highland-Lowland Divide in the Free Church; The Declaratory Act of 1892, he devotes a detailed and wide-ranging chapter.

Of those currents MacLeod's conclusion is that, 'One alone could not produce schism; two or even three in harness were not able to split the Free Church; but when the four developments converged, the result was dramatic' (p. 235).

The first three chapters fill in the background and set the scene for the climax of the book, the passing of the Declaratory Act and its aftermath.

As the Westminster Confession of Faith and the relationship of the Free Church to that Confession are at the heart of the secession of 1893, MacLeod devotes considerable space to that document. He traces it from its origins in the political turmoil of the seventeenth century to its position of honour in the Free Church until the advancing tide of revision

began to lap around that church in the 1880s. As MacLeod comments, 'If the Free Presbyterians were the product of a battle over the Westminster Confession of Faith, then that document was itself the product of a time of bitter conflict' (p. 180).

The author's access to the John MacLeod Collection of letters enables him to give a unique perspective on the events of the months immediately preceding the crucial Free Church assembly of 1893, as seen through the eyes of some of those who subsequently became leaders of the new denomination. As MacLeod wryly remarks, 'As letters of men who have been portrayed as standing shoulder to shoulder, under the leadership of Donald Macfarlane, this correspondence makes interesting reading' (p. 227). That those men (most of whom were students in 1893) are seen to have had moments of doubt and fear should not make us think any the less of the undeniable moral courage required to walk away from a church, loyalty to which was 'one of life's highest priorities' (p. 236).

In many ways it is a sad story which unfolds in this book. The failure of the conservatives to maintain a unified practical response to the passing of the Declaratory Act meant that the evangelical cause in Scotland entered the twentieth century with a legacy of bitterness and disarray which did not bode well for the future.

The remarkable fact is that both of the conservative denominations (the Free Presbyterians and the Free Church) which emerged from the turmoil of these events replicated in their respective communions the tensions, suspicions and finally the divisions of the parent body from which they both claimed descent.

The book is very fully documented with a comprehensive bibliography, numerous footnotes and an index. Both the specialist and the general reader will, we feel sure, find this a fascinating volume.

John Scoales, Edinburgh

Why angels fall
Victoria Clark
MacMillan, London, 2000; 460pp., £18.99; ISBN 0 333 75185 X

This is far and away the most enjoyable and insightful book that I read last year. These pages are the penetrating reflections of a journalist and medieval historian as he travels through the Eastern Orthodox world. By means of verbatim records and her historical insights, Victoria Clark takes us on a journey through Orthodox Europe from Byzantium to Kosovo. On entering the Eastern Orthodox world from the West, you

discover a very different dimension of time and belief. Their hold on history moves in divine and repetitive circles where 'the past is never forgotten because it comes around again and the future is never new'. It was once said of the Eastern Orthodox that the city is full of workmen and slaves who are all theologians. If you ask a man to change money, he will tell you how the Son differs from the Father; if you ask the price of a loaf, he will argue the Son is less than the Father; if you want to know if the bath is ready, you are told that the Son was made out of nothing.

We usually look at the history of Europe through a Western lens and discount the impact of the schism with the East in 1054. In the East, there was no flowering of a Renaissance, no Reformation, and no age of reason, as the West knew them. The Orthodox Church remained organically bound to the Byzantine State until the fifteenth century when Constantinople fell to the Ottomans. The difficulty in having a debate between the two worlds is summed up by the one who said that the Byzantines felt 'differently about religion; it is difficult to debate about feelings'. The author describes the religious difference as the West tending towards reason and worldliness and the East tending too much to spirit and other-worldliness. In another place, she concludes that Western Christendom has lost its heart and Eastern Christendom its mind. Whereas the Reformation irreversibly altered the mindset of Western man, the Orthodox world had no medieval period (or arguably is still going through it).

There is so much that is gold in this book. The difficulties of aligning religion with national aspirations are well demonstrated, and we are introduced to the heavenly practice of hesychastic prayer. Victoria Clark's strength is as a historian rather than a theologian and she does not try to hide her nominal Roman Catholic outlook. Published at the beginning of 2000, she offers an analysis of the break-up of the Balkans along with the exacerbation of divisions within Eastern Orthodoxy in the communist era. Finally, an Orthodox critique of western consumerism and economic exploitation is highlighted as a totalitarian tyranny and device of the devil himself. The opposition to Greece signing up to the Schengen Agreement was less about human rights and more about the number 666 used in technology for making electronic passports. This is a book that is difficult to put down.

Robert Calvert, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method
John G. Stackhouse, Jr (ed.)
Baker Books, Grand Rapids, 2000; 215pp., £12.99; ISBN 0-8010-2246-0

In the midst of the theological infighting within North American Evangelicalism today, and within the British context where evangelical believers are often not interested enough in theology to fight, this book provides a breath of fresh air. It illustrates that evangelical theology as a discipline is alive and well, and that sometimes evangelicals holding quite diverse theological positions can join together in amiable, vigorous and yet productive discussion toward a common goal of helping the church with her mission in the twenty-first century.

This book grows out of the 1999 annual Theology Conference at Regent College, Vancouver. It is a collection of six essays and three broad responses by eight of today's most fertile evangelical theological minds. These theologians, each committed to Scripture, offer insightful evaluations on the history and current state of evangelical theology, and particularly on evangelical theological method. Ultimately each suggests possible directions for a fruitful re-forming of evangelical theology for mission in an increasingly postmodern context.

Section one sets the stage. In the first essay Alister McGrath looks at the 'state of the art' of evangelical theological method and highlights where the debates do and will lie. He argues, in contrast to David Wells while at the same time sympathetic with his concerns, that evangelicals have not embraced pragmatism and lost interest in theology. In McGrath's view recent evangelical theology has focused on integrating theology and the spiritual disciplines. This, he suggests, is something that we must preserve as we move into the future. In the second essay John Stackhouse Jr reminds us that whatever else it becomes, evangelical theology must continue to be evangelical. This means that we must continue to focus on Jesus Christ and salvation. We must continue to: be Christocentric, be 'Bible people', emphasise conversion and spiritual transformation, remain focused on mission, and be a transdenominational movement.

Part two offers programmatic proposals for reforming evangelical theology by Kevin Vanhoozer and Stanley Grenz. Although the proposals are rather different, both show that evangelical theology has a bright future. Vanhoozer offers suggestions toward a kind of narrative theology (available to every believer) building upon his own 'speech-act' theory of hermeneutics. Grenz suggests why and how evangelical theology should

free itself from the modern constraints of foundationalism so that theology may again become the property of the believing community.

In part three McGrath and Stephen Williams challenge evangelicals as they continually reform their theology to engage more purposefully and learn from the 'Tradition' and other Christian traditions not our own. This is not a call to abandon our distinctives, rather it is a call to mature and learn from others not identical to ourselves. Part four offers refreshing responses from J. I. Packer, Trevor Hart and Roger E. Olson. Each in its own distinct way calls evangelical theology to have the courage of its convictions as expressed in these essays. As Olson ends the book, 'The essays in this collection help make evangelical theological methodology interesting and vibrant without worshiping at the feet of the "goddess of novelty"' (p. 207).

Darrell Cosden, International Christian College, Glasgow

The God of Miracles: An exegetical examination of God's action in the world
C. John Collins
Apollos, Leicester, 2001; 219pp., £11.99; ISBN 0 85111 477 6

Preachers beware! Don't let the sub-title deceive you into thinking that this is a book for preparing sermons. It is, rather, a theological/philosophical treatise on God's action in the world. The aim of John Collins is to examine the Bible to see if there is, inherent in the text, support for a particular way of understanding the nature of God's action in the world – 'special divine action' (SDA) as he calls it (p. 17).

The book is divided into four parts. Part one sets the stage for us summarising various models of understanding SDA from Atheism, through Deism, Traditional (Christian) Theism and on to what he terms 'Limited Theism' – a kenotic view of the relationship between God and the world, or, another example, process thought. Right at the start Collins excludes the possibility of the Bible supporting other than a model that falls within Traditional (Christian) Theism, and he goes on to explore three possibilities within that overall framework: supernaturalism, in which God intervenes in the course of 'nature'; providentialism, in which 'nature' runs its course but the coincidence of time and place *etc.* is the way God acts in the world; occasionalism, in which 'nature' does not really exist for God is always at work sustaining the creation and SDA is that in some particular instance God decides to do things differently.

Part two presents us with the exegetical material and this is the longest section of the book with over one third of its pages. In successive chapters he considers 'texts that seem to *assert*, and not simply to imply, that there are such things as natural properties and causal powers involved in events' (p. 73, italics original) and passages in which he looks for 'an affirmation of natural properties and an explicit identification of special divine action over and above those properties to produce the results'. In doing so he eliminates, first, occasionalism, since 'nature' really exists and, second, providentialism, because God really intervenes in nature. He then examines passages to which advocates of occasionalism and providentialism appeal for support and shows how they are patient of other interpretations, including supernaturalism.

We have a theological evaluation in Part three in which, in short compass, Collins dismisses occasionalism as presented by Berkouwer and others going on to argue for supernaturalism over providentialism.

In the final part he asks if the supernaturalist model can stand up to the arguments of rationalists, empiricists and to postmodern objections. In his opinion it can, and he goes on to argue that there is a strong apologetic available to Christians through the intelligent design of the universe and the scientific exploration of the 'laws of nature' that the supernaturalist model allows.

Who would most benefit from this book? I've already indicated that I don't think it's of great help to preachers pondering on how to declare the gospel from the miracle stories in the Bible. (Indeed, Collins disavows the use of the term 'miracle', which makes it surprising that he uses it in the title of the book.) It would, perhaps, be of greatest help to those especially interested in the relationship between theology/philosophy and nature and to those whose evangelistic opportunities bring them into contact with people of a scientific training or interest. When we ask what motivated Collins to write this book, the final paragraph gives us the answer. 'Promotion of these ideas should encourage glad, critical and constructive participation by Christians in the sciences   in the culture in which the sciences flourish' (p. 197).

I have no doubt that that statement is true and it is astonishing how many accomplished scientists have a strong Christian commitment. While the Church has not always lived up to her calling in this regard, our faith encourages us to 'think God's thoughts after him'. And Collins could well be right that supernaturalism is the best model for understanding SDA in the world. However, at the end I was left with some feelings of dissatisfaction at the outcome and some discomfort with his method.

First, I am rather uncomfortable with asking an ancient text questions it was never designed to answer. Collins has a finely tuned set of models to investigate. Did the biblical writers appreciate the nuances of these models, and if they did not, how valid is the exercise? Should we expect all the biblical writers to understand SDA in the same way?

Second, one has the feeling that, although this is supposed to be an exegetical examination looking for evidence to support one of the three candidates, Collins knew the conclusion he wanted to arrive at before he started because his ultimate aim is to encourage Christians to work in the realm of the sciences. That scientific exercise may appear more justifiable if there is such a thing as 'nature' and Christian apologetic benefits if not every event in history is explicable by recourse to 'nature'. It is handy for him, then, that the Bible itself supports supernaturalism.

This was an interesting and challenging book to read and, in spite of the criticisms above, it could well be of help to those in dialogue with scientists in search of a framework for understanding the workings of nature, for that might point them in the direction of the Creator God.

Jared Hay, Balerno Parish Church

The Task of Theology Today: Doctrines and Dogmas
Victor Pfitzner and Hilary Regan (eds)
T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1998; 224pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 567 08674 7

This is the first symposium produced by members of the Australian Theological Forum. This Forum, begun in 1994, is 'an independent theological body that is ecumenical in outlook and seeks to facilitate the engagement of Christian theology with other disciplines in addressing areas of social and cultural concern. It seeks to bring together theologians, other members of the church, scientists and other professionals – whether Christian or not – to explore the connection between faith and life' (p. ix.).

The founders of the Forum clearly felt that, for such a task to be fruitful, contributors should not be sailing in a completely uncharted sea but rather should operate with a broadly consistent view of the Christian faith, for the Forum affirms the Nicene Creed as its 'indispensable presupposition for the theological reflection and interdisciplinary discussion that it seeks to promote'. Although from different backgrounds, the contributors to the present volume, all of whom are systematic and/or philosophical theologians, all appear at least to wish to stand within the historic Christian faith. Of the eight contributors, four

are working in Australia, two in Britain, and one each in the USA and New Zealand.

Colin Gunton writes on 'Dogma, the Church and the Task of Theology' and, with his characteristic clarity, seeks to show the different senses in which the word 'dogma' is used and to set limits to the helpful use of the term. He sees the value of dogmas and confessions as liberating the theologian by providing a properly delimited subject matter, which is 'rich but not infinite' (p. 21).

Carl Braaten deals with 'The Role of Dogma in Church and Theology'. He analyses the current demise of systematic theology and, writing from an American context, notes that we now have 'a flood of experience-based academic theologies' (p. 23). Some decades ago, we tended to think of Paul Tillich as representing almost the extreme left in the contemporary theological world, but Braaten writes of Tillich almost as if he can now be viewed as much nearer the centre, so far has theology now drifted from its historic moorings. Braaten's chapter is a vigorous and well-argued call for a return to a dogmatic Christianity.

Stylianos Harkianakis writes on Dogma and Authority in the Church. I found this interesting, but somewhat disappointing, as, writing as an Orthodox priest, he engages only with other Orthodox writers, which seems to be against the intention of the Forum.

Sue Patterson is next, on 'Creation and Postmodernity'. How does the Christian doctrine of creation fare, resting as it does on the joint premises of divine transcendence and creaturely contingence, when it is viewed through post-modern spectacles? She engages with contemporary thought on cosmology and biology and takes the covenant and christological teaching of the Bible as pointing the way to an answer.

In a most interesting chapter, Stephen Pickard relates the thought of John Locke to the fate of Systematic Theology. Locke, as both a philosophical empiricist and a devout Christian, argued for a straightforward focus on biblical exegesis rather than on systematic theology, and in the process upset the systematicians of his day. Locke's thinking is in tune with the present-day movement away from Systematics to exegesis. Pickard writes of Locke sympathetically, but believes it important for theologians, albeit now more humbly, to seek general truths from patient exegesis. He does not use the term, but he is really arguing for the development of good Biblical Theology.

Denis Minns deals with 'Traditional Doctrine and the Antique World-View', taking the Virgin Birth and Original Sin as case studies. He seeks to relate them to contemporary scientific thinking, but he does so with a

reductionism not found in other chapters, and in the process the doctrines he deals with lose much of their distinctive historic content.

Winifred Wing Han Lamb's chapter is interesting because of the way it seeks illumination from educational philosophy as to the way convinced Christians may understand other faiths in God's World. She finds this particularly in R. K. Elliott's philosophy, which places emphasis on desire and imagination in the process of learning. She says, 'faith provides psychological resources to sustain the desire to understand and to live with difference' (p. 187).

The final chapter, by Murray Rae, looks at the status of doctrine through the eyes of Kierkegaard. He calls for recognition that the Christian faith cannot be reduced to the work of the intellect, for the theological task is a matter of existential urgency. So at the close of a book which has ranged far and wide, each reader is challenged to Christian commitment.

The Introduction tells us that the Forum hopes this volume will be the first in a series focusing on the nature of the theological task in the contemporary world. Like most symposia, the volume is a little uneven, and your reviewer found some of the chapters more significant and constructive than others. Most of them are well written, although one that I forbear to identify (if you read the book, you will certainly discover which I mean!), is, in my judgement, unnecessarily abstruse. The general quality is high and without doubt such a series should find a welcome among those who are seriously interested in theology.

Geoffrey Grogan, Glasgow

The ethics of human cloning
Neil Messer
Grove Books Ltd, Cambridge, 2001; 24pp., £2.50; ISBN 1 85174 470 3

The author begins with a brief history of cloning and discusses some of the present and potential uses of animal cloning in the treatment of human disease. A distinction is made between 'reproductive cloning' – generating a human child by cloning – and 'therapeutic cloning' – in which embryos are used as a source of pluripotent stem cells. The booklet only deals with the former use of cloning and it would have been of interest to have some discussion of the latter. He discusses the issue of risk *i.e.* for whose benefit and at whose cost is cloning being done. The risk to the child produced by cloning cannot be measured until it is born. He also argues that since we are introducing the element of 'making' into

procreation we may see the child as a commodity rather than an individual for whom we have respect. There might be a gradual change in attitudes so that it became normal to control the genotype of one's children and it might be considered irresponsible not to do so.

As a Christian the author states that 'attempts to create a person would be tantamount to taking upon ourselves tasks which belong to God alone'. He accepts that such an issue is unlikely to convince somebody who is not a Christian. However the author wisely challenges the church to be a community in which the truth of what it says can be clearly seen. Only then may its theological claims be taken seriously.

The ethics of transplantation
Keith M. Rigg
Grove Books Ltd, Cambridge, 2001; 24pp., £2.50; ISBN 1 85174 479 7

In the introductory chapter a factual overview is given and key ethical issues are considered. Subsequent chapters look at the issues from the donor perspective, the recipient perspective and further issues which developments in medicine are creating. The author states four ethical principles for developing a framework for discussion – autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice.

From the donor perspective the author discusses issues of defining when death has occurred. Consent and possible changes   the law, which might lead to the assumption that somebody is willing to be a donor unless they have specifically opted out, are also mentioned. Living donors are submitting themselves to a major operation they do not need. What is an acceptable risk and what if the donor is a child or somebody with mental incapacity? Another issue discussed is commercialism of the donation process.

From the recipient's point of view the author discusses the central issues of selection and allocation criteria. He argues that equality of access to organs is a fundamental ethical principle but consideration must be made of patient compliance with treatment and success with previous transplants.

Finally the author discusses further developments such as xenotransplantation. In all the discussion the overarching ethical principles are love for God and others and the fact that the body belongs to God and fully informed decisions should be made in this light.

Both these books are clearly written and will give a useful framework for those concerned about these issues. They are particularly helpful in

their application of biblical principles to these topics. They should guide Christians as they see further developments in both fields in the future.

Susan Holloway, Clinical Genetics Unit, Western General Hospital,
Edinburgh

Human Cloning. Religious Responses
Edited by Ronald Cole-Turner
Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, 1997; 151pp.; ISBN 0 664 25771 2

The achievement and phenomenon of 'Dolly' was announced to an awe-struck world in February 1997 and this collection of 12 responses from across the (Christian) religious spectrum (nine from the USA, three from the UK) was published the same year. Such a prompt response was itself an achievement. Necessary as it was, laying down an early baseline reaction to a scientific breakthrough as provocative as the theory of evolution or splitting the atom, it will make interesting comparative reading with more reflective responses that emerge in future years, benefiting as they will from the wisdom of hindsight. My personal view is that future Christian responses to the question of human cloning might be less diverse than the range presented here, for the editor has, I suspect rather skilfully, assembled opinions which are far from being clones of each other.

In this compilation half the contributors are somewhat forcefully against human cloning, three are basically against but leave the door of speculation ajar just a little, whilst three basically argue for human cloning, though from different perspectives. Two chapters in the 'for' category use, in my opinion, rather spurious and blinkered arguments, apparently failing to consider the issues in breadth. These include the writer whose concern for justice is strongly focussed in such a way that human cloning presents the perfect opportunity for gay and lesbian couples to aspire to be parents on an equal basis to heterosexual partners. The writer appears not to acknowledge any justice issues that may pertain to the cloned individual. It should not be assumed, however, that arguments presented in the 'against' category are always coherent. One writer asserts that, 'Most of the new reproductive technologies separate love, the conjugal act, parenting and the family...' – surely a far too sweeping statement and one for which no evidence is provided. My own anecdotal experience as a physician working in a relevant discipline places me at odds with such a strongly worded assertion.

The contributions impressing me most, and there are several, were those which presented a combination of rational argument, a sense of historical and/or ethical perspective, and the dimension of Divine transcendence which confidently leaves God out of the nitty-gritty of molecules and methods. If we acknowledge God as sovereign Creator it follows that his divine purpose is just as much a driving force in the assembly of water, H_2O, as in the assembly of DNA. It therefore seems theologically mistaken, to me, to elevate the status of DNA to superior sacred value. Hence, the vexed issue on which many argue against human cloning, namely the complex 'identity' of the cloned individual, should not centre solely on the genetics but, rather, genuine spiritual issues. Chapters by David Byers and Brent Waters achieve this rather well, concentrating their arguments on 'love' and the 'family' respectively. Sir John Polkinghorne, possibly the only contributor who can claim eminence as a scientist as well as a theologian/ethicist, provides a characteristically balanced and unemotional overview. Human cloning frequently evokes a 'Yuk' factor, such that many – probably most – find the whole concept abhorrent. However, thought-provoking contributions by Ted Peters and Ronald Cole-Turner himself point out the difficulty of constructing *any* theological argument *against* human cloning.

The breadth of views presented in this book make it stimulating reading, both for those wanting to explore the consequences of 'Dolly' and those who think the arguments are clear-cut one way or the other. It comes with several appendices that are official (early) position statements of several Christian denominations.

Peter D. Turnpenny (Clinical Geneticist), Exeter

Genetic Engineering for a New Earth
Celia E. Deane-Drummond
Grove Books Ltd, Cambridge, 1999; 24pp., £2.25; ISBN 185174 408 8

This concise and very readable booklet will be helpful to those who need to be appraised of the ethical and theological arguments both for and against genetic engineering of non-human species – covering agriculture, transgenic animals, and moving on to the issue of cloning (Dolly, *etc.*), including briefly, despite what is stated in the introduction, humankind. Its length precludes a detailed analysis of any individual point or theme but the main headings are there and the writer is clearly familiar with the science as well as ethics and theology, which is so essential in bringing balance to a subject which is easily dominated by polarised, uninformed

dogma. Those looking for a shortcut to relevant Scripture passages for Bible study or sermon preparation will be disappointed – there are only two direct references to Bible verses, both Old Testament, but many Judeo-Christian doctrines are woven in, including the Fall, God's covenant relationship with creation, suffering and evil, stewardship and love. These culminate with the writer's appeal to readers to seek solutions to the controversial issues through searching for wisdom. Whilst the final chapter, 'In Search of Wisdom', draws on a variety of ideas from science, church tradition, and even the philosophy of Aristotle, lacking is more direct reference to the theme of redemption, which is surely key to Christian orientation, and we are not overtly encouraged to seek this wisdom from a scrutiny of Bible Scripture. The theological emphasis appears to be that of continuing revelation.

This is, nevertheless, worth reading because of the balance of arguments presented and the surprising amount of information and detail packed into a few pages. Included is a brief section addressing some of the public responses to genetic engineering, which points out that much of the objections centre around 'the natural order' of the world, the concept of which 'relates to the idea that nature as untouched by human interference is good'. From this many sense that tampering with nature by introducing irreversible genetic change is threatening if not intrinsically wrong. The 'natural' versus the 'unnatural' is a recurring theme in the booklet and it is rightly pointed out that genetic engineering has brought more 'natural' medicines such as human insulin and human growth hormone, to the enormous benefit of many. Whilst the 'unnatural' argument is very much part of the popular psyche, it is in fact weak in many aspects (in relatively recent history slavery was part of the natural order of the world – so our concept of the 'natural' can be enlightened), but the application of wisdom would allow for responsible use of transgenic techniques. The writer points out, rightly in my view, that 'the belief that all life is entirely defined by genetics needs to be challenged', and she cites another writer (Ted Peters) who points out that those who view the world as sacred are in danger of encouraging (probably unwittingly) a doctrine of genetic determinism – 'if genetic engineering can be used for good, then it becomes a sin *not* to use it'.

Today's revolution in genetic knowledge and its powerful technologies are a challenge to some comfort zones of conservative and evangelical Christianity. It is incumbent on us to explore the issues with open minds and Celia Deane-Drummond's booklet is a good place to start.

Peter D. Turnpenny (Clinical Geneticist), Exeter

Theology and Piety in the Reformed Federal Thought of William Perkins and John Preston
Young Jae Timothy Song
Edwin Mellen, Lampeter, 1998; 248pp. (hard); ISBN 0-7734-2239-0

This volume is a doctoral dissertation presented to Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. It is a work of considerable scholarship and demonstrates a deep and thorough acquaintance with both the primary and secondary literature in the area of seventeenth-century covenant theology. It will be of particular value to other scholars in the field and of much less use to the general reader.

Those engaged in the study of early Reformed theology are divided concerning the proper interpretation of the Calvinist tradition. There are those who see a radical discontinuity between Calvin and the Reformed Confessions of the seventeenth century and others who see continuity and development. Within the study of covenant theology there are also significantly different alternatives offered. In particular, there is the supposed divide between those who have developed covenant theology from a 'historical' perspective, like Cocceius, and those who have developed it from a 'loci' or 'dogmatic' perspective, like many of the English Puritans. Those who favour the historical perspective have often accused the other side of rationalism, while those who favour the loci approach have often accused their opponents of historicism.

As Dr Song explains, this division has often caused unnecessary polarisation and led to a failure to understand the full breadth and scope of covenant theology. Although he believes that the distinction between the two schools is helpful as a methodological distinction, he affirms strongly that only when the two approaches are taken together and seen as complementary will a full appreciation of covenant theology be obtained.

In developing this thesis, Dr Song goes on to argue that in Puritan federal thought, the relationship between 'system' and 'piety' was much more significant than has formerly been realised. In order to demonstrate this, he uses William Perkins and John Preston as case studies. In the course of this study he clears up many misunderstandings which have arisen from less rigorous earlier scholarship, for example, the view that Preston did not hold to the 'double decree'.

He concludes that a proper understanding of the covenant, such as is found in Perkins and Preston, provides the church with a sound dogmatic basis for preaching the gospel and warns against the danger of separating system from piety.

This is a most stimulating book, which repays study, but is somewhat demanding and requires some knowledge of the literature already published in this area.

                    A.T.B. McGowan, Highland Theological College, Dingwall

Transforming the World?
David W. Smith
Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1998, 125pp.; ISBN 0 8536 819 0.

David Smith has written a short history of the evangelical movement since the Great Awakening, with particular reference to what (if any) social impact the movement was making as it went through a number of changes over the years. The original impulse of the Evangelicalism was a 'world transformative Christianity' (p. ix). 'While the individual experience of conversion and the blessing of personal fellowship with God resulting from it were central themes in the Evangelical message, these were *not* regarded as providing an escape from social responsibility' (italics Smith's). David Smith plots the changes over time – some due to the impact of forces outside of Evangelicalism: evolutionary theory, biblical criticism, absorption by the social order's power brokers. Other changes were more due to changes within the Evangelical movement: approaches to the ecumenical movement, differing millenarian views. It is clear from the outset that David Smith's sympathies are for the world transformative approach, which he claims, is being faithful to true Evangelical roots and principles.

I worried that coming to this book aware of the work of *e.g.* Bebbington, Marsden, Moberg, Wallis and others, I would find this book superfluous. Not so. This is a well-told story. A short book for the amount of ground covered, Smith moves the story along rapidly, yet with sure touch. Interest is heightened by his uncovering some different characters in the plot: yes, Simeon, Spurgeon, Booth *etc.* feature, but there is also analysis of the Chartists, Edward Miall, Rene Padilla and Samuel Escobar, Brian Griffiths.

The concluding chapter identifies important voices to be heard in the present day Evangelical movement, and also is a call for an engaged and active faith in order to grab the great opportunities that there are today. He mentions six 'voices' – Mainline Evangelicalism, Anglican Evangelicalism, Reformed Evangelicals, Charismatics, Anabaptists, and Fundamentalists. The task of mission today is one of great opportunity due to the break up of Christendom: 'secularisation brings positive

benefits to all churches by compelling them to make a fundamental revaluation of their purpose and calling in the world, so providing an opportunity, or a *kairos* for the rediscovery of their true nature' (p. 120). But the Church needs to let go of power and have her life more explicitly shaped by Christ. This is the primary missionary challenge. The second is to create a credible Christian apologetic. Smith urges us to take this road while, in conclusion, voicing his fear that Evangelicalism might (once more) retreat into a privatised religion and a justification of the status quo, and so fail not only itself but also the Lord.

David Smith is to be congratulated on giving us a racy, passionate, insightful call for a Christianity that changes lives and life.

Gordon R. Palmer, Edinburgh

God's Control over the Universe; Providence, Judgement and Modern Science

P. G. Nelson
Whittles Publishing, Caithness, 2000; 88pp.; £3; ISBN 1-870325-88-5

The principal concern of the revised and expanded edition of this book is the tension between a scientific understanding of the way the world works, in some sense as the outcome of impersonal scientific 'laws', and the biblical account of God's activity. The author's background (which is shared by your reviewer) is not that of a theologian with an interest in science, but a professional scientist (in his case a lecturer in chemistry) who is a Christian believer, committed to the authority of Scripture.

After a brief introduction, the second and third chapters describe first a mechanical and deterministic view of the universe, and whether God could act in such a universe with sovereignty and freedom, and secondly the kind of universe described by quantum mechanics, with inherent indeterminism and unpredictability, and how God could intervene in this kind of world; in both cases the author argues that God's freedom to act is not seriously limited by our scientific models. He then proceeds to consider how our understanding of human freedom of choice is affected by scientific views of physical processes; and then how human agency with real freedom of choice interacts with or limits God's sovereignty and action. There is a briefer consideration of the role of the devil and evil spirits. Two further chapters (added since the first addition) treat the subjects (more familiar to theologians) of Arminian and Calvinist understandings of divine sovereignty and human freedom and responsibility, and of the question of prayer; the aim is to illuminate

these questions from the point of view of the earlier discussion of scientific matters.

The book is aimed primarily at the Christian reader who is neither a professional scientist nor a professional theologian, and is written in as accessible and nontechnical a way as possible; a substantial number of references allow for further study, as well as indicating the research and study which has gone into writing the book. It is rather ambitious to attempt to cover the variety and difficulty of subjects treated, ranging from quantum indeterminacy to the possible relevance of chaos theory to the working of the brain. My judgement is that those with prior knowledge of some of the scientific subjects discussed would find the explanations unhelpfully simplified, while those without this knowledge would find them incomprehensible! I also predict that theologically trained readers will have their own, different objections! For many reasons the questions dealt with are important and difficult. But I suspect that the greatest benefit that most of the readers of this journal would gain from reading this very reasonably priced publication would be to be stimulated to read some of the very useful works which are referenced here.

Paul Wraight, Aberdeen

The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search For The Jew of Tarsus
Ben Witherington III
IVP, Downer's Grove & Leicester, 1998; 347pp., £14.99; ISNB 0 85111 772 4

The aim of this engaging study is to examine both primary sources and recent scholarship in order to set us on the road to 'a new, fresh and hopefully more historically accurate picture of Paul'. As befits this aim, *The Paul Quest* has an original approach. It is neither a chronologically ordered life of Paul, nor a study of his thought organised around theological categories or examinations of his letters. Instead, there are discussions of the major roles filled by Paul (prophet and apostle, rhetor and writer) and aspects of how he functioned in these roles (realist and radical, anthropologist and advocate, storyteller and exegete, theologian and ethicist). This is prefaced by a consideration of the main aspects of Paul's identity (Jew, Christian and Roman Citizen) and, crucially, an examination of how we should set about reconstructing an ancient personality. Witherington accuses older scholarship of anachronism, assessing Paul as if he belonged to the modern West. His novel approach

is an attempt to avoid the assumption that 'Paul as a human being was basically just like me'.

In some respects, this approach works admirably. The Paul who emerges is neither a genius towering above his first-century world, nor an inconsistent pragmatist whose advice to churches was entirely determined by circumstances. In an important corrective to evangelical readings that major on how his gospel addresses the individual, Paul is portrayed as a builder of communities patterned on the example of Christ. The work of the Spirit, and what Paul means when he speaks of being 'in Christ', are both discussed primarily in relation to Christian community. Paul does not mean his rhetoric of community to be taken metaphorically. There are 'real spiritual fellowships, connections, unions, pollution'. Given this, it is not surprising that social ethics loom large. Here it is helpfully emphasised that Paul does not fit our contemporary categories. Precisely because Paul's focus is on building Christian communities, he can appear a radical and a reactionary by turns. He believes in hierarchy within the church, but not the patriarchal one of Graeco-Roman society. He offers slaves and women equality within the church, denied them elsewhere, but does not explicitly condemn the institutions that disadvantage them.

Witherington thus provides the thoughtful reader with plenty to consider about our priorities for the Christian life. He does it lucidly, engaging with serious scholarship but always remaining accessible to those who are not Pauline specialists. Technical issues are clearly explained, as, for example, when he describes how decisions as to which rhetorical forms are used by Paul affect interpretation. Yet, despite its considerable virtues, there are also respects in which this book is problematic. Given that it aims to avoid anachronism, fashionable intellectual resources are used too uncritically. Paul's personality is reconstructed using Mediterranean anthropology. This helps to make the point that Paul was not a modern individualist but Witherington's Paul often simply fails to fit its prescription of what an ancient personality should be like, so threatening the coherence of the portrait presented. Similar, if less severe, problems apply to the use of narrative theology to provide underlying coherence for Paul's thought.

Finally, Paul the theologian is rather neglected. It is admittedly more usual to neglect the side of Paul highlighted by this book, but this is still a problem. We are told that the story of Christ's death and resurrection stand at the centre of Paul's thought, but little is said about how Paul understands the significance of the cross. Justification receives scarcely a page. It is held to concern how one gets into the body of Christ, and is therefore apparently of less interest than growing in Christ

as community. Yet even if its significance were restricted to conversion, which one doubts, justification remains important. Paul had to find converts in order for Christian communities to exist at all, a concern which we, in an ever more secular society, can ill afford to ignore. In the quest for Paul, Witherington's attractive and credible portrayal of a community builder is only part, albeit a crucial one, of what we can discover.

Stephen Chester, International Christian College, Glasgow

Inventing the 'Great Awakening'
Frank Lambert
Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1999; 300pp., £12.50; ISBN 0 691 08691 5

Frank Lambert of Purdue University has given us a scholarly contribution to the debate on the 'Great Awakening'. The title may seem to suggest that there was no such thing as a 'Great Awakening' in the American colonies in the 1730s and 1740s, but that it was a fabrication of 'spin'. The truth proves to be much more complicated, and a great deal depends on the meaning of the word 'invention'.

The phrase 'the Great Awakening' was coined by nineteenth-century revivalists (according to Joseph Conforti). Jon Butler rejected the idea that there was one cohesive revival which 'swept' through the American colonies: there were only local 'awakenings'. Lambert's thesis is that it was the colonial revivalists themselves who constructed the idea of a coherent inter-colonial revival (though not the term, 'the Great Awakening'). In the eighteenth century 'invention' had two meanings: 'the discovery of a thing hidden', and 'the fabrication or designing of something new', and both meanings apply to the promoters of the revival.

The story begins with a revival in Jonathan Edwards' church in Northampton, Massachusetts, from 1733 to 1735, publicised by Benjamin Colman of Boston and then by Isaac Watts and John Guyse in London. Edwards' account, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprizing Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton, etc.*, was edited and introduced and given its title by Watts and Guyse. But the editors heightened the element of 'surprize', not being aware that there had been six similar previous awakenings in Northampton. The narrative was used to promote and shape revivals both in England and elsewhere in the colonies, and the 'hype' greatly increased with George Whitefield's

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arrival in America. Careful publicity through the newspapers ensured that large crowds greeted him. But even so, the awakening did not affect all the colonies (nor all of England and Scotland), but only those parts where there were Scottish Presbyterian, English Puritan or German Pietist settlers and church traditions. The awakening split even those in the Puritan tradition, the opposition to 'the great ado' being led by Charles Chauncy, minister in Boston.

Frank Lambert has given us a careful and useful study, and Scottish readers will be particularly interested in the links to the revivals at Cambuslang and Kilsyth. But there are two fundamental problems with his thesis. First, there is an underlying assumption that it is false to take measures to promote an 'awakening' and then to proclaim it as 'a work of God'. This is a theological, not an historical judgement, and Lambert perhaps needs to reflect on 'the paradox of grace'. Secondly, although the painstaking research covers the revivals broadly associated with Whitefield and the Calvinistic evangelicals in the Puritan and Presbyterian traditions (documenting their geographical spread), it fails to take into account the wider evangelical revival led by the Wesleys and the evangelicals within the Church of England. When the long term statistical effect of this is taken into account, it may be seen that Edwards and Whitefield (and the Wesleys!) lit a fire which did not turn to ashes, but which burned steadily, leading to evangelical advance in Britain and America throughout the next two centuries and, through overseas missions, to the transformation of world Christianity. Seen in this longer perspective in was surely a turning point, and so a 'great' awakening indeed.

T. A. Noble, Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City

The Care of Creation
Edited by R. J. Berry
Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 2000, 194pp., £9.99; ISBN 085111 657 4

In the main dining area in the new Eden project in Cornwall, which houses a variety of ecosystems inside large plastic domes, there is a quotation from R. Buckminster Fuller, high up on the wall: 'Spaceship earth came with everything provided except the Operating Manual.' Evangelical Christianity has traditionally been quick to point out the perceived error of such this statement: 'We have an operating manual, it's called the Bible.' Taking seriously what the Bible teaches with regard to creation, now that is another story.

The Care of Creation is an attempt to inform and challenge us all in this task. It takes as its starting point the Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation of 1994, which has been signed by several hundred church leaders throughout the world. This provides a fascinating commentary on the text of the declaration by 20 leading theologians and environmental practitioners from around the world.

As to be expected from such a collection the contributors are passionate about their particular perspectives and in the main write well and succinctly. Each chapter begins with a paragraph of biographical notes, which helps set the scene of the following essay. Though the authors have had no contact with each other, and there is little overlapping of areas commented upon, the book holds together well.

The Care of Creation reflects the good and thoroughly biblical understanding that God intends our care of the creation to reflect our love for the creator. Professor Lynn White's influential lecture given at the American Academy of Science in 1966 is included straight after the declaration and gives a backdrop against which the statement is presented.

While Professor White is correct in his analysis of some strains of Christianity, which have 'de-sacralized' nature and allowed it to be exploited without restraint, much else of what he writes is less applicable to the present world. The observations regarding connections between right wing American Christianity and its opposition to conservation are relevant to recent decisions in the USA regarding carbon dioxide emissions and other environmental issues. As Calvin der Witt writing on the motivation for creation care rightly suggests, 'many will first have to become aware of creation and its God declared goodness. From this awareness, we can move to appreciation, and from appreciation we can move to stewardship'.

Illustrating that God's creation cannot be regarded as a mere side show, Stephen Rand puts it this way: 'imagine Michelangelo completing the Sistine chapel ceiling and sharing all his learning, experience and skill with his children, then offering them the use of his paints for their own artistic expression- and finding that they use them to scrawl ugly graffiti across his masterpiece'.

There are inevitable limitations due to the vastness of the subject yet t as one contributor points out the declaration is strangely silent on the issue of bio technology which is intimately related to care of creation. It is observed that 'this is a battlefield on which we are already losing the struggle for the care of creation'.

The stress on Creation theology by Matthew Fox and others has had the effect of driving a wedge between the creator and the creation. *The*

Care of Creation suggests that it is not creation theology that we require, but a theology of creation. This will be true to the Word of God and to a profound out-working of our role as stewards of his creation, holding together our genuine concern and love for both creator and his creation. In the words of Timothy Dudley-Smith's hymn,

> The God who set the stars in space
> and gave the planets birth
> created for our dwelling place
> a green and fruitful earth.

I believe this book could prove to be a most useful starting point from which to initiate a dialogue between church and society on the future care of creation. I heartily commend it.

Philip Noble, St Ninian's Episcopal Church, Prestwick

God Spoke to Them: An Overview
Peter Williams
Gwasg Brynterion Press, Wales, revised edition 1998, 223pp.; ISBN 1 85049 139 9

Peter Williams is a recently retired pastor having ministered in a large Baptist Church in Bournemouth. His only previous book 'Encounters with God' focussed on the practical spiritual lessons to be learned from some of the lesser-known characters of the New Testament. As a follow-up, in this book, he turns to 'character studies of Old Testament people' based on a series of sermons preached during 1996. In his preface, the author says, 'I have tried once again to present these 'lives' as faithfully as possible, including their triumphs and failings and drawing out the lessons and principles applicable to life in today's world.' The characters used in 26 different chapters cover a range of people from the well-known Noah and Moses to the lesser-known Nabal and Abigail, and Elihu.

Undoubtedly, Williams, in his presentation of each character study, is eminently faithful to the biblical text and he makes a valid, and often successful, attempt at the application of their principles to the life of the ordinary Christian in today's world. He writes clearly and in terms of the basic exegesis and application of the biblical material about each character, in many ways, helpfully. The book is not difficult to read.

However, neither does it make compulsive reading. For this reviewer it is a book that lacks sparkle and, at times, creative imagination. There so often seems to be an almost anaesthetising predictability about where

each chapter is heading and, sadly, there are few creative, and therefore challenging, surprises when we get there.

It is difficult to discern if there is any consistent principle behind the choice of these particular characters as opposed to others in the Old Testament. The flow of the book does move us through the sweep of the biblical material from Genesis to Daniel with a somewhat surprising tag-on of Elihu in the last chapter which, if the general structure of the book had been followed, would fit more logically as chapter 21.

While there are some useful insights into the 'wide variety of people God used and even blessed in pursuing His eternal purposes' that could be helpful for the busy preacher there seems, to this reviewer, to be little that is either new, compelling or, indeed, creatively applicable for the twenty-first century to make this book a must for one's study bookshelf.

Norman Maciver, Newhills Parish Church

Two Millennia of Church and Community in Orkney
Frank D. Bardgett
The Pentland Press Limited, Edinburgh, 2000; 148pp., £7.95; ISBN 1 85821 759 8

Although the publisher suggests that this is a book for the general reader, it is more likely to appeal to those with an interest in, and knowledge of, Orkney. Knowledge of Orkney's geography is essential to understanding references made to locations. Notwithstanding, Dr Bardgett has made good use of the opportunities he had as the Community Minister in Orkney, combined with his love for church history.

Covering two thousand years in some 140 pages suggests that either nothing much happened during that period, that there is a scarcity of information, or a selective story is being told. All three have an effect on why the story is so short. The Orkney church is not renowned for 'setting the heather alight' so it is not surprising that nothing much of great moment occurred in two thousand years of the church, yet during that period there have been some significant events, some of which have only a passing reference, if at all. The first thousand years are covered with a lot of speculative 'ifs and may be' about circumstances – solid facts being lost in the mists of antiquity. This makes the initial part more tedious to read, but fortunately a thousand years is as a day (about 40 pages) and Bardgett picks up, and maintains, a smoother pace for the second millennium!

Beginning the second millennium mid-way, at the Reformation, after a brief reference to Orkney's Norse Middle Ages, Bardgett then singles out the Secession Church in Kirkwall to represent the church in the latter part of the second millennium. He finishes his story short by ending in the nineteenth century and leaves out the last century of the millennium.

The author is particularly taken with the third Secession minister, David Webster. He also interestingly weaves into the story the contrasting St Magnus Cathedral minister, Dr William Logie – the one evangelical and the other, as far as the former is concerned, a 'moderate'. Nevertheless, whatever the labels, both, in their own way, maintained a zealous ministry for the cause of Christ, as Bardgett shows. Bardgett's restricted approach, although regrettable in that he does not bring the history up to date, does enable him to use the period he deals with to challenge the present church, giving the history an application of contemporary significance.

There are two comparatively minor niggles with the publication itself. Two indexes at the end of the book include people and places, but not a general index to make this a handy reference book. It is not possible, for instance, to search for references to a particular denomination.

On a technical point, the publication is marred by poor graphic reproduction, despite the publisher's claim that the text is 'well illustrated'. The dark, low-resolution pictures are an eyesore and detract from the text.

Overall, anyone knowing and loving things Orkney will find the book informative and fascinating. It is a useful book to have on a visit to Orkney, to read on a wet morning waiting for the afternoon sunshine, before visiting some of the sites mentioned!

Trevor G. Hunt, Evie, Firth & Rendall Churches, Orkney

The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom

Alan Kreider
Trinity Press International, Harrisburg, PA, 1999; I26pp., $11.00;
ISBN 1-56338-298-9.

The starting-point for this book, which is part of a series on Christian mission and modern culture, is the breakdown of Christendom in the West. Kreider sees this as a more accurate diagnosis than to talk of the demise of Christianity. He enthusiastically quotes the historian Sir

Herbert Butterfield who said in 1949 that this was 'the most important and the most exhilarating' period in the history of Christianity for 1500 years since there are no longer external inducements to be a Christian. As in the early church, now virtually all professing Christians have freely chosen to be such.

Christendom, by contrast, was marked by lack of choice. From the fourth century on many people became attached to the Christian church either because they were pressurised or because their own social prospects would be improved. Kreider illustrates that this development left its mark on the church's own understanding of conversion. He begins his historical survey by looking at the church in the second and third centuries, and details the various stages characterised by rigorous training and oversight which preceded full acceptance into the Christian community. He highlights the importance attached both to individual integrity and to adoption of the behaviour patterns of the Christian church before baptism.

One of the first signs of a changing situation in the fourth century was the anomalous position of the Emperor Constantine, who for much of his reign publicly acknowledged the Christian God but remained unbaptized and so outside the code of conduct imposed on Christians. As the fourth century progressed and more people desired to become Christians, fewer demands were placed on those seeking baptism. Rather than undergoing a process of resocialisation, prospective Christians at best were urged to battle against individual sins and to make a useful contribution to wider society as opportunity allowed. Any suggestion of building a Christian counterculture had disappeared.

Kreider is enthusiastic for but not entirely uncritical of the pre-Constantinian church. No one today, for instance, would want to imitate the frequent ceremonies of exorcism which those seeking baptism had to undergo. Kreider does, however, feel that we need to recapture the effort that was expended on remodelling the values and the conduct of potential converts, especially as we have tended to endorse a model of conversion based on a change in belief, which in turn produces a spiritual experience.

The strength of this book lies in its historical analysis. Early church initiation procedures are a difficult area to study because of the patchy nature of our evidence. Kreider's treatment has both the merits and the disadvantages of brevity. Thus, I had the impression of being offered edited highlights without much consideration of the limitations of our sources. Nonetheless, the overall framework presented by Kreider is sound. Perhaps a more unfortunate omission is the lack of a theological framework in which to assess the historical developments. It is clear, for

example, that initiation procedures in the second and third centuries had moved some way from apostolic practice. Was this a legitimate adjustment to new circumstances or did it amount to an addition to Scripture? Another issue which cries out for treatment is that of baptismal regeneration, but that is reserved for future work.

In short, Kreider is right to contend that many of us have taken Christendom so much for granted that we have overlooked its ambivalent legacy. He is also justified in focussing on Christian initiation as a vital subject for study. His book should prompt further thought in this area, but it is too brief to be a definitive account of the important matters it raises.

Graham Keith, Ayr

Dispensationalist Eschatology and its Influence on American and British Religious Movements
Peter E. Prosser
Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York, 1999; xviii+349pp.; ISBN 0 7734 8000 5

Dr Prosser, who serves as Professor of Church History and Christian Doctrine at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia, argues the thesis (the book is in fact his doctoral thesis, at one point so described) that Pentecostalism is derived from the holiness tradition, and beyond that from Methodism, so that the dispensationalism it drew from Fundamentalism was alien to its genius. The author was once a leader in charismatic Catholic circles in French-speaking Canada, which explains why there is a substantial section on the rise of charismatic renewal in that part of the world but nowhere else. Because he assumes Pentecostal-charismatic continuity, he wants to purge his own background of a theological perspective derived from dispensationalism that he justly characterises as pessimistic. Beginning therefore with Pentecostalist origins and dispensationalist teaching, he embarks on a study of 'sociological and historical influences' in chapter 3 that entails a discursive sketch of the history of Dissenting English-speaking Protestantism since the Reformation. This account is necessarily selective, but it is also often mistaken. Take, for example, the account of Presbyterianism. The Westminster Confession, it is said, 'could have no appeal' for the disinherited poor (p. 101); but that it undoubtedly did have in parts of Scotland. Later we are told that Methodism caused 'a considerable consentment for greater democracy amongst many of the

wealthy in the nation' (p. 116). The meaning is unclear; the use of 'democracy' is anachronistic; and the judgement is wrong. Nor, unfortunately, is this an exceptional quotation. The writer goes on to discuss the spread of dispensationalist teaching from J. N. Darby to the reception by Pentecostalism of this style of thinking around the First World War. There is some original material here: there is, for example, a welcome use of Horatius Bonar's *Quarterly Journal of Prophecy.* Far more of the text, however, is professedly derived from the standard works on the subject, especially George Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (1980). Furthermore, the argument of the book is flawed. In order to demonstrate that dispensationalism was alien to Pentecostalism, it is essential to show that it was absent from the origins of the tradition. The author, however, does not do that. Indeed, he (rightly) explains that dispensationalism was one of the currents flowing into the early Pentecostal movement (p. 19). So the case he is making is invalidated by his own contention. To understand early Pentecostalism the reader should turn to R. M. Anderson's *Vision of the Disinherited* (1979) or now (though this was published after Prosser's book) to Grant Wacker's *Heavens Below* (2001), which suggests that the element of prophetic teaching played a rather smaller part than Anderson had contended. But there can be no doubt that the thesis of this volume is wrong.

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D. W. Bebbington, University of Stirling

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Beginning Old Testament Study
John Rogerson, ed.
SPCK, London, 1998; 163pp., £9.99; ISBN 0 281 05103 8

This revised, and in parts re-written, edition intends to take account of changes in Old Testament study since the first edition appeared in 1983.

Rogerson's useful outline history of Old Testament study clearly sets out to make the approach of modern critical scholarship more palatable to students 'from conservative backgrounds'. Notwithstanding the passing recognition given to its roots in the radical rationalism of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Rogerson represents modern critical scholarship as the true heir of the open, critical, questioning approach of the early Bible translators and commentators and of the Reformers, while a (quite undifferentiated) 'modern conservatism' is viewed as the offspring of the uncritical tendencies of post-Reformation

Protestant scholasticism (with a dictation theory of inspiration and proof-texting approach to the use of Scripture) and of Pietism.

David Clines offers a balanced assessment of the value and limitations of the various 'criticisms', distinguishing 'first', 'second' and 'third order' methods in Old Testament study. His discussion of rhetorical criticism, however, does not take account of the recent return to a classical understanding of rhetoric, such as informs, for example, Thomas Renz's *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel* (E. J. Brill, Leiden 1999).

Rogerson then introduces the way the historical critical method functions and how it has been applied in ever more radical ways in recent years, making some useful distinctions and clarifications along the way. His helpful consideration of the worldview of the Old Testament offers a welcome corrective to ideas such as that the Israelites 'lived in a somewhat mystical world in which they were unable to make some of the distinctions that are fundamental to our perception of life', and that their belief was 'the product of a pre-scientific mentality that somehow made faith in God "easy"'.

Paul Joyce examines critically the idea of 'corporate personality' and the developmentalist view of individual responsibility in Israel, issuing timely warnings about the dangers of scholarly bandwagons, and about the perils of creating a neat, but simplistic, system which misrepresents a more complicated set of data.

John Barton turns a well-focussed critical eye on various understandings of what Old Testament theology is, or should be. While he believes that its task is 'the purely ancillary one of helping us to understand the categories and ideas with which the OT text works', he does concede that it is legitimate to synthesise its results, 'so as to produce a summary of the theological impression a careful reading of the whole OT is likely to make'. Barton then explores the distinct, but related, topics of 'ethics in Ancient Israel' and 'the ethics of the Old Testament'.

Joyce explores how Old Testament scholars handle general difficulties about the Old Testament and apparent conflict or inconsistencies between the Testaments, giving short shrift to Marcionite, allegorising and fundamentalist approaches alike, in favour of the application of historical criticism and the recognition of 'the rich diversity of both Testaments'. Any attempt at harmonising Joyce rules out *a priori*, as characteristic of fundamentalism, as 'not facing up to the issues' and as intellectual dishonesty. Recognition of the difference between a naïve, unreflected

fundamentalism and well-reflected, scholarly conservative thinking is surely called for here!

Rogerson's epilogue offers some (disappointingly thin) thoughts about using the Old Testament in the Church, and some further thoughts about its use in deciding social and moral questions, exemplified in a discussion of homosexuality in the light of relevant Old Testament passages. Warnings are given about 'plucking texts out of context' and 'applying them without remainder to today's world'. Rogerson suggests, somewhat relativisingly, that 'a more responsible way of using the OT' lies in recognising what he calls 'imperatives of redemption and structures of grace'. Old Testament laws are to be construed as 'attempts within their particular setting to order life graciously so as to reflect... the gracious actions of God who sets people free'.

Students beginning academic study of the Old Testament will gain from this book a helpful insight into where modern critical Old Testament scholarship is 'coming from', but in its disregard of the tradition of open, critical questioning in non-fundamentalist, conservative scholarship, and its dismissal of all conservative views from serious consideration by caricature, it falls somewhat short of being impartial.

Eryl Rowlands, International Christian College, Glasgow

Engaging Unbelief: A Strategy From Augustine and Aquinas
Curtis Chang
IVP, Leicester, 2000; 187pp.; ISBN 0-85111-472-5

As the title of this remarkable book suggests, the author seeks to discover strategies for Christian mission in a postmodern culture from a comparative study of the works of Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas. On the face of it this might not seem to be an approach that is likely to result in very fruitful outcomes and one can imagine potential readers concerned about the practice of mission today passing over this volume (that, frankly, was my initial reaction). It might be possible to envisage Augustine as having important things to say to us today (although didn't he justify coercion in evangelism?), but can any good thing come out of Aquinas?

Curtis Chang, who is himself a practitioner of mission as an Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship staff worker in the USA, blows away such misconceptions and opens up refreshingly new lines of thought and strategy in this book. The similarities between the contexts in which

these church fathers did their work and that in which we seek to do mission today is to be found in the fact that they, like us, faced what Chang calls an 'epochal' challenge. For Augustine, the challenge was provided by the interaction of the gospel with Graeco-Roman culture, while for Aquinas it arose from the emergence of Islam as a threat to Christendom. The bulk of Chang's book involves a comparative study of Augustine's *City of God* and Aquinas's *Summa contra Gentiles* in which he seeks to show that both adopt a rhetorical tactic which involved entering sympathetically into the challenger's worldview, retelling their story from the inside, and then, crucially, 'capturing the retold tale within the gospel metanarrative'. This then leads to a discussion of how a similar strategy might enable us to meet the challenge of a truly missiological engagement with postmodernity.

It is impossible to do justice to the profound and highly original nature of this study within the limits of this brief review. I suspect that Chang's work will make an important contribution to both patristic and medieval studies and it is without doubt important within the fields of both church history and missiology. However, to describe it in this way is to sell it short since what this author does is to bridge such categories in a work that succeeds brilliantly in demonstrating the relevance of history to contemporary church life and witness. By viewing both Augustine and Aquinas through the lenses provided by cross-cultural mission, Chang replaces the tired stereotypes of a dusty approach to church history with a dynamic study which, while never sacrificing academic rigour, allows both the fathers to speak powerfully across the centuries. *Engaging Unbelief* is not an easy read and, despite its relative brevity, requires very close attention. Yet it seems to this reviewer to be an enormously important book, full of fresh insights of great practical value in relation to mission in a postmodern context. And it is a volume which, despite my initial, superficial reaction, I shall be reading again and again.

David Smith, Whitefield Institute, Oxford

The Realm of Reform
Robert D. Kernohan (ed.)
Handsel Press, Edinburgh, 1999; 183pp., £9.95; ISBN 1 871828 48 1

This is a varied collection of essays, brought out to mark the historic coming of the Scottish Parliament and our entering into a new millennium. The editor has gathered a range of prominent Scots

contributors most of whom 'sit distressingly leftward, politically or theologically or both, of the benignly liberal conservatism and unrepentant unionism of its editor'. Some of these 'lefties'(!) take up broad-ranging subjects – such as William Storrar on Scottish Calvinism, David Wright on the Church being national or Christian, Johnston McKay on the relevance or otherwise of the Church. Others pick up much more particular or specialised questions – T. F. Torrance once more on theological and natural science, George Bruce on mother tongues, Stewart Lamont on the information revolution. Only a small number *e.g.* Donald MacLeod and Ian Mackenzie, directly tackle the declared context of the new millennium and the Scottish Parliament.

But most deal bravely with big and contemporary issues, though often, such as in Russell Barr's examination of the parish system, only opening up (helpfully) the issues without taking us a great deal further forward in knowing what to do, or where to go. Chapters by Catherine Hepburn and Donald Smith are challenging, while others – Johnston McKay and Ian McKenzie's are far too self-conccsciously smug to be much use at all. The postscript is also somewhat indulgent: a very personal ramble through the editor's reading tastes. The millennium and the Scottish parliament are here – and perhaps with less impact than many had hoped for. Vital questions about the nature of the church, her relation to society, and her mission remain. There are valuable contributions to the continuing debate in these pages. Some excellent chapters notwithstanding, this volume was not one to leave a lasting mark.

Gordon R. Palmer, Edinburgh

Our Triune God. A Biblical Portrayal of the Trinity
Peter Toon
Victor, Illinois, 1996, 269pp.; ISBN 1 56476 553 9

Peter Toon's pedigree is well known to evangelicalism in Scotland. He is an evangelical Anglican scholar with academic teaching credentials from Oxford and the USA. He is known for scholarly and astute defences of mainly conservative positions within the evangelical community. This very particular gift carries both credits and debits. On the credit side we find ourselves with a modern book, in touch with today's critical literature, presenting the Trinity in a deeply devotional way, in line with the early church confessions and faithful to mainline tradition. As a bonus, we meet robust repelling of radical or destructive writings. On the

debit side, however, one is not always sure that the balance is right. The author can sometimes be over-sanguine about the church's tradition, overlooking its contextuality and frailty. And is it really necessary to aim a hail of bullets at 'political correctness' (p. 26) when exploring feminist theology? 'PC' is a very easy target in this crude, conceited and individualist age. It demands mental effort and sensitivity to others on the part of communicators, something that even many clergymen and other preachers appear to consider beneath them. It is quite possible critically to evaluate the weaknesses of some 'feminist' theology (and there are many versions) without disparaging all efforts made to make truth and its communication as meaningful to women as to men. Whose side would Jesus be on I wonder? If only we could ask Mary and Martha. Equally, while it is true that many feminist theologians are far from a traditional view of Scripture this should not make more conservative Christianity blind to everything creditable in their challenge. At one time theologians stressing social concern were dismissed as 'liberals' but evangelicals had to humble themselves and recover that lost note to their witness.

This sort of thing apart, Peter Toon's book nevertheless is a rewarding read. Legitimate targets also take direct hits (*e.g.* non-Trinitarian theism, individualism, pantheism *etc.*) The heart of the book is the conviction that the Trinity belongs to the life and conviction of the NT. True, the NT church often did not elaborate trinitarian statements, instead focusing on binitarian ones, but a trinitarianism is more often *implicit* because the Holy Spirit's role is assumed. This mirrors the viewpoint in John 3 that like the wind, the Spirit is known by his effects. In this line, most of the book concentrates on the rich biblical sourcing of Trinitarian belief and fills very well a gap for student and professional alike.

This will not be the book for exploring the engagement of the idea of the Trinity with cultures and society, politics or ethics. But there are plenty of other books for that.

Roy Kearsley, South Wales Baptist College, Cardiff

A Reformation Reader: Primary Texts with Introductions
Denis J. Janz (ed.)
Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1999; 386pp.; ISBN 0-8006-3180-3

Denis Janz, Provost Distinguished Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Loyola University, has gathered in this volume a large, multi-faceted selection of primary source material from the

Renaissance and Reformation periods. There are six chapters, covering 'The Late Medieval Background', 'Martin Luther', 'Zwingli and the Radical Reformation', 'John Calvin', 'The Reformation in England', and 'The Counter/Catholic Reformation'. The book is clearly and attractively laid out, with a brief introduction by Janz to each chapter and extract. Perhaps these introductions err on the side of economy, but Janz's intention is obviously to step aside as quickly as possible in order to let the primary sources speak for themselves.

The translations read smoothly, and the selected passages are made more accessible to the reader in this large format volume by being divided on each page into two columns, after the fashion of many English Bibles. Some of the sources would be difficult or expensive to track down elsewhere, and Professor Janz is to be congratulated on bringing them all together so handily into a single reference work. For example, having read much about the Dominicans Heinrich Kraemer and Jacob Sprenger's epoch-making *Malleus Maleficarum* of 1486 (*The Witches' Hammer*, constantly reprinted throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: the most influential book ever written about witchcraft), for the first time I am now able read a lengthy extract from it in the 'Late Medieval Background' chapter of Janz. Other gems include the extract from Dietrich Kolde's *Mirror for Christians* (1470), which – in the midst of medieval Mariology unacceptable to Protestants – exhibits a basic trust in God's mercy alone for salvation; and Cardinal Cajetan's thoughtful response to Lutheran theology, some of which reads somewhat like a learned Reformed critique of popular Evangelicalism.

Janz's book does leave me with a few slightly puzzled questions, although these should not be seen as seriously marring the usefulness of the work. Why is there nothing on Wyclif and the Hussites in the 'Late Medieval Background' chapter? Why is Zwingli so oddly bracketed together with the Radical Reformation? In the same chapter the Radicals are overwhelmingly the Anabaptists; the Spiritualist Radicals are represented only by Thomas Muntzer and Hans Denck (besides, Denck combined the Spiritualist and Anabaptist impulses of Radicalism in equal measure), and the anti-Trinitarian Rationalists are not represented at all. Why does the English Reformation merit a whole chapter to itself, but there is nothing on the Danish, Scandinavian, Dutch, French, Scottish, or other national Protestant Reformations? Why in the chapter on 'The Counter/Catholic Reformation' is there no extract to illustrate the theology and spirituality of the highly influential 'Catholic Evangelicals'?

These omissions do not prevent my recommending Janz's book as an extremely convenient and rich handbook of primary source material on the Renaissance and Reformation eras.

Nick Needham, Highland Theological College, Dingwall

Harry Potter and The Meaning of Life
Philip Plyming
Grove Books Ltd, Cambridge, 2001; 24pp., £2.50; ISBN 1 85174 482 7

The Harry Potter phenomenon cannot be ignored. The books have sold 66 million copies and pundits reckon that the tale is up there with Coca-Cola in the way it has reached deep into the hearts of local communities.

Plyming attempts to ask the question, 'what is this book about?' He reacts against two mistaken approaches; the first is to view the Harry Potter series as a series of analogies to the Christian faith, seeing Dumbeldore as an Aslan-type figure and Hogwarts as Heaven, the second is to view them as some sort of covert occult handbook. He wants us to simply read the books and engage with the issues.

The book identifies four themes raised in the Potter series: 'transformation of character, 'choices', 'good and evil' and 'relationships'. The author argues that we deal with each of them in the same way as Paul dealt with the Athenians in Acts 17; we use them as a basis for sharing our faith.

This book is essential reading for anyone who wants to relate to contemporary society. It is the best book I have read on the issue. The conclusion of the book is that the Potter series is simply full of allusions which are ideally suited for starting off deeper discussions. The author argues that this is popular apologetics at its best and I wholeheartedly agree with him.

This is a book for the personal evangelist, not for the conspiracy theorist!

David C. Meredith, Smithton-Culloden Free Church, Inverness

Homelessness and Evangelism
Ralph Upton
Grove Evangelism Series No. 52, 2000, 24pp.; ISBN 1-85174-449-5

This booklet is aimed at churches concerned to do something about homelessness in their area. The author is the Housing and Homelessness Officer for Liverpool Diocese of the Church of England.

A concise introductory chapter sets the scene in terms of definitions of homelessness, reasons for it and current government responses.

The chapter on *A Christian Response* is welcome because it indicates the need for action, not just at a local level through individual projects, but at a national political level. It is sometimes too easy for well meaning individuals to initiate projects without taking account of this broader context. Upton adopts John Stott's position that social action should not be seen as a means to evangelism, nor as a manifestation of evangelism but as a partner of evangelism. His argument would benefit from expansion but the scope of a Grove booklet does not permit that.

Options for practical responses are then examined with chapters on Soup Run and Outreach, Drop in Centres and Hostels and Move-On Accommodation illustrating with examples from different cities and churches (of varying sizes) around England.

There are two strengths here. Upton is aware of and addresses criticisms that are sometimes made of certain types of work. He also emphasises the need for thorough research, consultation with other agencies and consideration of ecumenical possibilities before launching new projects.

This is a helpful booklet. Although English in background most of what is said can be translated easily into the Scottish context. However, it would have been useful if the appendix of useful contact addresses had included some from north of the border. Scottish readers wanting to follow up some of the ideas in the booklet would find the Scottish Churches Housing Agency, 28 Albany Street, Edinburgh (0131 447 4500) a good place to start. It can provide information, education, advice and support to groups seeking to tackle homelessness in their local area.

Graham Dickson, St Stephen's Comely Bank, Edinburgh

Preaching with the Grain of Scripture
Stephen Wright
Grove Books Ltd, Cambridge, 2001, 24pp., £2.50 ISBN 1 85174 468 1

Written by the Director of the College of Preachers, based at Spurgeon's College, London, this booklet is No. 20 in the Grove Biblcal Series.

Using the metaphor in the title, the author helpfully discusses what constitutes a healthy relationship between preaching and Scripture. Highlighting the requirement to balance faithfulness to the gospel and the Bible, he also identifies the need to treat traditional interpretations both

sympathetically and critically while stressing the importance of respecting both the content and the form of Scripture.

Admitting their value, he warns against allowing the pressures of a lectionary, thematic preaching and particular sermon structures to militate against 'going with the grain'. He concludes with four outlines of his own sermons as examples of the points he has been arguing.

This is a useful encouragement to preachers who want to echo the author's desire that we treat the Bible with integrity and that God would use our efforts to impact people's lives for his glory. While recognising the limited space available the list of resources might have included books on preaching by Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, John Stott and the volume edited by Sam T. Logan.

John W. Lockington, Larne

BOOK REVIEWS