

Evangelical Review of Theology

*Articles and book reviews reflecting
global evangelical theology for the purpose
of discerning the obedience of faith*



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Evangelical Review of Theology

GENERAL EDITOR: THOMAS SCHIRRMACHER

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Editorial: Heirs of the Reformation

As a tribute to Dr Emilio Núñez, who passed away on 14 January 2015 at the age of 91, we re-publish one his addresses which first appeared in our issue of April 1980. Núñez, a key member of the TC in the 1980s, was one of the great figures of Latin American evangelicalism. We are all indebted to him and we are also the poorer for his passing. His paper, 'Heirs of the Reformation', focuses on a worthy topic which is also our theme for this issue.

Next we welcome back to our pages Amos Yong (USA) with an excerpt from his recent book, *The Future of Evangelical Theology* (also reviewed on page 280), which issues a striking challenge to his Asian-American colleagues, calling for them to develop their own theological profile rather than one simply fitting in with their adoptive context. This is an important perspective in line with Reformation principles, and it arises out of his own personal pilgrimage; it is one that theologians from other communities around the world could well emulate.

Another important principle of the Reformation was the issue of the Christian vocation of the lay person. The essay of Scott Harrower (Australia) is a welcome reflection on this topic, showing that 'the divine triune life expressed in God's economy of creation, salvation and recreation involves a particular set of callings upon God's children', including 'the call to be worshippers, workers, lovers, disciples, and particularly gifted servants'. He concludes that such a theology will 'take into account our Spirit-enabled

response and loving obedience to the triune God who has been revealed in the Jesus'.

The impact of the evangelical gospel of the Reformation was no more obvious than in cross-cultural mission (although that insight took some time to emerge). Wayne Detzler (USA) reveals some fascinating links between the history of slavery and the origins of the modern missionary movement which provide compelling reading. This leads on to further discussion of the difficult question of the use of the term 'Christian' in some sensitive areas of the world. Our article on this topic takes the form of a panel discussion which raises many different angles of the question which need to be considered. Still in the area of mission, Fohle Lygunda li-M (Burundi) presents the results of empirical research on the participation of Francophone Africans in regular and unusual forms of outreach, especially those resulting from voluntary and involuntary emigration. In the process, his work reveals strengths but also some troubling aspects of the matter which need urgent action.

Finally for this issue, the editor contributes the first part of an updated history of Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance which publishes this journal. This section from the new edition takes up the story of the TC from 2005 where the previous edition ended; the remainder of the update will appear later.

Thomas Schirrmacher, General Editor
David Parker, Executive Editor

Heirs of the Reformation

Emilio Antonio Núñez

In the providence of God, we are beginning our Second Latin American Congress on Evangelization on the day dedicated to commemorating the sixteenth-century religious Reformation. There is no doubt that October 31, 1517, is a date of transcendental importance in world history.

It is true that not all the groups that make up the Evangelical Church in Latin America show the same enthusiasm for the celebration of this anniversary. It would seem that we Evangelicals prefer to underline the fact that our historical roots go deep into God's written revelation, especially in the pages of the New Testament. Nevertheless, we are conscious that the Reformation came about in order to emphasize biblical truths that, in general, lie at the very foundation of our evangelistic message. In one way or another, all we Evangelical Christians are heirs of the Reformation. It would be helpful, therefore, to continue studying in our respective church groups the essence of our heritage.

The Reformation was a movement with profound cultural, social and political repercussions. In this Congress, however, our concern is to emphasize the theological foundations of the

Reformation, and especially the soteriology of the Reformers. To fulfil our purpose, we will refer to the four great affirmations of the Reformation—Grace alone, Christ alone, Faith alone, Scripture alone. Without studying in depth the significance of these affirmations for the Reformers, we will simply take them as the starting point of our meditation, attempting to apply them to the Latin American situation.

I Grace Alone

The Reformers taught that the sinner is justified by the grace of God alone, through faith in Jesus Christ. In this case, grace is that divine favour that man does not deserve, but that God in his sovereignty and goodness has wanted to bestow. Salvation is the work of God, not of man. Paul says, '*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast*' (Eph 2:8, 9). '*But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace*' (Rom 11:6).

Man is not able to give, but God makes him able to receive. Man holds out an empty hand in order to receive,

This article by Emilio Antonio Núñez was first published in our April 1980 issue, Vol 4:1, 238-247, when the author was President of the Central American Seminary, Guatemala. It was originally the keynote address at CLADE II conference on Reformation Day, October 31, 1979. We reproduce it here in honour of Dr Núñez who died on 14 January 2015 at the age of 91. Born in El Salvador, he was one of the leading evangelical theologians of Latin America who was contributed significantly to the work of the WEA Theological Commission and to many other bodies. We thank God for his ministry and mourn his passing.

not a full hand in order to give. He has nothing that he can give to pay for his salvation. Nor can he co-operate with the divine grace in order to save himself. He is dead in his trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1–3). The only thing he can do is to receive God's favour.

The idea of *grace alone* deals a hard blow to man's pride. There is no room here for self-sufficiency, nor for the arrogance that attempts to save oneself and others through endeavours that appear noble or heroic in the eyes of society in general. The idea that man is good by nature and that he can liberate himself and raise himself to heaven by his own boot-straps crumbles in the face of the revelation of the doctrine of God's grace alone, a doctrine that brings us face to face with our own spiritual and moral bankruptcy.

The social sciences speak of *homo sapiens*, of the economic, political and social man, of the man who works and who has created a marvellous civilization by the work of his own hands. The Bible tells us that man is a sinner, in need of God's grace for his complete liberation. He is a sinner by inheritance, a sinner by nature, a sinner in thought, word and deed; a sinner as an individual, sinner as a social entity, creator of corrupt and perverse structures, placed at the service of the demonic forces that operate in this universe.

Society is sick because individuals are sick, with a mortal illness. This is the sombre and depressing picture that we must keep in mind in order to grasp fully the significance of the grace of God and to preach the gospel faithfully.

On the other hand, let us remember that grace reveals also the immense value of man in God's eyes. In the light

of Scripture it is possible to speak both of the misery and of the greatness of man. Biblical anthropology does not allow itself to be influenced by the empty optimism of the humanists, nor to be seduced by the funeral dirge of the pessimists. It is a realistic anthropology. Man has his origin in God and bears the image of his Creator, although affected by sin. This gives him a special dignity. He possesses faculties that raise him far above other creatures in the world and enable him to exercise dominion over nature. He is, above all, the special object of God's incomparable love (Jn 3:16). He has fallen deep into sin, but, as Paul affirms, '*Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more*' (Rom 5:20).

God is always '*the God of all grace*' (1 Pet 5:10). He manifested his grace in Old Testament times, especially through his covenants (Dt 7:12; Jer 31:3, etc.). Salvation always has been, is, and will be by grace: but this grace comes in all its fullness in the person of Jesus Christ (Jn 1:17). Christ is God's inexpressible gift to the world (2 Cor 9:15). Man can be saved in Christ, but not apart from Christ. Thus we come to another distinctive theme of the religious Reformation of the sixteenth century.

II Christ Alone

The Reformers' message was Christological and Christocentric. Ours should be likewise. Jesus said, '*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me*' (Jn 14:6). And according to the apostle Peter, '*... there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*' (Acts 4:12).

It is incumbent upon us to listen again to these declarations that are so radically opposed to every attempt at syncretism or universalism. Whether we like it or not, the New Testament gospel is inclusive and exclusive. It includes all those who accept Jesus Christ as the only mediator between God and man; it excludes all those who reject the grace of God. We have no right to include what God has not included, nor to exclude what God has not excluded. *Christ alone saves.*

But, which Christ? We definitely are not speaking here of the Christ of man-made dogmas, nor of the Christ of ancient or modern statuary, nor of the Christ of Latin American folklore, nor of the Jesus Christ super-star of the wealthy societies of the North Atlantic, nor of the Christ of the powerful economic and social interests on our continent, nor of the Christ of the modern ideologies; we are speaking of the Christ who is revealed in Scripture, the Christ rediscovered by many pious souls in the darkest days of the Middle Ages and in the brightest times of the Protestant Reformation, the Christ who has found us and whom, by the grace of God, thousands and millions of us Latin Americans have found.

Christ our God! He is the eternal Logos, a member of the trinitarian council, eternally associated with the Father and with the Spirit; Creator and Sustainer of heaven and earth; Lord of life and history; King, now and forever; Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, whose origin is from old, from ancient days; Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the one who is and who was and who is to come, the all-powerful Lord.

The historic Christ! Revealed in time and space, at a precise date in God's calendar, in the course of human history, in the context of a certain geographical location, a certain people, a certain culture, a certain society.

The human Christ! Conceived by the Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, sharing the life of flesh and blood, 'made man', completely identified with mankind. Christ the total man, the man for others, who lives among us, 'full of grace and truth' (Jn 1:14).

The poor Christ! Born in a stable, residing in a village, known as 'the carpenter', son of a carpenter. The proletarian Christ, the one with the hands calloused by hard work, the one with his forehead sweaty with the day's labour! He was born, he lived and died in abject poverty, like the other poor of his people. Nevertheless, he never capitalized on the social resentment of his contemporaries to deepen the gulf between man and man, between class and class, or between nation and nation.

He never asked his followers to raise the flag of hate and vengeance. Instead, he spoke of forgiveness and of brotherhood. He gave himself up in sacrifice to abolish in his cross the enmities and to break down the dividing wall that separated one human being from another. Furthermore, his presence is inevitably a sign of contradiction for those who oppress the poor and turn their backs on human misery.

Christ the prophet! Herald of God the Father, interpreter of the Deity, revealer of the divine will for his people and for all humanity! His word, aflame with fire from heaven, is the consolation and the hope of those who are humble in heart, and the warning of unavoidable

judgment for those who work iniquity.

Christ the Lamb of God! He who takes away the sin of the world; the one who makes the ultimate self-sacrifice on Calvary for our redemption; the one whose precious blood cleanses us from all sin.

Christ the living one! Through his death he destroys the one who held the power of death, and triumphs over the grave on the glorious day of his resurrection.

Christ the priest! The one who is seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high and *'is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them'* (Heb 7:25).

Christ the coming King! The Glorifier of his church. The Judge of the living and the dead *'by his appearing and his kingdom'* (2 Tim 4:1). The Messiah awaited for the blessing of all nations. The King of kings and the Lord of lords. Christ, the one who affects total renovation.

Who are those who are saved by the Christ thus revealed in the Scripture? The answer to this great question leads us to another affirmation of the Reformation—the sinner is saved through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

III Faith Alone

Saint Paul affirms: *'But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law ... the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe'* (Rom 3:21–22). Faith is reckoned for righteousness to the sinner who trusts in Jesus Christ (Rom 4:5) and God declares him righteous, giving him peace (Rom 5:1). Martin Luther's great discovery in the Scriptures

was that *'the just shall live by faith'* (Rom 1:17). This biblical truth came to be the battle cry of the Reformation.

Someone has said that faith is the hand that receives the gift of God in Jesus Christ. Indeed, for St. John the Evangelist, to receive Christ seems to be the equivalent to believing in him (Jn 1:12). Through faith we make ours the benefits given by the crucified and risen Christ. It is in these benefits that our eternal assurance of salvation rests.

But the faith through which we are justified is not blind, nor is it mere credulity. Jesus declares: *'And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent'* (John 17:3). And the apostle Peter says to his Master, *'And we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God'* (Jn 6:69). Believing and knowing go hand in hand when it comes to salvation. *'But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?'* (Rom 10:14).

Faith is never a simple agreement with revealed truth. It is much more than a mere intellectual exercise. To have faith is *to trust*, to cast oneself completely into the arms of Jesus Christ, recognizing the enormity of our guilt and our complete inability to free ourselves from sin by our own resources. It is to admit that human merits are useless to procure justification; it is to lay hold of the infinite value of the person and the work of the Son of God. To have faith in Jesus Christ is to allow oneself to be saved by him.

Faith also implies obedience. In Acts we read that *'a great many of the*

priests were obedient to the faith' (6:7). Paul, for his part, points out that not all those who hear the gospel obey it (Rom 10:16), and that the Lord will return to give the deserved payment to the disobedient (2 Thess 1:8). When a man believes that the gospel is the truth, he is under the obligation to obey it.

Furthermore, the person who believes what the Scripture says in regard to the punishment for sin and the pardon offered in Jesus Christ repents and is converted to God. The Lord Jesus called the people of his day to repent (Mt 3:2) and instructed his disciples to announce repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations (Lk 24:47). In obedience to the master's command, Jews and Gentiles have been called to repent, believing in the gospel (Acts 2:38; 17:30–31).

Repentance is an internal change that is manifested in some way in the conduct of the believer in Christ. John the Baptist spoke of *'fruits that befit repentance'* and pointed out concrete changes that should take place in the lives of those who accept the message of the Kingdom (Lk 3:8–20). It is God who grants *'repentance unto life'* (Acts 11:18). The repentant sinner returns or is converted to God (Acts 3:19; 26:20).

According to Reformation doctrine, the sinner is justified by faith alone, but the faith that justifies does not remain alone. It is not a sterile faith, and much less a dead faith. James' teaching (2:14–26) is in complete accordance with that of Paul, who affirms that we are not saved *by* good works, but that we are saved *for* good works which God has prepared for us (Eph 2:8–10).

These good works are the fruit of salvation, not the cause. They are not

simply works that are liturgical in nature; they are closely related to our personal, family, and social life. The person who has been justified by having believed in Jesus continues demonstrating his faith, not only in words, but also in actions that glorify God and benefit his neighbour and society.

To believe in Jesus Christ means, as well, to make a serious commitment to him, to his church and to society. We do not accept Jesus Christ in order to avoid our moral responsibilities and to live as we please, once we have obtained an insurance policy for all eternity. There are serious ethical demands inherent in the gospel.

The Lord Jesus was careful to warn people about the difficulties along the way that he proposed. He did not hesitate to spell out the demands of discipleship (Mt 10:34–39; cf. Mk 8:34–38). No one could complain of being deceived with an offer of *'cheap grace'*. His main concern was for the quality, not the quantity, of his followers.

When Jesus was in Jerusalem, at the Passover feast, many believed on his name, having seen the signs that he did; *'but Jesus did not trust himself to them, because he knew all men ...'* (Jn 2:23–24). He was very cautious about keeping the statistics on those who were converted. His miracles captivated the people, but Jesus did not take advantage of his extraordinary powers to attract people who were not truly willing to follow him. When many of his disciples left him, offended at his teaching, he did not beg them to return. He asked the Twelve, *'Will you also go away?'* Faith had triumphed in them. They decided to remain (Jn 6:60–69).

We need much wisdom from above in order to present to the people of

Latin America the ethical demands of the gospel on the lives of those who profess to believe it, without twisting the biblical concept of salvation. We will find the necessary equilibrium in our proclamation of God's written revelation and in the ministry of his Spirit.

Salvation is by *grace alone, in Christ alone, through faith alone*—a faith that does not remain alone. On what do we base this conviction? On nothing less than the Word of God, which we have cited many times in this message. This brings us to another of the great affirmations of the Reformation: the supreme authority of Holy Scripture.

IV Scripture Alone

It may be stated that it was basically on this declaration that the Reformers and the official church of their day came to a parting of the ways. The leaders of the Reformation accepted the supreme authority of the Scripture, not only in regard to the doctrine of justification by faith. They determined to submit their faith and their life to the final authority of the biblical canon, and to no other authority, whether that of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, that of natural reason, or that of the impulses of the heart. They accepted and proclaimed the Scriptures as their objective, final authority.

In making this transcendental decision, the Reformers were simply continuing a long tradition that comes from Old Testament times and the days of Christ and his apostles. The Old Testament prophets appealed to the written law as their final authority. Christ authenticated his ministry before the people by appealing to the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms (Lk

24:44). His apostles also supported their message with the authority of the Old Testament. The primitive church accepted both Testaments and thus had a more extensive canon to which to appeal as the basis of their decisions of faith and practice. The Reformers made the '*thus says the Lord*' and '*it is written*' resound powerfully throughout western Christianity.

Throughout the centuries the principle of *Scripture alone* has been threatened and challenged by natural reason, by pietistic sentimentalism, by ecclesiastical pressures (both Catholic and Protestant), and by the presumption of leaders who consider themselves authorized to impose their private system of interpretation on the people of God.

In this critical hour in which we as Evangelical Christians have been called to live and take on serious responsibilities, we must frequently ask ourselves exactly what is our supreme authority in faith and practice, in the face of the intricate problems presented by our people, in the light of the new solutions we hear proposed in theological circles and in the socio-political field. We must decide, as well, where the final authority lies, in the face of our own tendency to look exclusively to the past, or to live in the future, in some future eschatological time, ignoring the present moment, in order to preserve outworn traditions, interpretations, and practices that are our own additions to the sacred text and not the Word of God itself. We must remember that the Reformed church must constantly be reformed, in the light of the written revelation of God, under the power of the Holy Spirit.

If we have decided to accept the supreme authority of Scripture—recog-

nizing that it is totally inspired by God and infallible—it behoves us to use the best available text and to interpret it according to accepted rules of biblical exegesis, in order to arrive at our theological conclusions. This implies making an effort to derive from the text the significance that the sacred writers wanted to communicate within a certain cultural context. Then we will make every possible effort to apply this meaning to our own lives and to the Latin American situation, asking the text what it has to say to us in our particular socio-cultural context.

We will also bring to the text the questions raised by our contemporaries, allowing the Word itself to answer these questions, without trying to force the text to say things that will put a sugar-coating on the answer we give, or to support our own theological peculiarities. Dr Cecilio Arrastía has said very accurately that *'we must not make a coup d'état to the Text'*. The Reformers advocated the free examination of the Scriptures, but not free interpretation. The universal priesthood of believers—another of the great doctrines exalted by the Reformation—does not authorize anyone to twist and distort the biblical text.

In order to achieve the contextualization that does justice to the text and at the same time answer adequately the questions raised by Latin Americans, two factors are indispensable—serious exegetical study of the text itself, and a thorough knowledge of our socio-cultural context. But above all we must re-affirm our confidence in the integrity and efficacy of Holy Scripture; we must renew our commitment of obedience to biblical authority; we must depend on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who will

lead us into all truth and keep us within the community of the saints, so that we may be instructed, exhorted, and edified by our brethren in the faith, who also have the Word of God and in whom also dwells the Spirit of truth and love. Let us not attempt to be 'lone rangers', galloping here and there through the rugged paths of theological reflection.

If we do not embrace the objective normativity of the Scriptures, if we do not submit to the lordship of Christ, if we are not in tune with the Holy Spirit, if we withdraw from the community of faith, we will easily fall prey to subjectivism or to relativism, or we may innocently fall into the trap set by some ideology, of whatever shade it may be.

We are conscious of the serious hermeneutical problem that we are facing today in Latin America. We do not pretend to close our eyes to the difficulties that exist along the way in biblical interpretation. But we are convinced that for us as Evangelical Christians the problem will be even greater if we retreat before hermeneutical systems that approach Scripture with rationalistic or existentialistic presuppositions, tacitly denying the supernatural nature of the Word of God.

In the second and third chapters of the second letter to Timothy, there are two basic exhortations concerning the Scriptures. The apostle instructs his disciple Timothy to *persevere* in the Word and to *preach* the Word. The reasons for these exhortations, which also can be of help to us, are found in the text itself. To a world disoriented morally and spiritually and confused by the ambassadors of error, what we must announce, in season and out of season, is the Word of God. But we cannot be faithful spokesmen of this Word if we

do not persevere in it, holding it in high regard, recognizing its divine inspiration, and trusting in its efficacy for the salvation and spiritual growth of those who receive it as the revelation of the Lord.

If we do not persevere in the Scriptures, we will find ourselves perplexed, lost in the labyrinth of doubt, confused by the false teachers; we will turn our ear away from hearing the truth, and we will be attracted to the myths or fables that they propagate.

In his book, *La Cruz sin Velos*, Dr Frederick Huegel relates that one day Admiral Byrd, who was engaged in scientific investigation at the South Pole, stepped out of his ice hut for a breath of fresh air. He was alone. Suddenly he stopped, frightened. He had strolled too far. Turning around, he realized that it was impossible to see his hut. He could see nothing but snow. He understood that if he set out to find his hut and if he did not locate it on the first attempt, he would lose all sense of direction and would have no fixed point by which to orient himself. He had a stick in his hand. He stuck it into the ice. '*Here*' he said, '*is my centre, and I will not leave it until I have found my house.*' He then walked in several directions, without losing sight of his stick. At last, after several attempts, he found his hut and was safe.

Dr Huegel uses this story to illustrate his point on the central place that the cross of Christ occupies in the plan of redemption. But Admiral Byrd's experience also makes us think of the written word of God, which should serve as a guide for us in the midst of the confusion that reigns in the world.

Let us be sure that our post—the Word of God—is firm and erect; let us hold it as the point of reference in our theological pilgrimage and, without losing sight of it, let us continue to explore confidently, without fear.

Only thus will we have assurance for ourselves and confidence to point out the way for others to follow.

The Reformers desired to have the Scriptures as the basis and authority for every doctrine that they believed and taught. Whether they achieved this aim in every case is the subject of additional study. What is certain is that this zeal for the supreme authority of the Bible is part of the great inheritance that we have received from the Reformation.

We Latin American Evangelical Christians have also desired to be the people of the Book, proclaimers of the Christ revealed in that book, and the followers of the ethical principles that that book teaches. We admit that we still have a long way to go in studying, comprehending, and obeying its contents; but we still hold it fast, and will not let it go. It is in this stance that we are pre-eminently heirs of the Reformation. We may be in disagreement with one or another of the doctrines, or with some particular emphasis of the Reformers, but we can never take issue with their firm determination to exalt '*the living and abiding word of God*' (1 Pet 1:23).

May this Word be the norm for our thinking and our feeling during this Congress that we are inaugurating today, and in the difficult but glorious task that we have ahead of us in our Latin America.

The Mandate of Asian American Evangelical Theology

Amos Yong

I Asian American Evangelical Theology: Whence and w(h)ither

It is fair to say that we are still at the very beginning stages of Asian American evangelical theologizing.¹ As we shall see, we can only speak about Asian American evangelical theology if understood in a very broad sense. The following sketches three streams of such reflection, which enables comprehension of its largely conservative instincts.

Particularly for Asian Americans from an East Asian background, the Confucian emphasis on filial piety plays out in their evangelical spirituality. Some of the earliest works on Asian American evangelical theology, there-

fore, were focused on how especially second-generation Asian Americans could honour their parents while following Christ.² This was and remains an especially important matter if the immigrant generation were non-Christians. Beyond this is the pressure of perfectionist expectations by parents, not to mention having also to live into the 'model minority' stereotype outside the home. When combined with the deferential East Asian posture, many Asian Americans develop a self-inferiority complex—devastating within a culture of shame—particularly when having also to confront linguistic challenges in navigating through school and then a career.

¹ One of the few forays into the question remains Young Lee Hertig, 'Why Asian American Evangelical Theologies,' *Journal of Asian and Asian American Theology* 7 (2005–2006): 1-23.

² See Jeanette Yep, ed., *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents: Asian American Discipleship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), and Nikki A. Toyama and Tracey Gee, eds., *More Than Serving Tea: Asian American Women on Expectations, Relationships, Leadership and Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006).

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The ecclesial or congregational domain is also one where Asian American Evangelicals have expended some effort. This is to be expected given the long history of ethnic churches and the many debates, not to mention challenges, related to assimilation to the dominant culture. Within the literature on Asian American Evangelicalism, we find works on pastoral ministry (designed to equip ministers to cross generational, cultural, ecclesial, gender and other divides),³ congregational health and effectiveness (which provide models for ethnic-dominant, bilingual and even mixed ecclesial communities),⁴ and even a growing number of pan-Asian or pan-ethnic visions of the future (which often deal with the issues of race and racialization within an evangelical paradigm).⁵ Asian American Evangelicals have focused some of their energies on these ecclesiological matters. What can be hoped for is that these more practical,

ministerial and missional emphases will also translate, in due course, into more robust ecclesiological and theological reflection.

1. Recent developments in Asian American evangelical theology

It is at the more properly understood theological level that Asian American Evangelicals can be said to be barely out of the starting gate. Still, even in these gestational times, some potential routes for development can be discerned. One is a collection of essays that appeared in 2006.⁶ Published by the L2 Foundation, an organization devoted to Asian American leadership and legacy development, this is the first book to appear on the topic of Asian American *evangelical* theology.

The six essayists reflect the diversity of the AAE community. David Yoo, a historian at Claremont McKenna College, surveys (with two collaborators) the pre-WWII histories of Japanese and Korean American Christians and urges that religion needs to be factored into immigration and race analyses of these communities, even as Tim Tseng, a historian of American Christianity and founder of the Institute for the Study of Asian American Christianity, exposes the 'color blindness' of American church history and provides some hermeneutical options for moving beyond orientalist or assimilationist models of the Asian American Christian experience. A practical theologian at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Peter

3 E.g., Ken Uyeda Fong, *Pursuing the Pearl: A Comprehensive Resource for Multi-Asian Ministry* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1999), and Russell Yee, *Worship on the Way: Exploring Asian North American Christian Experience* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2012).

4 See Peter Cha, S. Steve Kang and Helen Lee, eds., *Growing Healthy Asian American Congregations* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006), and M. Sydney Park, Soong-Chan Rah and Al Tizon, eds., *Honoring the Generations: Learning with Asian North American Congregations* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2012).

5 Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, S. Steve Kang and Gary A. Parrett, *A Many-Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), and Kenneth A. Mathews and M. Sydney Park, *The Post-Racial Church: A Biblical Framework for Multiethnic Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2011).

6 D. J. Chuang and Timothy Tseng, eds., *Conversations: Asian American Evangelical Theologies in Formation* (Washington, D.C.: L2 Foundation, 2006).

Cha, discusses the challenges involved in identity formation among second-generation Korean Americans. An intriguing chapter is missiologist James Zo's (affiliated with Logos Evangelical Seminary in El Monte, California) insightful analysis of how structural and power issues complicate the assessment of racism, prejudice and discrimination on both sides of the American and Asian American equation.

For a volume on evangelical theology, the two explicitly theological contributions are by historical theologians: Paul Lim (who specializes in early modern England, has taught at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and now is, as of the time of this writing, at Vanderbilt University) reveals the importance of biography in the construction of any Asian American evangelical theology, and Jeffrey Jue (a post-Reformation historian at Westminster Theological Seminary) seeks a way beyond both modernist experientialism and postmodernist subjectivism by returning to the gospel. The conversational approach of each chapter in the volume invites others to join in the discussion.

A second line of development lies with Asian American evangelical women, many of whom are also working in the area of biblical studies.⁷ A recent volume includes ten chapters, most springing off female biblical characters, all set within what Young Lee Hertig calls a 'yinit paradigm' that is neither merely feminist (nor womanist nor *mujerista*) nor yet acquiescent to the patriarchal structures dominant

within Asian American Evangelicalism in particular and (white) evangelical theology in general.⁸ *Mirrored Reflections* is thus a ground breaking and paradigmatic book not only for Asian American theology but also for evangelical biblical hermeneutics.

It opens up space for Asian American women's readings of the Bible without mimicking other feminist agendas; it embraces reader-response approaches while honouring the scriptural horizon; it boldly explores a counter-cultural contextualism, polyphonous multivocalism, and intersubjective perspectivism without lapsing into relativism; and it insists on the need for us to come to terms with pluralism, globalization and transnationalism in the pursuit of faithful Christian discipleship in our time. Arguably, this is biblical interpretation and theological reflection at its best: engaging, subversive, transformative and salvific—for women and men.⁹ Such paths opened up by Asian American evangelical women may well be what is most generative and productive for Asian American evangelical theology in the longer run.

The contributions of Hertig and

⁷ See Young Lee Hertig and Chloe Sun, eds., *Mirrored Reflections: Reframing Biblical Characters* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010).

⁸ See Hertig's lead chapter, 'The Asian American Alternative to Feminism: A *Yinit* Paradigm,' in Hertig and Sun, eds., *Mirrored Reflections*, 3-14.

⁹ Perhaps in contrast to the dominant strands of Asian American evangelical biblical interpretation that have swallowed Western hermeneutical methods almost hook, line and sinker; see Andrew Yueking Lee, 'Reading the Bible as an Asian American: Issues in Asian American Biblical Interpretation,' in Viji Nakka-Cammauf and Timothy Tseng, eds., *Asian American Christianity: A Reader* (Castro Valley, CA: The Institute for the Study of Asian American Christianity, 2009), 60-69.

company run parallel to other Asian American evangelical voices that find themselves betwixt-and-between the centre of the evangelical movement and the mainline Protestant communities. Soong-Chan Rah's work mediates these spaces as representative of a promising path in contemporary Asian American evangelical theology.¹⁰ The potency of Rah's argument is that he speaks not only to Asian American Evangelicals but also to the evangelical theological establishment as a whole. This is because his is a call for the church to let go of its individualism, consumerism, materialism and racism—all effects of Western culture—in order to be freed from its cultural captivity.¹¹ Rah's analysis, however, can find deeper Asian American traction, particularly if wedded to the uncompromising call for living into the Asian American identity by theologians such as Jonathan Tran.¹² The latter empowers a distinctive Asian American voice, albeit one that is not parochial since it addresses larger ecclesial (and perhaps even social) concerns.¹³

10 Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009).

11 From a hermeneutical perspective, see the similar argument of E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012).

12 See Jonathan Tran, 'A Few Things I Want from Asian American Evangelicals,' in Nakka-Cammauf and Tseng, *Asian American Christianity*, 243-51; cf. also Tran, 'Identity as Missiology,' *SANACS Journal* 1 (2009): 29-40.

13 Matthew Soerens and Jenny Hwang, *Welcoming the Stranger: Justice, Compassion and Truth in the Immigration Debate* (Downers

The fact of the matter is, however, that there is little else available on Asian American evangelical theology and that Asian American Evangelicals are still a long way off from thinking theologically as Asian Americans. Part of the reason is that many Asian American Evangelicals, even those who are theologically trained, have basically replicated the majority evangelical (white) approaches to Scripture. Further, many second-generation Asian Americans have adopted the assimilationist experience as their model and have presumed that an 'American universalism' maps onto a biblical universalism.¹⁴

The result is the subordination of their racial and ethnic identities and modes of thinking. Among the many reasons for this is the dominant conservatism of Asian American culture, especially within ecclesial communities of East Asian descent (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese churches). As such, Asian Americans are content to persist with

Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009) is another example of Asian American Evangelicals speaking into wider conversations, precisely the thrust of this book and part of its goal in terms of motivating Asian American evangelical theological inquiry. I will return to discuss the proposals of this volume in more depth in chapter six.

14 This is my way of putting what other Asian American scholars have also observed; see both Antony W. Alumkal, 'The Scandal of the 'Model Minority' Mind? The Bible and Second-Generation Asian American Evangelicals,' and Timothy Tseng, 'Second-Generation Chinese Evangelical Use of the Bible in Identity Discourse in North America,' both in Tatsiong Benny Liew, *The Bible in Asian America: Semeia* 90-91 (Atlanta: The Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 237-50 and 251-67, respectively.

the status quo of evangelical theology inherited from their (white) evangelical teachers.

2. Asian American evangelical conservatism.

The phenomenon of East Asian or Confucian cultural conservatism is, of course, a complicated one to untangle. On the one hand, there is something to the stereotype of East Asian Confucianism as essentially androcentric (in subordinating women to men), patriarchal (sustained by the tradition's emphasis on filial piety) and authoritarian (preserved in the king-subject and older-younger brother aspects of the 'five-fold relations'). On the other hand, like most extended cultural traditions, Confucianism has been neither static nor free from dissenting trends that have attempted to retrieve, reappropriate and, when necessary, jettison these traditional doctrines for the late modern world.¹⁵ Certainly, in the North American context, there are progressive forces at work especially among second and later generations of Asian Americans, but equally certainly, the weight of portable cultural and philosophical traditions like Confucianism (see chapter two) means that change occurs slowly.

Within the Asian American evangelical community, the gradual transformation of the inherited cultural conservatism is certainly being played out, even if at a much slower pace than in nonevangelical contexts. On

the one side, the gospel is understood as providing a critical perspective on culture—on which I will say more momentarily; on the other side, however, there are certain biblical themes such as honouring of parents and the submission of women (read off the surface of some Pauline texts) that resonate with the filial piety of especially Confucian cultures, and these have inevitably become central issues for the forging of Asian American identities.¹⁶ Hence Asian American immigrants who are attracted to Christianity are often drawn to evangelical Protestantism because it provides a similarly conservative worldview, one that enables their acculturation into American society. For these reasons, Confucian conservatism morphs, among Asian American Protestants, into a form of evangelical conservatism.

To be sure, the exact role of Confucianism behind Asian American evangelical conservatism might be debated among scholars, particularly since the appropriation of the Confucian tradition across the Asian American diaspora is not all of one stripe. At the same time, even if other Asian traditions were to be factored into the matrix of Asian American life, many are informed by a kind of patriarchal, hierarchical and authoritarian conservatism that functions similarly in East Asian Confucian culture. In short, perhaps the 'model minority' stereotype, as contested as might be such a designation, that characterizes much of the Asian American experience contributes to the conserv-

¹⁵ See here Daniel A. Bell, *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), chap. 3.

¹⁶ E.g., Tom Lin, *Losing Face and Finding Grace: 12 Bible Studies for Asian Americans* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), esp. part 1.

atism that permeates Asian American Evangelicalism.

3. North American evangelical conservatism and its implications

But highlighting East Asian conservatism tells only one side of the story about why Asian Americans tend to be contented with and passive recipients of the theology of the dominant evangelical culture. The other half of this tale has to do with North American conservatism as well. Of course, historically, North American Evangelicalism was formed out of a long history of reaction to mainline Protestant liberalism. By definition, to be conservative means to resist the forces of change insofar as such changes are thought to compromise the received values of a particular tradition. So while some changes have been embraced, evangelical conservatives have long resisted what are perceived as adjustments to historic Christian orthodoxy foisted upon the North American church by their liberal counterparts.¹⁷ More recently, Evangelicals have also entered into the culture wars in defence of traditional family values and other aspects of the agenda of the Republican Party.

Over time, then, Evangelicals have been led to develop theological arguments for their conservative stances. Most relevant for the Asian Ameri-

can experience is how the dominant evangelical culture has accepted, while slightly redefining, at least more recently, the basic categories of the classical *Christ and Culture* study of H. Richard Niebuhr.¹⁸ Yet historically, Evangelicals have embraced the 'Christ against culture' stance, albeit more recently shifting more toward the 'Christ transforming culture' posture. This involves either, at worst, the rejection of culture, which has traditionally characterized evangelical sectarianism (especially among fundamentalists, the close cousins of Evangelicals),¹⁹ or at best, an ambiguous relationship with culture, one featuring what might be called a cultural hermeneutic of suspicion that is always concerned about syncretism with the world. Culture, in popular evangelical parlance, is almost equivalent to the world, and in that sense, is what humans need to be saved from rather than partake of.

So how has this played out in Asian American evangelical communities? Most pointedly, Asian American Evangelicals have traditionally understood their Christian conversion to involve either a turning away from their Asian cultural roots or a minimizing of such aspects of their identity. That Christian

¹⁸ See H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (1951; repr., San Francisco: Harper Torchlight, 1956); cf. Glen H. Stassen, D. M. Yeager and John Howard Yoder, *Authentic Transformation: A New Vision of Christ and Culture* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996).

¹⁹ I.e., as manifest in missionary and evangelistic strategies that called on converts to abandon their cultural beliefs and practices in following Christ—e.g., Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity Among the Ewe in Ghana* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1999).

¹⁷ There are many versions of this story; my own telling is here: 'The Word and the Spirit, or the Spirit and the Word? Exploring the Boundaries of Evangelicalism in Relationship to Modern Pentecostalism,' *Trinity Journal* 23, no. 2 (2002): 235-52.

conversion actually involves Americanization is quite prevalent across the Asian American scene. In my own case growing up, as already indicated in the prologue, we never talked about the importance of Chinese culture; the emphasis at home (my parents were first-generation converts to Christianity) was always on embodying Christian culture. Many Asian Americans thus tend to view their Asian historical and cultural legacies in binary terms: food, dress and music might be retained, because they concern the outward aspects of life, which are incidental anyway to true human identity; but literary, philosophical and religious ideas are to be cautiously approached (at best) since they are probably representative of 'the world' and thus antithetical to the gospel.

This confluence of Confucian and evangelical conservatism has been strengthened through the process of theological education. Asian American Evangelicals tend to attend solidly evangelical seminaries because of their conservative commitments. So whereas mainline Protestant seminaries are much more focused on corporate identities, evangelical seminaries, and their curricula, focus more on personal identities, particularly the formation of spiritual lives in relationship to Christ.²⁰

What this means is that ethnic identities are minimized as having no more than biological significance, and that historical and cultural aspects of Asian

identity are accepted only as accidental to identity in Christ. Asian American Evangelicals are first and foremost Christians, and only secondarily, if at all, Asians (although, interestingly, the prevalence of nationalism among Evangelicals means that American identity is much more important than evangelical rhetoric usually lets on). Evangelical theological education thus provides the philosophical and theological apparatus to make sense of such modes of identity construction

II The Burden of Evangelical Theology—a Minority Report

[The middle section of the chapter, 'The burden of evangelical theology; a minority report', highlights the characteristics of Western evangelical theology embraced by many Asian American Evangelicals, including on its global epistemology, a-cultural hermeneutic, biblical-theological method, and universal doctrinal framework, and argues that Asian American Evangelicals have 'internalized the white evangelical worldview' and so 'do not see the need to think explicitly from an Asian American vantage point'. However, the argument proceeds from the conviction that the Asian American Evangelical community has a much more significant contribution to make, and the final section of the chapter outlines some elements of how that might be achieved.]

III The Mandate of Asian American Evangelical Theology

The preceding analysis raises self-critical awareness for Asian American

²⁰ Russell Jeung, 'Evangelical and Mainline Teachings on Asian American Identity,' in Liew and Yee, *Bible in Asian America*, 211-36, reprinted in Nakka-Cammauf and Tseng, *Asian American Christianity*, 197-216.

Evangelicals and invites them, in dialogue with other Evangelicals, to consider whether their minority status is problematic and what, if anything, can and ought to be done about it. Now I am aware that there are developments within the evangelical theological tradition, broadly construed, that have moved beyond some of the strictures identified in the preceding section. Progressive evangelicals, the evangelical left and postconservative evangelicals denote just a few of the trends, among others, percolating on the margins of evangelical theology.²¹

But that is precisely part of the problem: that these are movements that except for a small minority remain outside the evangelical mainstream and that they have also, by and large, been ignored by Asian American evangelical scholars and theologians. I believe that productive ways forward can be charted via Asian American evangelicals in dialogue with some of these ideas, although at the end of the day, such conversations will be only as productive as Asian American evangelicals formulate a platform on which they can bring something substantive to the discussion. This latter task is part of the present challenge, and burden of the present book.

Insofar then that I am interested in the question of what Asian Americans can contribute to evangelical theology not just historically or sociologically but at a theological level, my claim is that pursuit of these matters, ironically, also involves taking seriously the

historicity and particularity of Asian American cultures, experiences and perspectives. In this final part of this chapter, I do no more than suggest, in broad strokes, how to go about such an undertaking.

1. Realities of the Asian American diaspora

Part of 'the problematic of evangelical theology' can be clarified if we situate Asian American evangelical theology amid the broader Asian American diasporic, historical and social realities described in part at the beginning of chapter two. Doing so enables the more stark realization that Asian American Evangelicals are constituted by a wide range of experiences on the one hand and the pressure to assimilate to American culture on the other. While Asians have lived in North America since the founding of the republic and had even contributed to the building of the American empire during the nineteenth century, the 1965 Immigration Act that repealed the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1924 reopened the door to a new wave of Asian migration. During the last generation, Asian American life has been further transformed by the forces of globalization: diasporas created by modernization, industrialization and urbanization; refugee populations displaced by war, famine and climate changes; movement enabled by the emergence of a worldwide market economy, advances in technology and mass communication; the cross-fertilization of ideologies; and shifts in international relations.²²

²¹ Many of these are discussed in Roger E. Olson, *Reformed and Always Reforming: The Postconservative Approach to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

²² For an overview of these issues, see Wanni W. Anderson and Robert G. Lee, eds., *Dis-*

The result, as saw in the previous chapter, is the appearance of a wide range of Asian American communities across North America. Life in such communities is fluid, affected by migration patterns, socioeconomic pressures and the strength of relations with those 'back home.' The stronger the transnational ties between Asian immigrants in the West and their families, organizations and institutions (religious and otherwise) in their homeland, the more intense and longer-lasting the exchange of religious goods and ideas (in the form of books, periodicals and various forms of telecommunication).

Unsurprisingly, then, first-generation immigrants often deepen the religious commitments that they held or practiced perhaps more nominally before moving. Sometimes immigrants convert to the more dominant religion of their new home. In either case, religious affiliation often serves to secure social networks, confer status otherwise difficult to come by for immigrants, and strengthen ethnic, cultural and linguistic bonds and identities. But for the 1.5 generation (those born in Asia but who grew up at least in part in the United States, like myself) the process of assimilation is well under way. In these cases, the ethnic enclave will develop English-speaking sections, as

well as social organizations, school clubs and Christian congregations.

For young adult Asian American Evangelicals, however, there is often a keen sense that their own ethnically organized congregations or groups are somehow less religiously and theologically legitimate because they do not have the more 'universal' appeal of white or multicultural evangelical churches or parachurch organizations.²³ The result is either the transition of ethnic congregations into pan-ethnic congregations or movement from their 'home' congregation to other less ethnically defined church environments.²⁴ By the time the second generation attains adulthood, the remaining cultural or linguistic barriers to full assimilation into American society are practically overcome, often to the dismay of parents and grandparents.²⁵

²³ See, e.g., Rebecca Y. Kim, 'Negotiation of Ethnic and Religious Boundaries by Asian American Campus Evangelicals,' in Tony Carnes and Fenggang Yang, eds., *Asian American Religions: The Making and Remaking of Borders and Boundaries* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 141-59, and Rudy V. Busto, 'The Gospel According to the Model Minority? Hazardous an Interpretation of Asian American Evangelical College Students,' in David K. Yoo, ed., *New Spiritual Homes: Religion and Asian Americans* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 169-87.

²⁴ See Russell Jeung, *Faithful Generations: Race and New Asian American Churches* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004).

²⁵ As can be discerned by reading between the lines of the Bible studies in Tom Lin's *Losing Face and Finding Grace*. This appears to be the case whether the second generation intentionally attempts to distinguish its ethnic congregational life from that of the first immi-

placements and Diasporas: Asians in the Americas (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005). I discuss further the implications of globalization for Christian theology in Amos Yong and Peter Heltzel, 'Robert Cummings Neville and the Global Future of Theology,' in Yong and Heltzel, eds., *Theology in Global Context: Essays in Honor of Robert Cummings Neville* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 29-42, esp. 30-34.

What does such assimilation consist of? Certainly speaking English, participating in the market economy and adapting to the options provided by American secularity and politics are minimal adjustments. But perhaps assimilation also requires abandoning the norms of the immigrant culture in favour of American norms for family and gender relations, and engaging with the public square on its terms. If so would this not lead to an evangelical self-understanding deeply formed by American culture, politics and economics? Would this not result in a subordination and even deformation of all that is Asian except for the biological phenotype? It would appear, then, that becoming American would more easily facilitate the embrace of evangelical Christianity—if such is defined as a suburban, Midwestern, white, middle-class religious phenomenon with Wheaton, Illinois, as its veritable ‘Mecca’—but this brings with it the cost of losing one’s Asianness. Does this mean that full acceptance of Evangelicalism includes ‘repentance’ from Asia and ‘conversion’ to Americanism?²⁶

grant generation, or whether the second generation becomes absorbed into nonethnic or even multiethnic congregations; on this point, see Elaine Howard Ecklund, ‘Models of Civic Responsibility: Korean Americans in Congregations with Different Ethnic Compositions,’ *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44, no. 1 (2005): 15–28.

26 One could also make the reverse argument, however, that Evangelicalism in the United States has already been molded by its social, cultural and historical context to the extent that the very features that mark the American way of life—i.e., individualism, experientialism, pragmatism, even consumerism—have also come to characterize evangeli-

cal Christianity. For an insightful analysis of the oftentimes uncritical conflation of Evangelicalism and Americanism, and of the forces that have also resisted such accommodations, see D. G. Hart, *That Old-Time Religion in Modern America: Evangelical Protestantism in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Dee, 2002).

That this is not the case seems to be borne out by the sociological literature, which confirms that ethnicity remains just as important as religion in the formation of Asian American identity.²⁷ But if so, evangelical theology has not even begun to wrestle with the importance of ethnicity and race, not to mention their theological implications. Second-generation Korean Americans, for instance, seem to be intuitively drawn to churches and parachurch ministries that foreground their Korean cultural identity,²⁸ but they have developed few theological rationales for such forms of social organization; more to the point, their own theological presuppositions mitigate against such activity, which may explain their identity conflictedness.

Unsurprisingly, then, Asian American evangelical theology has yet to get off the ground even at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Asian American Evangelicals getting degrees from institutions of higher education have had to wrestle with/against this assim-

cal Christianity. For an insightful analysis of the oftentimes uncritical conflation of Evangelicalism and Americanism, and of the forces that have also resisted such accommodations, see D. G. Hart, *That Old-Time Religion in Modern America: Evangelical Protestantism in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Dee, 2002).

27 See Jerry Z. Park, ‘The Ethnic and Religious Identities of Young Asian Americans’ (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2004).

28 See Sharon Kim and Rebecca Y. Kim, ‘Second-Generation Korean American Christians’ Communities: Congregational Hybridity,’ in Carolyn Chen and Russell Jeung, eds., *Sustaining Faith Traditions: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion Among the Latino and Asian American Second Generation* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 176–93.

ilative impulse, have had to struggle with the question of whether they are or should be doing (descriptive) sociology rather than theology (as normative reflection), and have had to articulate an apologetic for doing *Asian American* evangelical theology rather than just *evangelical* theology. For too many Asian American Evangelicals, their status 'betwixt and between'—on the one hand belonging to Asia and to the United States in some respects, but on the other hand being a stranger to both Asia and the United States in other respects—puts them in a unique position to interrogate evangelical theology but (to date) leaves them outside the formal organizational and institutional structures to critique effectively and transform the evangelical theological tradition.

2. Moving trajectories of theological reflection

Of course, if Asian Americans hope to climb the ranks of the North American evangelical theological academy, they can only do so on the terms established by their hosts. And rather than responding to sociopolitical factors, the evangelical theological guild has always understood itself primarily in theological terms and seen its charge as defending historical orthodoxy, whether that be against liberalism's denial of biblical supernaturalism, against neo-orthodoxy's ambiguous stance on Scripture, against mainstream science's theory of evolution, against open theism's doctrine of God, and so on.²⁹ If evangelical

theology has never before entertained ethnic perspectives in its discursive construction, why now undermine the (its presumed) universal framework and applicability by adding the *Asian* or *Asian American* qualifiers?

While in a sense this entire book provides a set of responses to this question, here I suggest three reasons that can motivate such a theological path forward.

First, the Asian diaspora in the United States is now in a situation to reflect substantively on its experience of migration. While there are tremendous challenges to migration,³⁰ some Asian Americans have achieved a level of upward social mobility so that they are now in the position of producing scholarship informed by such experiential perspectives. Since the memory of migration among Asian Americans is more recent than those of their Caucasian colleagues, such perspectives might be helpful to identify how the migration from the European continent has shaped the evangelical theological enterprise as a whole. If Asian Americans can help their evangelical colleagues identify the historical impact of old to new world migration on the beliefs and practices of North American Evangelicalism, that in itself will open up possibilities for considering afresh Asian American histories and their contributions to the wider conversation.

alism: The Postwar Evangelical Coalition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

³⁰ Some of these are documented by Kenneth J. Guest, *God in Chinatown: Religion and Survival in New York's Evolving Immigrant Community* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), whose work we will return to in chapter six.

²⁹ Evangelical theology's many internal and external battles are documented by Jon R. Stone, *On the Boundaries of American Evangelicalism*.

Second, Asian Americans are forced to think about race and ethnicity in a way unlike most of their white brothers and sisters, although their reflections can also mediate perspective in an otherwise white-and-black demarcated world. Race and ethnicity are undeniable aspects of Asian American history and experience. The import of this is at least twofold. First, Asian Americans are positioned to engage the discussion opened up by black evangelical theologians regarding contemporary theology—even in its evangelical guises—as reflecting the ascent of white perspectives in the early modern period at the expense of Jewish and other nonwhite cultural realities. Asian American perspectives on race and ethnicity will open up new vistas on the racial and ethnic dimensions of the biblical world.³¹ In other words, the marginalized histories and perspectives of Asian American Evangelicals have much to contribute to contemporary biblical interpretation and theological explication. The dominant forms of evangelical theology forged in part out

of the hegemony of Christendom are in need of critical analysis and dialogical revision.

Last but not least, central and ongoing elements of Asian American history are part of the present experiences of transnationalism and globalization. The issues here are complex.³² One matter that needs to be addressed is the interwoven character of the global economy and how it affects people around the world differently depending on various social, political and cultural circumstances. In addition, with regard to the Asian American side of this equation, there remain difficult issues related to how the question of assimilation or acculturation is being negotiated and adjudicated. First-, second- and third-generation perspectives differ, sometimes momentarily, and this does not even factor in the perspectives of the 1.5 generation.

If theology is to engage the historical realities of real flesh-and-blood human beings, it must engage such questions in our contemporary world. Asian American Evangelicals can lead the way in thinking theologically about such things, and this will benefit not only Asian American communities but also those of other ethnic, racial and cultural groups who are also wrestling with life in the twenty-first-century global context.

Evangelical theology today will need to heed more intentionally than it has before factors of migration, ethnicity, globalization and transnationalism. Asian American Evangelicals can assist with these matters, if they will

31 Asian Evangelicals thus need to build from the insightful readings of mainline Protestant biblical scholar Tat-Siong Benny Liew, *What Is Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics? Reading the New Testament* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), regarding the ethnic dynamics underneath Jewish-Gentile relations in the New Testament. To be sure, Liew's mainline Protestant assumptions may be rather distant from evangelical ones, so some critical dialogue and perhaps correction may also be in order. Yet the strength of Liew's book is to suggest how Asian American experiences of ethnic marginality can illuminate the disputes between Jewish and Gentile followers of the Messiah in the first century. This is an issue worth substantial engagement from an evangelical perspective.

32 E.g., Neil J. Ormerod and Shane Clifton, *Globalization and the Mission of the Church* (New York: T & T Clark, 2011).

arise to the occasion. This does not detract from the universality of the gospel message. On the contrary it addresses questions of universal significance that are otherwise neglected or engaged from or within only one (dominant, centrist) set of perspectives.

3. Reconnecting to the broader evangelical theological tradition.

Before concluding this chapter, however, an important caveat ought to be sounded. None of the preceding should be read as denying either Asian American indebtedness to the evangelical tradition or the interrelatedness of Asian American and other evangelical efforts in the contemporary theological task. The preceding might suggest that Asian Americans are only pointing accusing fingers at their white evangelical friends. Without taking away anything from the seriousness of the foregoing discussion, I also realize that white Evangelicals in particular and Americans in general have been welcoming to Asians and that we have made it this far on our diasporic journey only with the help of such friends.

Beyond such ecclesial collegiality, however, I would grant that Asian Americans are in various respects beholden theologically to American Evangelicals as well. In particular, American evangelical commitments to Christ-centeredness, biblical faithfulness and missionary zealotry are important elements of Christian belief and practice in the twenty-first century. Asian American Evangelicals should embrace and live out such commitments not only for themselves but also for other Evangelicals and even for the world.

Yet my claim is precisely that such a posture enables Asian American Evangelicals to contribute theologically to the formation of an evangelical belief and praxis relevant to the twenty-first century. For this to happen, however, Asian American Evangelicals must embrace not only the *evangel* but also the historicity of their diasporic experiences.

The incarnation of the Son of God consisted, after all, of taking on the concreteness, palpability and temporality of human, Jewish and first-century Palestinian flesh, and the outpouring of the Spirit of God on the Day of Pentecost involved the redemption of the diversity of human tongues, languages and cultures so that they might bear witness to the wondrous works of God (Acts 2:11). This pentecostal theme—related to Acts 2 first and foremost, albeit refracted unavoidably through the lens of my modern pentecostal ecclesial sensibilities—will inform the deep structure of the argument in the remainder of this volume, yet achieved within a pent-evangelical rather than merely charismatic frame of reference.

My point going forward, however, is that in light of these theological and trinitarian commitments, Evangelicals should be the first to embrace the diversity of their historical particularities rather than shy away from them. Traditionally, of course, Evangelicals have subordinated the vicissitudes of history, and with that their anxieties about the flux and subjectivities of experience, to the surety and foundationalism of the Word of God as revealed in the Scriptures. My proposal, however, is that the work of God in Christ and by the Spirit redeems us amid, with and through the specificities of our his-

torical and cultural experience (rather than saving us from out of such altogether) and thus that the Word of God speaks into such realities (rather than that we have to deny them or reject them as part of who we are).

In short, Asian American Evangelicals do not need to be apologetic about their lives, experiences and perspectives. Rather, by following the path of the Son of God into the far country, by receiving the infilling of the Spirit of God poured out on all flesh, and by faithfully attempting to live out such a Christ-centred and Spirit-empowered

faith in the footsteps of their evangelical forebears and ancestors, Asian Americans may then be able to bring their theological gifts to the conversation table, gifts that will challenge the discussion while simultaneously enriching the fare for all those concerned about the *euangelion* in the present time. It is time to theologize as Asian Americans, not just as Evangelicals, in order that Evangelicalism itself can be renewed and invigorated for the sake of the gospel and in anticipation of the reign of God.

PATERNOSTER THEOLOGICAL MONOGRAPHS

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A Trinitarian Doctrine of Christian Vocation

Scott Harrower

I Introduction

In Sanders' work, *The Deep Things of God*, the central thesis—and perhaps the most helpful point of Sanders' work—has to do with 'God's life in us'.¹ Sanders has outlined a participatory view of salvation and the Christian life in direct contrast to what he sees as a 'reductionist' evangelicalism. To his credit, Sanders has applied his trinitarian insights to the key Christian practices of prayer and Bible reading. However, our view is that 'God's life in us' entails greater outworkings in the human realm than just these two individual devotional practices. Indeed, such a limited view of the human response to God would be tantamount to falling prey to the individualism which Sanders so roundly rejects.

If trinitarian theology is truly able to change everything (as Sanders' subtitle claims), then surely the compre-

hensiveness of the triune-human relationship must capture the full sweep of our being.² For this reason a theology of vocation plays a key role in spelling out a theological anthropology and the divine-human relationship.

Vocation refers to God's call upon people's lives. It is based on the Greek *kaleo* (to call), which is to summon and invite.³ Vocation answers the question: 'What does God the Trinity call and invite us to do?' A 'thin' theological response to this question tends to be expressed in such a way that trinitarian theology is entirely absent. This view, commonly expressed in the realm of practical theology, holds that God is primarily active and rational rather than the triune God who is a personal

¹ Fred Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything* (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway, 2010).

² Other areas into which Sanders' work could be extended include the areas of mission and ecclesiology.

³ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 'Vocation' in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1988), 995.

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knower and desirer.⁴ Such a minimalist view of the trinitarian grounding for a doctrine of vocation will locate this doctrine within God's providential care and guidance (Ps 127; 139; Prov 3:5-6; Mt 10:29-31). For example, this approach may claim that vocation merely follows on:

...from two propositions. The first, that God is everywhere active in human affairs and his will operative at all times. The second, that he is a rational God, fully aware that the world needs farmers and miners as well as priests and nuns.⁵

If such a minimalist view were taken, then as far as the doctrines of the Trinity and vocation go, we may have lost our focus on God himself. Hence we heed Sanders' caution against unthinkingly throwing ourselves into the 'river of salvation and swimming downstream' with little regard for the fountain from which the life of salvation flows.⁶

The need for extending trinitarian theology into the realm of vocation is clear. Its benefits include the fact that such a view is more closely related to the witness of scripture and it also places the triune life of God as both the ontological basis and the relational source and goal for human life. A loss

of focus on God when it comes to human vocation naturally leads to various theologies which place false calls upon our lives.

After the fall of Adam, the relational and purposeful aspects of human nature were distorted. As a consequence, humankind's relationships and work are irrevocably altered, and people fall prey to the tyranny of distorted, destructive, idolatrous pseudo-calls. Moreover, theology which is inexorably dependent upon God's own life will expose the *Abgotts*, the false gods, in whose shadow we seek to live.⁷

More positively, a gospel-centred trinitarian theology will richly capture who God is and who we are as his people. This is because our human vocation is truly understood only in the context of conversion and regeneration, and for this reason must be seen within a trinitarian reality.⁸ Only a trinitarian basis for vocation can include the renewed call to be God's covenant

⁷ For example, a very common *Abgott* today is the self-focused call to be physically fit and wealthy above all other concerns. In addition, a trinitarian theology of vocation will also respond to *ungodly* ways in which vocation theology has been employed for exploitation. On this issue see Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁸ 'Conversion, or a change of heart and heart orientation, becomes the means by which we discover our identity; it does not change it, but rather enhances that call. You might say that prior to conversion you lived falsely; with conversion we find ourselves and our vocations, though it is certainly possible, before conversion, to live one's true vocation, but not in the light of the grace of God.' Gordon T. Smith, *Courage and Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 52.

⁴ Naturally (!) he is God the Trinity who is only ever active in creation as the willful gracious outflow of the trinitarian super-life. Further to this, he is only ever rational in a personal manner.

⁵ Gordon R. Preece, 'The Threefold Call: A Trinitarian and Reformed Theology in Response to Volf's *Work in the Spirit*' (Fuller Theological Seminary, 1997), 3:14.

⁶ Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*, 69.

partners.⁹ Furthermore, the reception of this call and its enablement cannot be understood aside from the work of God through Christ and his Spirit.

This work outlines a foundational trinitarian theology of vocation.¹⁰ In our view human vocation consists of four calls from God upon our lives. These are the calls to be co-worshippers, vice-regents, disciples, and gifted servants. The first aspect of human vocation is to be worshippers of God as a covenant community. Secondly, we are called to be God's labouring and loving vice-regents. Thirdly, we are called to be obedient Christ-like disciples of Jesus. Fourthly, we are called to discern the particular gifts we have received in order to serve others.

II Being in Right Relationship with God

The first aspect of human vocation is to be worshippers of God in the company of his image-bearers. This is the *being-in-right-relationship* aspect of

vocation. A trinitarian model of God's life presents him as the grounds for a personalist view of what is ultimate. In a Christian personalist account, the ultimate personal being and his desires lie at the centre of reality. The super-personal God as three persons and his desires is the free personal plenitude and self-delight of God the Trinity.

This is captured by Sanders' language of the 'Happy Land of the Trinity'.¹¹ The phrase helpfully clarifies that the 'personal' is the centre of the universe, not only in terms of reality, but also in terms of axiology-value.¹² Indeed, the tri-personal One is accorded the highest axiology; the highest value. Thus, the first aspect of a doctrine of human vocation is the relational acknowledgement of God's worth-ship: our worship of God as Father, Son, and Spirit.

A trinitarian theology of worship means that mere knowledge of God is not a sufficient outcome of a personal relationship with him. Rather, our 'I-Thou' relationship will be experienced as the enjoyment of the exclusive worship of God.¹³ While the telos of the creation is to 'glorify God and enjoy him forever', due to the distinctive triune nature of God, the joyful ascription of worth to him in this world will be of

⁹ There is a dynamism inherent in this trinitarian reality which is a result of the present and eschatological nature of the Kingdom of God for both individuals and communities. In the present, the redemptive renewal of an individual and a people group by the Spirit of Christ involves knowing and experiencing the identity and call of the Triune God. We are called to be transformed in light of the ontological reality and economic acts of God the Father as co-triune creator and worker, the believer's new basic identity as 'dying and rising with Christ', and discerning the gifts and renewal made possible by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁰ I am particularly grateful to my wife, Kate Harrower, and to Jonathan King from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School for their valuable feedback on this paper.

¹¹ Not only is this a catchy phrase but it highlights the freedom and plenitude within the loving life of God. 'In himself and without any reference to a created world or to the plan of salvation, God is that being who exists as the triune love of the Father for the Son in the unity of the Spirit.' (Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*: 63).

¹² Here I am indebted to Graham Cole's work of Personalism.

¹³ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (Columbia: Word, 1987), 9.

a particular kind.¹⁴

Firstly, our 'I-Thou' enjoyment of God takes place as image-bearers. This involves a degree of con-natural-ity. Due to this con-natural relationship in which *like* knows *like*, we can truly relate personally to the super-personal God. The image-bearers of God know and enjoy the One they image. Importantly, the triune-to-image relationship can occur only in the light of his life *for* us and *in* us. That is, we perceive God's self-revelation only *post facto* human repentance, the divine forgiveness of sin and a person's reception of the Holy Spirit.

We can know and enjoy him only in the person of the Son and the intimacy of the Spirit. In this way we are re-vivified to worship God. Thus, the Christian call to the worship of God necessarily assumes a trinitarian theology. Only a triune vocation theology can successfully accommodate the personal and historical forms of the saving good news of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

A trinitarian view of our primary vocation, the worship of God, has tremendous ramifications. Such a perspective halts the 'means-to-an-end' view of God which Sanders has highlighted within some pockets of Christianity. He writes that if our trinitarian reflection and practice has a starting point other than God himself, then

... everything we say about the practical relevance of the Trinity

could lead us to one colossal misunderstanding: thinking of God the Trinity as a means to some other end, as if God were Trinity in order to make himself useful. But God the Trinity is the end, the goal, the *telos*, the omega.¹⁵

Thus, we reject functional approaches to God, and thereby derivatively uphold that humanity was created in order to be *creatures-in-right-relationship*: God's people in God's place, in God's presence.¹⁶

This far-reaching personal relationality means that the human vocation to be worshippers cannot be actualized on an individual level. It is irrevocably a call to be worshippers with other redeemed image-bearers of God.¹⁷ This is a necessary consequence of the triune economy, and is no mere outward call imposed upon the believer. We are ontologically determined as co-worshippers with other regenerated people by the new nature we receive and the indwelling of God. As those who worship Jesus in the Spirit, we are inherently in *koinonia* with one another.

15 Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*, 62.

16 This is a variation on Goldsworthy's work wherein he claims that the Kingdom of God seen in the Garden of Eden and woven throughout Scripture is 'God's people in God's place under God's rule'. In our view, however, 'God's Rule' is an outworking and facilitation of his presence. Thus we give God's presence the priority in our schema (Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and kingdom: A Christian Interpretation of the Old Testament* [Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1981], 46).

17 Being in a relation of loving worship to God naturally leads to loving his image-bearers in their proper proportion; as relational flesh from our own flesh.

14 Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace: The Kuyper Lectures for 1981 delivered at the Free University of Amsterdam* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1983), 69-72. See also Article 1 of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*.

Thereby worship (and the service it entails) is never an individual action. Indeed, we worship with others even when we are not worshipping in the local church. Christians are not alone in worship because we are conjoined to worshippers throughout the world and throughout time. Further, a trinitarian appreciation of our vocation to worship means we never worship alone because we join with the prayers of Jesus and the Spirit in the company of saints.

The character of the worshippers and the kind of worship which arises within Christians stem from divine freedom. These flow from the fact that God's wisdom delighted to determine humans into being as his image-bearers. The free divine plenitude as Father, Son, and Spirit is the objective basis of grace because God's relationship to us is configured towards us from the *a priori* plenitude of his triune freedom apart from creation. Sanders highlighted the gracious and astounding movement outwards from God's self as follows:

Imagining God without the world is one way to highlight the freedom of God in creating. ... Creation was not required, not mandatory, not exacted from God, neither by any necessity imposed from outside nor by any deficit lurking within the life of God. It would be wrong to say that God created because he was lonely, unfulfilled, or bored. Such divine freedom is one of the things meant by grace.¹⁸

Grace is one of the implications of the Trinity's freedom from creation. The pure act of God's being *is* as Father, Son and Spirit. Any act to will or know outside himself is a strictly unnecessary, though strongly willed, act of generous giving. Therefore, the sum of the God-human relationship is predicated upon the basis of the kindness and generosity of God. In this light, the worship of God does not stem merely from his right over us as righteous creator, but from our appreciation of his gift of creating us in his image.¹⁹

Furthermore, in salvation his grace is offered to humans despite their enmity towards him. By means of beginning with the fullness of the triune life, and hence the relational freedom of God, doubly good news is presented before us. There is the good news of general creation and the particular good news of salvation-life. Hence, neither creation nor salvation-life is dependent on human faith or moral virtue, but on the gift and grace of being brought into a richness of life with God the Trinity. As humans we have experienced the qualitatively gracious generosity of God before the fall, and after the fall we have received divine mercy.

God the Trinity seeks to dwell with human beings. Ultimately both the gift of creation and the grace of redemption serve this relational goal (Rev 21-22). The divine call to return to this primary worship is re-stated and re-offered in Jesus, and is enabled by the Spirit, as John's gospel makes clear (Jn 14:6 ff.). Indeed, the book of Revelation climaxes with the call: 'Worship God!' (Rev

¹⁸ Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*: 64-65.

¹⁹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics 4/1: The Doctrine of Reconciliation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 528-48.

22:9). Thus all other areas of human vocation will be received in worshipful thanks as good gifts from God. Purposeful activity (work) and relationships are each a *Dei donum*. We now turn to these performative aspects of human vocation: labour and love.

III Labour and Love

The second aspect of a trinitarian theology of vocation involves the call to be God's vice-regents, 'in Christ', on earth. This involves the *labour* and *loving* aspects of human vocation.

The divine call upon humans to be his working vice-regents on earth stems from the fact that the triune God is a creator-worker, and people are his image-bearers. The consequence of being made in the image of God (Gen 1:26-30) is that as God's vice-regents our vocation is to extend God's life-giving rule via purposeful labour and relational fruitfulness.²⁰ The divine re-statement of love in the incarnation, the cross, and the indwelling of the Spirit, re-affirms humanity as God's chosen creatures. The gospel highlights the Spirit's indwelling of believers as one of the main ways in which God the Trinity remains providentially involved in creation. Labour, or work, as an extension of human rule, is part of people's basic activity as beings, and not a result of sin.²¹ Because human

identity is endowed with royal dignity and priestly purpose as image-bearers of God, 'human work is invested with preeminent significance'.²²

This is the great affirmation that God takes people and their work seriously, because he has entrusted people to co-manage the planet under him.²³ In covenant with God, humans have the lofty task of defining the earth by obeying God's command to work in the Garden of Eden.²⁴ Our covenantal relationship with him is an outworking of his triune decision for life beyond himself. God's image-bearers are to reflect his decision for life and his care for the universe. People are to care for the garden because it is not self-caring, nor self-perpetuating.²⁵

God's speech in the second creation account nuances the nature of human world-care. Humankind is instructed to 'dress' and 'keep' the garden. Dress involves service: 'the man is placed in the Garden as a servant. He is not to be served but to serve.'²⁶ To 'keep' carries the nuance of tending, guarding, and 'to exercise great care over'.²⁷ A concern for the earth means a benevolent human 'subdue and rule' (Gen 1:28).

mentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1990), 171.

²² William P. Brown, 'Whatever Your Hand Finds to Do', *Interpretation* 55, no. 3 (2001), 271.

²³ Smith, *Courage and Calling*, 26-28.

²⁴ Brown, 'Whatever Your Hand Finds to Do', 271.

²⁵ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 171.

²⁶ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 171.

²⁷ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 171.

²⁰ Human vocation is necessarily connected to our relationship with God, other people, all creatures and the earth. Therefore, human vice-regency entails a fullness of relational and active life within which God's intentions for humanity are mutually enriching.

²¹ Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, The New International Com-

This entails a righteous human treatment of creatures, the earth and other humans, as God would treat them.²⁸ On God's side of the covenantal relationship, his command to 'subdue and rule' implies that God promises to assist humankind to carry this out.²⁹

Human work is never presented as a vocation in isolation from the other calls upon the Christian life. The creator-to-image-bearer relationship lays the foundation for the fact that in the account of the Garden of Eden, a relational frame of reference conditions the work of human beings. Humans are not only worshippers of God but are also called to fruitfully multiply. The kingdom of God in Eden will expand only as people are in relationship to God and in relationship to one another. The 'personal' aspect conditions, or relativizes, the 'professional'.

This is highly significant for western cultures in which performance has priority over persons. Primary amongst the many examples whereby the relational conditions limit the realm of work is that the creation account makes it abundantly (and polemically) clear that God is the only right object of worship.³⁰ Knowing God is both logically prior and properly basic to being commanded to rule the earth and be fruitful within it. Work is not the goal

of existence nor should it be the object of worship or first allegiance. That the relational places delimiters upon human work-activity is clear also from the instructions people receive: dominion *and* reproduction.

The reproductive aspect of our call means that the production of work is never valued more highly than the producers themselves, nor those who engage in the activity of labour. The relational goal of rest with God—the Sabbath command whereby rest is holy—means that rest relativizes work and points humanity to its ultimate state of shalom rest and delight with God.³¹

The particularly trinitarian aspect of human work and fruitful relationships is refocused by the gospel. The gospel spotlights the need for, and the possibility of, both human work and fruitful relationships rightly taking place only 'in Christ'. In this way, the messiness of ordinary Christian life is truly connected to God and his purposes. This is the extension of the message of *The Deep Things of God* with its emphasis on good *participatory* news, which is best stated as 'God participates in our life'.

We can extend Sanders' work by stating that this participation 'in Christ' means work or 'doing what the Lord has given your hand to do' (Ecc 2:24-25; 3:12, 22; 9: 7-10; Col 3:17) that takes place in the light of being called into God's household (Eph 2:19). Thereby, a Christian spirituality of vocation and work truly entails the

²⁸ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*: 32.

²⁹ 'This is repeated to Noah after the flood (9:1), and the patriarchs too are reminded of this divine promise (17:2, 20; 28:3; 35:11). The genealogies of Gen 5, 9, 11, 25, 36, 46 bear silent testimony to its fulfillment, and on his death bed Jacob publicly notes the fulfillment of this divine word (48:4; cf. 47:27).' Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*: 33.

³⁰ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 9.

³¹ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*: 143. Gordon R. Preece, 'Choices at the Coalface', (Sydney: Anglican Dicoese Social Issues Committee, 1991), 10.

ultimately personal and divine in the midst of the messiness and ordinariness of human existence.³² With regard to work Luther stated, 'God himself will milk the cows through him whose vocation that is. He who engages in the lowliness of his work performs God's work, be he a lad or a king.'³³ Human work is 'the work of our Lord God under a mask, as it were, beneath which he himself alone effects and accomplishes what we desire'.³⁴ Luther also modelled relational fruitfulness by means of his loving marriage and the couple's ministry of hospitality.

The fact that work and relationships are carried out 'in Christ' leads to their expression in tandem with the progressive Christ-likeness of the believer. The in-Christ-ness of our vocations to work and be fruitful entails that we do these righteously—the 'as Christ' aspect of our vocations.

IV Human Imitation of the Divine Life

The third aspect of a Christian view of human vocation is the call to be disciples of Jesus. This is the *imitational* aspect of vocation. Whereas we have argued above that our work is to be done

'in Christ', here we turn our attention to the hope of working 'as Christ'. This is so because Christ is our role model for both active and passive obedience to God as Father. This is enabled by the Spirit in line with the will of God the Father. Our first vocational call is to be worshippers. From this life of worship flows a life of obedience to God's call to be workers and fruitful 'in Christ'. The manner in which this is carried out after the Fall must reflect Jesus' righteousness and call to be followers of him.

An unhelpful interpretation of this call and role modelling would be a practical Christo-monism. Sanders' helpfully highlights this danger in chapter 5 of *The Deep Things of God*. He warns of the danger whereby 'Jesus becomes my heavenly Father, Jesus lives in my heart, Jesus died to save me from the wrath of Jesus, so I could be with Jesus forever'.³⁵ Sanders' comment is helpful as he reminds us that the whole of the triune economy must be taken into account in order to properly reflect God's concerns.

Our first point here is that careful attention to Jesus' call to be disciples entails a triune expectation on our behalf. That is, Jesus' call to be disciples entails a dependence on God who is at least a plurality of persons. Jesus' calls to faith and discipleship are possible only if Jesus is worthy of worship. Therefore Christian discipleship must be at the very least binitarian if it is not to be blasphemous. However, one cannot be a binitarian disciple and do explanative justice to the economic work

32 Simon C. Holt, 'When it's an Industry, What's Hospitality?', *Zadok Perspectives* 79, no. 17-25 (2003): 19.

33 Luther, *Exposition of Psalm 127 for the Christians at Riga, XV*, cited in Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), 9. See also Preece, 'The Three-fold Call: A Trinitarian and Reformed Theology in Response to Volf's Work in the Spirit', 2.

34 John S. Feinberg, 'Luther's Doctrine: Some Problems of Interpretation and Application', *Fides Et Historia* 12 (1979), 60.

35 Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*, 171.

of God in redemption.³⁶ It is impossible to come to that posture before Jesus by our own design. This highlights God's grace towards us.

Being a disciple of Jesus is an outworking of God's free initiative and superabundant love towards and in people's lives. Discipleship is predicated upon the regeneration by, and reception of, the Holy Spirit despite default human indifference or outright rejection of God. The Holy Spirit highlights Jesus' person and work as well as enabling us to receive the justifying and sanctifying benefits of these. Vocational righteousness and God the Trinity must go together. Human fulfilment of all righteousness is ever only a trinitarian event.³⁷ The divine identity, which is perichoretic, secures not only the identity of the one God, it also secures the very possibility of human vocation.

We now turn to God the Trinity's enablement of human faithfulness. Progressive vocational righteousness, or sanctification by the Spirit, is given a clear shape and goal by Jesus' own model of righteous obedience to God. Jesus has demonstrated the true righteousness of God and of the new Adam and of faithful Israel. As such, Jesus exercised true human dominion and authority in that he responded faithfully and missiologically to the delegated

authority he received (Mt 28:1-20).

The practical outworkings of the divine commission of the Father, Son and Spirit encompass the whole of our human vocations. Indeed, Jesus' threefold Great Commission moves us in the direction of re-creation based upon Genesis 1 and 2. This re-creation is aimed at a restoration of relationship between people and God, others, and the earth.

That is, firstly, there is the call for persons to be baptized and become disciples themselves. This re-states and restores the God-wards aspect of the covenant. Secondly, disciples are to do what Jesus refers to as: 'All that I have taught you'. This is the rule of right relationships in the horizontal aspect of the covenant. Thirdly, the call to make disciples is the work of the restoration of God's image-bearers who are to rule over the earth. These disciples are to do so by being salt and light in a decaying world. This involves anticipating the new heaven and the new earth.³⁸

Within this framework, Jesus called some of his followers away from their work in order to follow him. However, he also called many to stay in the social context from which they had come (Mk 5:18ff.; 5:34; 8: 26; Mt 8:13; 9:6). Luther appreciated the significance of this theology for everyone. He proposed that everyday activity becomes a vocation when it is transformed by the gospel. Luther rightly regarded the fulfilment of worldly duty as 'the highest form which the moral activity of an

³⁶ We must take into account also the fact that God's trinity is also the personal and active grounds for beginning the pilgrim journey of Christ-likeness as we are perfected by the Spirit.

³⁷ Just as God's concern for humanity is expressed in his trinitarian redemptive acts, so his enablement for carrying out our tasks in a Christ-like manner will be trinitarian.

³⁸ The new heaven and new Earth are the final land promise of God's covenant with his new people of God. This is a strong contrast to the Babel type of self-glorifying, this-worldly dominion of Genesis 12.

individual could assume'.³⁹

This takes seriously the call to grow in Christ-likeness (2 Cor 3:18; 1 Pet 1:16; 1 Jn 3:2-3). As part of this call to be saints (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2) and 'partakers of a holy calling' (2 Tim 1:9), believers are to respond to God's active providence in faith. In this light, people can delight in God's providence amidst whatever occupies their daily time.

This delight is based upon the knowledge that their activities are part of God's call upon their lives. This includes not only paid work but all the 'smaller' purposeful activities in life such as putting out the bins or having lunch. These are the activities carried out by Jesus' disciples who have an active role in the extension of the Kingdom of God by means of their lived-out characters. Any context where people are placed, such as at home, at a commercial workplace, or at a volunteer society, is where people carry out this discipleship aspect of their vocations.

V Discernment and Direction-Setting

The final aspect of vocation which we shall outline today is the call to be gifted servants. This is the *discerning and directional* aspect of vocation. Having established the world of work as one which must be carried out 'in Christ' and 'as Christ', we now turn to establish the 'for Christ' and 'from his Spirit' aspects of human work. The sharper end of the question of vocation is in relation to the individual gifting a person receives from God for his service.

It is possible to take an anthropocentric view, a solely pneumatological view, or a trinitarian view on individual giftedness. The anthropocentric view is that taken by Gordon T. Smith, who argues that people have a birth vocation which is inherent to them particularly. Smith argues that people have a life-long vocation which does not change.⁴⁰ A practical outworking of this is his view that vocation probably cannot be truly discerned until a person is in their mid-thirties. Sanders' theology as a whole is a helpful corrective to the anthropocentric view. He writes: 'A Christian, especially ... is somebody who is already immersed in the reality of the Trinity, long before beginning to reflect on the idea of the Trinity.'⁴¹

Thus, Sanders lays the basis for a corrective to the anthropocentric view for two reasons. Firstly, Christians do not live in a reality which can be *a priori* considered apart from God's particular gifts. Secondly, all Christian vocation and particular guidance must be addressed in line with God's desires for the church and the world.

Another unhelpful view would be a *solely* pneumatological view. On the positive side, this perspective rightly stresses that people are gifted by God (Eph 4; Rom 8, 12) in specific ways for specific tasks (Ex 35:2-3; 1 Chr 28:11-12) for the benefit of others (1 Cor 14:12). Gifts are not inherent to the individual, they are imparted by the

⁴⁰ Though he is inconsistent at times. He also argues that the vocation needs discovering and using if life is to be fulfilling inwardly, horizontally and vertically. Smith, *Courage and Calling*.

⁴¹ Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*, 26.

³⁹ Cited in Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work*, 106.

Spirit (1 Cor 12:11), and may be taken away by the Spirit (Rom 11:29).⁴² The problem with a *solely* pneumatological view, divorced from the Spirit's relationship to the Father and the Son, is that one is in significant danger of committing what Gunton called the 'worst kind of anthropomorphism'. That is, 'of making the Spirit a kind of individual agent in relation to the created order'.⁴³

A trinitarian view of vocation robustly captures the Christological sense and hence missionary sense of Scripture.⁴⁴ Sanders writes: 'Jesus himself is always centred on the work of the Father and the Spirit, so successfully focusing on Christ logically entails including the entire Trinity in that same focus.'⁴⁵ A trinitarian view

will not consider the work of the Spirit aside from the persons and acts of the Father and the Son.⁴⁶ Therefore a trinitarian theology of vocation will always be informed by the economy of salvation and the *Missio Dei*.

VI Conclusion

The goal of this work was to outline a trinitarian doctrine of human vocation in conversation with Fred Sanders' recent work, *The Deep Things of God*. This has involved much more than merely restoring the Sunday-Monday faith-life connection. Rather, we have argued that the divine triune life expressed in God's economy of creation, salvation and recreation involves a particular set of callings upon God's children.

This set of callings includes the call to be worshippers, workers, lovers, disciples, and particularly gifted servants. These vocations must be lived out in the light of the economy of the triune God. As such, a theology of vocation will take into account our Spirit-enabled response and loving obedience to the triune God who has been revealed in Jesus.

⁴² This view stresses the broad panorama of the Spirit's work of creation (Ps 104: 30, 23) and re-creation (Rom 8:22) in the present social context of the individual, as well as the final Kingdom of God. For more on this perspective see Robert J. Banks, *Faith Goes to Work: Reflections from the Marketplace* (Alban Institute, 1999), 164-68.

⁴³ Colin Gunton, 'The Spirit Moved Over the Face of the Waters: The Holy Spirit and the Created Order', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 4, no. 2 (2002): 195.

⁴⁴ He writes that a 'Christ-centered message can never be in real tension with a Trinity-centered message [because] ... the two messages are concentric' (Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*, 168).

⁴⁵ Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*, 168).

⁴⁶ Thus a mere pneumatological view of vocation will not do either. This model loses the eternal simultaneity within God's loving inner being. This means diminishing the triune grounding of the Spirit's work and a loss of the triune-Christological reference point of the Spirit's work and goals.

Jonathan Edwards, Slavery, and Africa Missions

Wayne Alan Detzler

I Edwards and the European Pietists and Evangelicals¹

Geography indeed separated Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) from European Pietists and emerging English evangelicals. In fact, the term 'evangelical' appeared during the eighteenth century as a description of the impact of John Wesley (1703-1791) on Britain and beyond. Despite the ocean between them, Jonathan Edwards was closely akin to both Calvinist and Arminian preachers, George Whitefield (1714-1770) and John Wesley. He drew heavily also on the Pietist circle arising from August Hermann Francke (1696-1769) in Halle, Germany. Considering the primitive state of communication in the

eighteenth century, this spiritual closeness is as singular as it is significant.

Early German translations of Jonathan Edwards' writings confirm this theological and philosophical connection to Continental movements. Professor Jan Stievermann of Heidelberg University traced these in *Faithful Translations: New Discoveries on the German Pietist Reception of Jonathan Edwards*. Stievermann shows two strains of interest in and influence by Edwards. These two strains are represented by the two translations which Stievermann discusses. In the first, writing from a traditional Lutheran standpoint, Johann Adam Steinmetz (1689-1762) produced a strong Lutheran translation of Edwards' *Faithful Narrative* in 1738. In this project Steinmetz enjoyed both the approval of the Francke Foundation in Halle and the patronage of Prussia's King Friedrich Wilhelm I (1688-1740). Steinmetz titled his work *Glaubwürdige Nachricht*.

¹ This article could also be titled, 'Jonathan Edwards, Grandfather of the Modern Missionary Movement'. As the study progresses, justification for this claim will become more evident.

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It is a literal representation of *Faithful Narrative*.²

A second translation emanated from Solingen in the Rhineland. Johann Schmitz adapted Edwards for the Reformed wing of German Protestantism. He named his translation *Erweckliche Nachricht aus Northampton in Neu-England (Revival News from Northampton in New England)*. Not only did Schmitz abridge the text, but he also misspelled the author's name, 'Jonathan Edwardt' (sic). The Solingen edition concentrated heavily on Jonathan Edwards' Reformed theology, emphasizing the sovereign grace of God as well as the unlimited nature of free grace.³ This also identified Jonathan Edwards as champion of sovereign grace among American Reformed theologians.

Alongside Prussia and the Rhineland, another locus of eighteenth century interest in the British and American awakenings is found in Augsburg. It centred upon the impactful ministry of Johann August Urlsperger (1728-1806). In addition to his preaching in the major churches of Augsburg, Urlsperger also founded in 1780 the ecumenical German Society of Friends and Devotees of Christian Truth and Godliness. It became known under the more popular name of *Christentumsgesellschaft* (Christianity Society). This movement cultivated lively connections with the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in London.

Arising from the *Christentumsgesellschaft* were the German Tract Soci-

ety (1802), the German Bible Society (1804, simultaneous with the British and Foreign Bible Society), and the Basel Mission Society (1815). Urlsperger was likewise aware of the ministry and writings of Jonathan Edwards.⁴ Ecumenism would dominate the international religious scene until 1830, when a more narrow confessionalism emerged in America, Britain, and Europe.

II Edwards and Emerging Missions Education

Not only did the writings of Jonathan Edwards affect a rising tide of evangelical religion in Europe. One recalls that Jonathan Edwards had been trained for ministry at Yale Divinity School. The instructional model of this school shaped the emergence of education for both clergy and missionaries in Europe. Professor Adriaan Neele adds understanding from his perspective in South Africa. Jonathan Edwards had studied the work of Frances Turretin (1623-1687), a Swiss-Italian Reformed theologian. Turretin espoused the teaching of John Calvin. Turretin distinguished himself also as a teacher of Reformation history at the Geneva Academy. His writings endeared him to the Puritans in England and also in the American colonies.

Likewise Jonathan Edwards studied the works of Petrus von Maastricht (1630-1706) who was well schooled in Reformed theology, and taught at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands. Maastricht tried to build bridges of ecumenical goodwill between the

2 Jan Stievermann, 'Faithful Translations: New Discoveries on the German Pietist Reception of Jonathan Edwards', *Church History*, 83 (September 2014), 324-66.

3 Jan Stievermann, 'Faithful Translations'.

4 Jan Stievermann, 'Faithful Translations'.

warring factions of Dutch theologians,⁵ but unfortunately, his ecumenical hopes exceeded his performance as a peacemaker.

Dr. Neele makes the point that evolving theological and missiological education in Europe was shaped strongly by the writings of Jonathan Edwards. Neele found traces of this influence in the Basel Mission School, founded in 1815 in the wake of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo. He discerned the influence of Edwards also on the missionary training institution founded by Johannes Jänicke (1748-1827) in Berlin. Jänicke's small seminary thrived due to the patronage of King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia (1770-1840). Jänicke attracted to Berlin several notable Moravians, such as Baron Ernst von Kottwitz (1757-1843), who developed a small circle of influential theologians including August Tholuck (1799-1877) and August Neander (1789-1850).

When the Prussians defeated Napoleon at Grossbeeren, King Friedrich Wilhelm III hosted a victory banquet. On that occasion he applauded the significance of Jänicke:

Sirs, I will tell you who won [the Battle of Grossbeeren]. We did not, we only played a part. The man who won the battle is Pastor Jänicke [the Moravian], who spent day and night with his congregation kneeling and calling on the Lord, our God.

The king's religious rhetoric existed alongside his conservative political philosophy. While acclaiming pastors such as Jänicke, the king also repressed conventicles. He feared that spontaneous house gatherings might foment democratic resistance to the monarchy. The spectre of Napoleon hovered like an angel of death over the king's long reign.⁶

Another training centre for missionaries was the Rhineland Mission. There Johann Christian Wallman (1811-1865) also relied on the works of Jonathan Edwards in developing training programs. Notice the flurry of missiological education in the eighteenth century. This has been ignored largely by subsequent missiologists on both sides of the Atlantic. In reality, it probably traced its roots to the virile missionary-sending atmosphere of the Moravians under the leadership of Zinzendorf.

When the Scot, Robert Haldane, settled in Geneva shortly after the Battle of Waterloo, he conducted a regular Bible study. As he taught the New Testament book of Romans a spiritual awakening erupted. This spread throughout the Francophone world under the general term, *Réveil*. While lecturing at the prestigious *Société des Amies*, Haldane made frequent references to Jonathan Edwards as the foremost authority on Reformed theology.⁷ Already Jonathan

5 Jonathan Edwards, 'Works of Jonathan Edwards online', (WJE) 16:217, as quoted in Adriaan C. Neele, 'Theological education of nineteenth-century French Missionaries: An Appropriate Catholicity of Classical Christian Theology', *Studies in Historia Ecclesiastica*, 39/2 (December 2013), 150.

6 Albert Emil Bruckner, *Erweckungsbewegungen: ihre Geschichte und Frucht für die christliche Kirche* (Hamburg: Agentur des Rauhen Hauses, 1909), 123.

7 These lectures were later published as, Robert Haldane, *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans*, 9th ed. (Edinburgh: William Oliphant & Co., 1874), 117, 206, 488, 527.

Edwards' writings had achieved for him distinction at the very pinnacle of American theological thought.

It seems as if in both Germany and France an elementary missiology was coming to life. Its nature was theological not anthropological. For this reason the works of Jonathan Edwards were formative. Wilbert Schenk noticed this lack of anthropological missiology and traced the beginning of Continental missiological studies to Gustav Warneck (1834-1910). Warneck's *Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift* first appeared in 1874, but his magnum opus, *Evangelische Missionslehre*, did not come until 1892. It is the contention of this author and also that of both Neele and Stievermann that a primitive missiology preceded the dispatch of the first European missionaries to Africa.⁸ Eighteenth-century mission grew out of a symbiotic relationship between English Anglicans and German Lutherans. After all, they were both offspring of the Protestant Reformation, restless siblings in spirit.

Early Continental missionary activity seemed to grow as a natural progeny of the revival movements in both French and German Europe. Indeed, the period of time between 1800 and 1830 was marked by an ecumenism born out of necessity. Across denominational lines Christians who were part of those revival movements engaged in mission.⁹

There was a deep theological basis

to the renewal, and Jonathan Edwards' writings buttressed those beliefs. However, parallel to the awakening in America there was a seething social issue. That festering sore on the body politic was slavery, and Jonathan Edwards engaged also with this issue.

III Edwards and Evolving Views on Slavery

It is Dr. Kenneth Minkema who has given exhaustive attention to the matter of Jonathan Edwards and slavery. He has documented carefully the Edwards' family history of slaveholding. Jonathan Edwards' father, the Rev Timothy Edwards (1688-1759) of East Windsor, Connecticut, owned at least one slave named Ansars. Likewise the maternal grandfather of Edwards, the Rev Solomon Stoddard (1643-1729), owned slaves.¹⁰

Jonathan Edwards visited the slave market at Newport, Rhode Island in 1731. There he purchased a female slave, aged fourteen, on June 7, 1731, and the name given to Jonathan Edwards' slave was Venus. Colonial law in Massachusetts specified humane treatment for slaves held within the colony. This marked a progressive approach in strong contrast with many plantations in the southern colonies, where brutality was often compounded by the plantation system of agriculture. It regarded slaves as chattels and treated them as such.¹¹

Because most academics and clergy

⁸ Wayne A. Detzler, 'Seeds of Missiology in the German *Erweckung* (1815-1848)', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 38/2 (June 1995), 231.

⁹ Johannes Aargaard, *Mission, Konfession, Kirche* (Lund: Gleerup, 1967), 1, 287.

¹⁰ Kenneth P. Minkema, 'Jonathan Edwards' Defense of Slavery', *The Massachusetts Historical Review*, vol. 4, Race and Slavery (2002), 24.

¹¹ Kenneth P. Minkema, 'Jonathan Edwards' Defense of Slavery', 28.

in the north were ignorant of the dark side of slavery, they wrote from a theological perspective. In fact, some contemporary theological writers viewed slavery as an instrument in the process of converting Africans. Edwards concurred with this 'Christian view' of slavery. In *Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival* published in 1743 he wrote: 'Many poor negroes had been wrought upon [converted] and changed.'¹² Edwards was the first New England clergyman to baptize slaves into the Christian church.¹³

Despite owning slaves, Jonathan Edwards condemned the vulgarity of the slave trade. This distinction is important for the development of our case. He defended the traditional view that slaves should be 'debtors, children of slaves, and war captives'. However, he condemned the forays of slave traders into Africa, whereby they took captive and sold as slaves citizens of another land. Edwards denied that, 'nations have any power or business to disfranchise all the nations of Africa'. Additionally he commented that this involved 'a greater encroach[ment] on their liberties than even the opposers of this trade them[selves] do suppose this trade'.¹⁴

Jonathan Edwards was well aware of the abusive aspects of slavery in New England, where many married couples were forced to live separately. Although more rare than in other plac-

es, compulsory breeding of slave children did occur also in New England. If the slaveholder died, slave families were often broken up as part of the legacy.¹⁵

In his defence of slavery Jonathan Edwards marshalled exegetical support. For instance, he took exception to the view that 'loving one's neighbour' undercut the concept of slavery. He applied rigour to the issue, and concluded that God had 'winked' at the slave trade in previous times, in 'times of darkness'. Here he quotes St Paul's speech in Athens (Acts 17:30). Then Edwards asserted, 'God don't [sic] wink at such things now.'¹⁶

There is ample evidence that Edwards associated both spiritually and also intellectually with the Fathers of Awakening in the United Kingdom. He carried on lively correspondence with George Whitefield (1714-1770), who visited the colonies and engaged in the Great Awakening. Likewise Edwards corresponded with John Wesley (1703-91), who was maturing in his hatred for the slave trade.¹⁷

One recalls that the dying wish of John Wesley was the abolition of the slave trade. Indeed he opposed the very institution of slavery. From his deathbed Wesley wrote these words to William Wilberforce (1759-1833):

Balam, 24 February 1791

Dear Sir:

Unless the divine power has raised you up to be as *Athanasius contra*

12 *WJE*, 4:330.

13 Kenneth P. Minkema, 'Jonathan Edwards' Defense of Slavery', 54 n49.

14 Kenneth P. Minkema, 'Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 54/4 (October 1997), 831.

15 Kenneth P. Minkema, 'Jonathan Edwards' Defense of Slavery', 38.

16 Minkema, 'Jonathan Edwards' Defense'.

17 Minkema, 'Jonathan Edwards' Defense', 39.

mundum, I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise in opposing that execrable villainy which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? O be not weary of well doing! Go on, in the name of God and in the power of his might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it.

Reading this morning a tract wrote by a poor African, I was particularly struck by that circumstance that a man who has a black skin, being wronged or outraged by a white man, can have no redress; it being a 'law' in our colonies that the *oath* of a black against a white goes for nothing. What villainy is this?

That he who has guided you from youth up may continue to strengthen you in this and all things, is the prayer of, dear sir,

Your affectionate servant,
John Wesley¹⁸

One notices in this comprehensive letter from the dying patriarch, a remarkable awareness of the issues involved in slavery. Wesley calls it an 'execrable villainy'. He likewise regards American slavery as a particularly despicable version, because good men have come to its defence. In Wes-

ley's opinion the African has no legal redress whatsoever against the white slave holder, and this seems universal throughout the colonial holdings of the British crown. The dying preacher cries out: 'What villainy is this?' Then he passes to young William Wilberforce the leadership of an anti-slavery movement.

Certainly this vehemence by Wesley was neither new, nor was it lost on his trans-Atlantic friend, Jonathan Edwards. For Wesley the war against slavery and the slave trade were as compelling as was his gospel preaching and his passion for perpetuating the movement within the class system of religious conventicles.

Beyond the British Isles Jonathan Edwards drew heavily also on the religious treasury of Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf (1700-1770). By the same token, Edwards was well aware of the awakening at Halle, and especially of its guiding light, August Hermann Francke (1663-1727).¹⁹ In many ways Zinzendorf and Francke formed separate tracks for the early awakening in German-speaking Europe. Nevertheless, Jonathan Edwards drew from both for the benefit that each offered. Zinzendorf especially had introduced to Protestantism both the emotional warmth of a mystical awakening and the pragmatic practice of dispersing missionaries to areas hitherto unreached by the Christian message. Zinzendorf planted the seed idea of Protestant cross-cultural missionary activity.

Early in his life Jonathan Edwards had come to oppose the slave trade. Dr.

¹⁸ John Wesley Letter to William Wilberforce, February 24, 1791. [http://www.whattimeitis.org/ComingEvents/Wesley to Wilberforce.htm](http://www.whattimeitis.org/ComingEvents/Wesley%20to%20Wilberforce.htm). Accessed December 8, 2014.

¹⁹ Wesley, Letter to Wilberforce, 39.

Minkema recently discovered a draft from the hand of Jonathan Edwards bearing the date of 1738-42. It reveals the widespread practice of slaveholding in the vicinity of Northampton, Massachusetts. This letter is significant on two levels. First, it displays the evolving viewpoints of Jonathan Edwards. Second, it demonstrates the seeds of a movement that would become much larger in the nineteenth century.

Although his arguments against slavery are not stated explicitly, they may be inferred from the draft. Jonathan Edwards is moving toward the viewpoint of accepting slaveholding but rejecting the slave trade.²⁰ Again, the early date of this draft must remain as a reminder that the views of Edwards were growing, and they would continue to change over the remaining years of his life.

Jonathan Edwards cited the views of a valued voice of his day, Samuel Sewall (1652-1730), a judge, a businessman, and a printer. In 1700 he had released an essay under the title, 'The Selling of Joseph'. In this slim volume he had criticized the very practice of the slave trade. In turn he was criticized for this 'progressive' view.²¹

Jonathan Edwards foresaw an eschatological era, a 'millennium' in which righteousness rules. This was not a minutely defined concept of eschatology, but it was rather a statement of the

Scripture teaching concerning the coming kingdom of God. He would derive evidence from the writings of Hebrew prophets such as Isaiah, Hosea, and Malachi. Also, Edwards would invest some degree of literal interpretation in the kingdom teaching of Jesus. He summarized his kingdom time under the generic term, 'glorious times'. He expected to see 'books of devotion, the most divine and angelic strains from among the Hottentots, and the press shall groan in wild Tartary'.²²

This writing was conditioned by the revivalist fervour of the Great Awakening, in which Jonathan Edwards had played a major part. No doubt his readers interpreted his vision for Hottentot and Tartar conversion as part of his dynamic approach to communication. He went on to imagine a future time when Negroes and Indians would be converted to Christianity. They would unleash a veritable torrent of excellent books published in Africa, Ethiopia, and Turkey.²³ One would ask whether Edwards predicated these hopes on the early days of Christianity, when North Africa produced such a great voice for truth as St. Augustine. Indeed, through the first five centuries of Christianity North Africa, Turkey (Asia Minor), and Ethiopia were veritable seedbeds of religious creativity.

From a practical standpoint, the movement in New England of ethnic minorities seeking church membership encouraged Edwards. Already Africans

²⁰ Edwards Papers, folder ND 2.13. Franklin Trask Library, Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Massachusetts, as quoted in Kenneth P. Minkema, 'Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade', 823-4.

²¹ *The Diary and Life of Samuel Sewall*, edited by Mel Yazawa (Boston: Bedford Books, 1998).

²² Kenneth P. Minkema, 'Jonathan Edwards on Slavery', 828. Minkema here cites, Stout et al., eds., *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 9: *A History of the Work of Redemption*, ed. John F. Wilson (New Haven, 1989), 480.

²³ Minkema, 'Jonathan Edwards on Slavery'.

and Indians (Native Americans) were being admitted into membership. This movement was pronounced during the 1730s in both Massachusetts and Connecticut.²⁴

Jonathan Edwards extended the gospel invitation to both 'black and white'. He challenged them to 'hearken to the call of Christ', believing that the Christian message was a great equalizer. Of course, this viewpoint was quite foreign to his age. Indeed, this sociological position would set the pace for the emerging evangelical movement not only in the American colonies, but perhaps also to some degree in Britain and even in Europe.²⁵

Despite his developing views, Jonathan Edwards continued to be a slaveholder. When temporary exile took him to the Mission House in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, Edwards brought with him a slave named Rose. Later records show that Rose was freed by 1771. Edwards may have freed her when he moved in 1758 to Princeton to assume the presidency of The College of New Jersey (later Princeton University). Still he continued to own slaves until his untimely death.²⁶

In 1753 Jonathan Edwards wrote his final will and testament. Included in his possessions was a slave boy

named Titus. Perhaps he was the son of a slave family Edwards had owned. It is not clear whether Titus was the son of Joan and Rose Binney, or perhaps another couple identified as Joseph and Sue. The boy was listed under 'Quick Stock' and valued at £30.²⁷ Although he entertained serious questions about the process of buying and selling human beings, he deemed it pragmatic and even compassionate to own and care for personal slaves.

IV The Slave Trade and Early Protestant Missions to Africa

Ambiguity marked many slaveholders, yet abhorrence of the slave trade animated an ecumenical assemblage of luminaries on both sides of the Atlantic. It actually led to the birth of the modern missionary movement that gathered up the strands of slave trade reform. George Whitefield (1714-1770) helped to unite the evangelical movement by participation in the American Great Awakening. It was in America that Whitefield observed slavery first hand. One must ask whether John Wesley (1703-1791) had formed opinions during his short stint of ministry in Savannah in Georgia colony. After all, Savannah was an epicenter of southern slavery.

Once back in England Wesley attacked the issue of slavery with evangelical fervour. This can be seen in his above-mentioned deathbed letter to young William Wilberforce (1759-

²⁴ Lorenzo J. Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 268, as cited in Minkema, 'Jonathan Edwards on Slavery', 828.

²⁵ Miller, 'Jonathan Edwards' Sociology of the Great Awakening', *New England Quarterly*, 21 (1948), 72, 77 as cited in Kenneth P. Minkema, 'Jonathan Edwards on Slavery', 829 n.19.

²⁶ Kenneth P. Minkema, 'Jonathan Edwards' Defense of Slavery', 43.

²⁷ Kenneth P. Minkema, 'Jonathan Edwards' Defense of Slavery', 43-44. Edwards to Joseph Bellamy, February 28, 1754, in *WJE*, 16:622. Edwards to Esther Edwards Burr, November 20, 1757, in *WJE*, 16:731.

1833). One must note that Wilberforce was born the year after Jonathan Edwards died. Wilberforce represented the next generation that would take hatred of the slave trade into a new century, the nineteenth century. They were of a mind not only to espouse the cause, but also to act upon their conviction. One course of action was legislative activism, of which Wilberforce was the primary proponent.

As the movement against slave trade gathered speed its advocates were 'The Fathers of the Victorians'. Ford K. Brown explored and expounded the story of this intrepid band of Christian activists in a book under that title.²⁸ Brown correctly located the centre of this flurry of activity in the south London suburb of Clapham. The Rev John Venn (1759-1813) was both the Rector of Clapham and the spiritual dynamic behind the intense social action of his parishioners.

As the eighteenth century waned William Wilberforce became the titular leader of the so-called Clapham Sect. A galaxy of social activist stars surrounded him. Henry Thornton (1760-1814), like Wilberforce, was a Member of Parliament from Yorkshire. He was a near neighbour of Wilberforce in Clapham.²⁹ Another member of the Clapham Sect was James Stephen (1758-1832). After the death of his first wife, Stephen married Wilberforce's sister. He too was a

Member of Parliament and an activist in the abolition movement.

Another member of the Clapham Sect was Zachary Macaulay (1768-1838). He became the Governor of Sierra Leone, the colony that was organized to receive freed slaves and also to erect a wall of resistance against the slave trade. Slave traders heaped hatred on Sierra Leone and all involved with the colony. As governor Macaulay was able to welcome the first, tentative attempt to bring missionaries to Africa.³⁰

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) was founded on 12 April 1799 in Aldersgate Street in the City of London. The majority of founding members were also associated with the Clapham Sect. Pleading pressure of work, Wilberforce deferred to Henry Thornton, MP as first president of the CMS. Be it here noted that Aldersgate Street had gained something of a cult presence because of the 'sudden conversion' of John Wesley in 1738. There he attended a Bible study meeting led by Moravians under the auspices of the Church of England.³¹

After the closing of monasteries and religious orders, the Church of England had no means of deploying missionary workers. This especially impacted its role in the non-Christian world. Thus the newly born CMS agreed to abide by the liturgical lines of the Church

²⁸ Ford K. Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians; the Age of Wilberforce* (Cambridge: University Press, 1961).

²⁹ Kevin Belmonte, *William Wilberforce* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 139. 'Henry Thornton', <http://spartacus-educational.com/REThorntonH.htm>. Accessed December 10, 2014.

³⁰ 'Zachary Macaulay,' <http://spartacus-educational.com/REVMacaulayZ.htm>. Accessed December 10, 2014.

³¹ The 'Aldersgate Experience' is discussed in the following articles: 'John Wesley', 'Protestantism', *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/13584/>. Accessed December 11, 2014.

of England, although the organization was free of episcopal, even clerical, control. It was primarily a lay movement.

Founders of the CMS under the leadership of Wilberforce and Thornton were committed to three purposes: 'abolition of the slave trade, social reform at home, and world evangelisation [sic]'.³² It is the stated view of this author that, '[Wilberforce] undoubtedly saw the missionaries as agents to lay the axe at the root of slavery, the slave trade in Africa'.³³

Furthermore, the Clapham founders assumed that Anglican clergy would volunteer to serve under the new organization. However, as is often the case, laity and clergy differed in response. English clergymen did not come forward to serve in Africa and Asia. Indeed, for the duration of the nineteenth century, the CMS maintained strong relationships with Continental Churches and seminaries and the first missionaries of the CMS were German Lutherans.³⁴

Thus it was missionary activity that wed the Clapham Sect (not the Anglican Church) to the continental awakening. As is also often the case, laypeople led the way to productive ecumenical cooperation.

V The German Source for CMS Missionaries

In search of such missionary candidates, the governing body turned to their Continental siblings, the German awakening movement. Johannes Gossner's fledgling seminary in Berlin dispatched on March 8, 1804 Melchior Renner and Peter Hartwig to Sierra Leone.³⁵ Eugene Stock comments in his landmark *History of the Church Missionary Society*: 'The missionaries were instructed to wean native chiefs away from the trade [of slaves] and to portray slavery as immoral'.³⁶

The first missionary-receiving nation in Africa was Sierra Leone, founded by British anti-slavery leaders. However, the history of Sierra Leone is marked by its strategic value as a trading outlet. In 1792 John Clarkson (1764-1828) established the Sierra Leone Trading Company. It was an expression of the so-called Committee for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. This action drew the hatred of many nations throughout Africa which had profited from the blood business of slave trading.³⁷

In addition to Gossner's little seminary, others also emerged in Germany. Johannes Jänicke (1748-1827) established a training centre based on the distinctive missiology of the Moravi-

³² 'A brief history of the CMS', <http://www.cms-uk.org/default.aspx?Tabid=181>. Accessed December 11, 2014.

³³ Wayne Alan Detzler, 'British and American Contributions to the "Erweckung" in Germany, 1815-1848', (Unpublished PhD dissertation. University of Manchester, 1974) 32 6n47.

³⁴ 'A brief history of the CMS', Canon Max Warren. <http://www.cms-uk.org/Whoware/AboutCMS/History/FourstagesinCMSHistory/tabid/182/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>. Accessed December 15, 2014.

³⁵ Detzler, 'British and American Contributions', 325.

³⁶ Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*. 2 vols (London: Church Missionary Society, 1916), 1, 83.

³⁷ The Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Global Migration of African Peoples, The University of York, Canada. www.tubmaninstitute.ca/cites/default/files/file/CA1_E2. Accessed December 12, 2014.

ans. He was the foremost Moravian pastor in Germany for most of the early nineteenth century.³⁸

The most comprehensive and ecumenical expression of the *Erweckung* in German-speaking Europe was the *Christentumsgesellschaft* (the Christian Society). Founded by Johannes Urlsperger, it drew together the disparate branches of Protestant awakening, liturgy, and theology.³⁹ In fact, southern Germany and northern Switzerland have been to this very day a seedbed of theological speculation and experimentation. This predisposes the region to true Christian liberality.

It was the *Christentumsgesellschaft* that birthed in 1815 the Basel Mission. The venerable Johann Christoph Blumhardt (1805-1880) dispatched the first missionaries to Tranquebar, India in 1846. This resulted amazingly in the establishment of the Anglican Church in Asia, including the appointment of Samuel Gobat (1799-1879) to be the first Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem in 1846.⁴⁰

Despite the fact that many of the early German missionaries served to build the Anglican Communion, German Lutherans still rallied to the cause. In 1823 the distinguished professor of ecclesiastical history at Berlin, Johann August Wilhelm Neander (1789-1850), issued an appeal for funds to support missionaries. He ti-

tled this effort, 'An Appeal on Behalf of the Heathen'.⁴¹ Ironically, his appeal coincided with a hiatus in missionary sending. No further missionaries were sent from Berlin until after the transition to confessional missionary activity around 1830.

Missionaries could never escape criticism. The *Allgemeine Kirchenzeitung* (general church newspaper) was published in Darmstadt. It was the voice of scientific theology and higher criticism in the first half of the nineteenth century. Its editors and contributors regarded the *Erweckung* in general as a mystical movement devoid of either logical thinking or modern (so-called *neological*) activity. Thus an editorial published in 1827 condemned missionary agencies as being more mindlessly mystical than socially active. The *Allgemeine Kirchenzeitung* writers appeared to be relatively free of serious journalistic restraint.⁴²

A more sympathetic assessment of the early missionary movement occurs in the dissertation of Johannes Aargaard. He freely concedes that the early English/European missionary movement was not designed to transfer the organized (confessional) church to Africa and Asia. Rather, it was mainly an expression of evangelical English social activism until 1830.⁴³ Both Aargaard and Warneck trace the transition from ecumenical missions to confessional missions to the emer-

38 Detzler, 'British and American Contributions', 320.

39 Detzler, 'British and American Contributions', 232, cf. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Neill, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954), 1, 117-119.

40 Detzler, 'British and American Contributions', 236-236.

41 Detzler, 'British and American Contributions', 330.

42 *Allgemeine Kirchenzeitung* (Darmstadt, July 10, 1827).

43 Johannes Aargaard, *Mission, Konfession, Kirche*, as cited in Wayne Alan Detzler, 'British and American Contributions', 318.

gence of theological sophistication in Germany. In a sense, this development represents a philosophical triumph for the *Allgemeine Kirchenzeitung* and its rationalistic approach.

The fact remains, however, that mission was mainly an instrument of the anti-slave trade movement at least until 1830. By that time the House of Commons was wrestling with the abolition of slavery in general. Also, in the colonies there was an abolition movement building.

VI The Cautionary Tale of Renner and Hartwig

In 1802 Jänicke's embryonic training centre dispatched to England two graduates, Peter Hartwig and Melchior Renner who had been ordained in 1803, possibly by the (German) Lutheran Church in England. When the CMS engaged their services, their first stop was Clapham and the Society For Mission to Africa and Asia (later to be called the Church Missionary Society).⁴⁴

While preparing for their assignment to Sierra Leone, Peter Hartwig met and married on 4 January 1804 Sarah Winzer, former governess of the Rev John Venn's family. Soon thereafter Renner and Hartwig were dispatched together with Sarah to Freetown, capital of Sierra Leone.⁴⁵

In 1805 Hartwig took his first missionary journey to Rio Pongo, where he received hospitality from slave trad-

ers. Hartwig sent no journal accounts to the Corresponding Committee, the oversight body of the CMS. Returning from this first journey, Hartwig entered into a period of inactivity due to the 'indisposition of his wife'. Additionally when Hartwig preached, 'his discourses were rather too severe concerning the conduct of Europeans'.⁴⁶

Due to ill health Mrs. Hartwig returned to England in 1806. By that time Renner had been ordered by the Governor of Sierra Leone to leave his quarters and take up residence with the Hartwigs. It was Renner who reported: 'It was soon visible that they [Renner and Hartwig] could not well agree on managing the house jointly'. Hartwig exacerbated the situation by discussing it with 'his ill-chosen friends', i.e. non-missionaries. To ease the situation the Corresponding Committee sent Hartwig to Mandingo County 'to keep him out of mischief'.

The situation reached a crisis in 1807, and Renner records this in his detailed report to the Corresponding Committee:

About this time Hartwig would be no longer under the restraint of the 'Cor[responding] Com[mittee],' and did not want direction from the Society, but determined to go into the country, but Alas! Not to pursue his pretended zeal in the Mission, but to turn Slave Trader at once. He got a passage in a vessel, where he sent his trunks on board. But his intention was detected by the Cor[responding] 'Com[mittee],' let fetch his trunks back, supposing that he had packed up some of the

⁴⁴ Tubman MSS.CA1/E2/131 (Toronto: York University).

⁴⁵ Melchior Renner, 'A Short Account of the Mission and Missionaries in Africa', (January 1812). Tubman MSS, CA1/E2/131.

⁴⁶ Renner, 'A Short Account', 131.

Society's books and other things. By this Mr. H[artwig] left not off from his purpose, but set off in a canoe with some Mandingo people, and set himself down with a Slave Trader in Fouricaria. He came to Bariera, and told Mr. Renner that the Cor[responding] Com[mittee] had dismissed him.⁴⁷

The current state of research on this issue emerges from the Harriet Tubman Institute at York University in Toronto, Canada. Professor Paul Lovejoy has referred our inquiry to Katrina Keefer, a PhD research student. In a detailed email she writes:

In summary, the Mousers suggest that Hartwig was placed in an extremely awkward and unfair position by the CMS, Renner, and the colonial authorities. He was being instructed to learn Susu as rapidly as possible by CMS, was being pressured by a frustrated Renner to replace Renner as Colony Chaplain, and pressured by the Governor to teach in situ. His eventual departure after waiting for permission to return to the Susu region was taken as theft of CMS property (which he had on him) as it was not a welcomed departure, which along with his ongoing friendship with the slave-traders of the region amount-

ed to the conclusion that he'd left to become a slave trader himself. I tend to agree with the Mousers' analysis, and think that Hartwig really was villainized for a variety of reasons.⁴⁸

Indeed, the Church Missionary Society in its earlier form sought fulfilment of the eschatological vision that Jonathan Edwards shared with his transatlantic brethren. It was their hope that missionary activity in Africa could lay the axe to the root of slavery by stopping the slave trade. The failure of Peter Hartwig demonstrates the depth and breadth of this assumption among early missionaries and their homeland supporters.

VII Edwards and the Modern Missionary Movement

The rather ragged beginning of missionary activity must not obscure the strength of this movement. The small beachhead in Sierra Leone laid the foundation of greater missionary activity both in Africa and also in India. Although it has not been explored thoroughly, Jonathan Edwards played a foundational role in the emergence of the Protestant missionary movement.

Both Andrew Fuller (1754-1815) and William Carey (1761-1834) regarded Jonathan Edwards as 'the Grandfather of Modern Missions'. Both Fuller and Carey had in 1784 gained access to Jonathan Edwards' *Humble Attempt to Promote Prayer for Revival*. Together with the *Journal of David Brainerd Full-*

⁴⁷ Renner, 'A Short Account,' 131. Bruce L Mouser and Nancy Fox Mouser wrote a refutation of this story under the title, *The Reverend Peter Hartwig, Slave Trader or Misunderstood Idealist? Clash of Church Missionary Society Imperial Objectives in Sierra Leone 1804-1815* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003). It seems however, that Renner's primary source report is a more accurate description of the sad saga.

⁴⁸ Katrina Keefer, The Harriet Tubman Institute, York University, Toronto. Email December 16, 2014.

er and Carey cited these writings as a refutation of the Reformed position on soteriology.

Fuller and Carey were Baptist ministers, who would combine to found the Baptist Missionary Society in 1784. This was twelve full years after the publication of Carey's *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. (One recalls that Carey was chided by John Ryland upon the publication of his *Enquiry*. Ryland railed at the young preacher: 'When God wants to save the heathen, He will do it without your help or mine.'⁴⁹ From time immemorial Reformed churchmen contended that evangelical preaching stood in direct contradiction to the sovereign grace of God.)⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Neele, 'Theological education of nineteenth-century French Missionaries', 157.

⁵⁰ As late as the 1980s Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones led a neo-Reformed movement in England called 'The Westminster Fellowship'. He vehemently and categorically contended that God would save the lost by sovereign grace apart from any human persuasion, discussion,

Despite doctrinal bickering the emerging missionary movement melded two noble causes: abolition of the slave trade and the evangelization of Africans. Jonathan Edwards foresaw this blending of purposes, and his experience in the Great Awakening allowed him to surmount the pettiness of lesser clergy. Kenneth Minkema summarizes: 'According to Jonathan Edwards, "Continuing excursions into Africa [or anywhere else] for slaves created resentment against Christian Europeans that could ultimately thwart evangelization"'.⁵¹

This connection was created in the mind of Jonathan Edwards fully fifty years prior to the usually accepted birthdate of European and American Protestant missionary activity. Jonathan Edwards was indeed, 'The Grandfather of Modern Missions'.

or argumentation. He was indeed a modern spokesman of the movement represented by John Ryland in his resistance to William Carey. ⁵¹ Minkema, 'Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade', 829.

What's in a Name? Should All Followers of Jesus Call Themselves 'Christians'?

Edited by L.D Waterman

Should all followers of Jesus call themselves 'Christians'? Are there situations in which it may be preferable to avoid that term? What does Scripture say? What cultural and contextual factors (rightly or wrongly) influence this decision? This is an issue which is vital in Islamic contexts, and also in post-Christian western contexts. This article consists of excerpts from email discussions among members of the Bridging the Divide network (<http://btdnetwork.org/>) (See end of article for a list of the participants.)

As we will see, this is a multi-faceted issue. We observe that the connection of the term to the global and historic church has both a positive and negative side. We also see that a person's opinion about the use (or non-use) of the term 'Christian' often seems rooted in deeply held values and emotional commitment—either to the global and historic church as 'our family in Christ' or to a desire to avoid major stumbling blocks that some part of the visible church presents to those outside of Christ.

I Objections to the term 'Christian'

Terry: We talked at this year's consultation about 'myths'. Let's expose a persistent myth I keep hearing: that the word 'Christian' doesn't need to

apply to 'believers in Jesus'. I keep hearing it said that in the few places it occurs in the NT it is only an 'insult-word' and applies 'only to Gentiles' not to Jewish Christians (as if somehow that justifies dismissing the fact that believers worldwide have claimed it ever since the end of the first century).

I don't really understand, from either an exegetical or an historical perspective, the severe objections to the term 'Christian'. I think the reasons for these objections really arise from the Islamic context and particular social needs that people are trying to meet rather than from Scripture. The church at Antioch which first receives this epithet was founded by Hellenized Jews who had converted to faith in Christ and evangelized Gentiles (Acts 11:19-20). So these first 'Christians' were a mixed church, Jew and Gentile (Acts 11:26). Neither can one blithely presume the term is derogatory; on the contrary, the text presumes that Agrippa recognizes that 'Christian' is precisely the 'sect' Paul is trying to get him to join, and there is nothing in the text to suggest that Paul objects or repudiates that.

This text shows that in a very short time the epithet became recognized as a self-designation by believers in Christ. And what is also overlooked is

that Luke is now writing, looking back from a point in time farther down the road when the term has become standardized. Again, in 1 Peter the readers are told to ‘glorify God because you bear this name’—not ‘deny you are “Christian” and tell everyone you are just a “believer in Jesus”’.

Georges: Terry, Your post on the name Christian is right on. In 1 Peter 4:16, the apostle Peter says two things:

First, do not be ashamed to suffer as a Christian, and second, praise God that you bear that name. The name here is Christian. In Acts 26:28-29, not only did Paul not object; in fact he wished that all those listening to him would become Christians. These two verses are enough to settle the matter once for all.

I know that Christianity has a bad reputation to a segment of the Muslim world, but as Dorothy Day famously said: ‘The church is a whore, but she is still my mother’.

Benjamin: Which Christians are not insulted as their master has been? Who can escape being insulted by dropping the name ‘Christian’? As Mordecai argued with Esther, you were born to show your identity. Do not be ashamed of it. I am not ashamed to stand by the church historic. I am not ashamed of my spiritual family. The church, spiritually understood, is like a hospital near the battle field. We have always gathered the wounded and the healers. We must never apologise for how badly it stinks and how awful it may look.

II ‘Christian’—helpful or not?

Rob H: Not to stir up too much trouble (said with a smile), but a few issues.

First, I get the impact of the 1 Peter passage. But Peter’s point is to clarify that suffering for Christ is actually a good thing (as opposed to suffering for doing evil), not to mandate use of a particular label. Now, let us imagine that someone is asked at gun point, ‘Are you a Christian?’ and answers, ‘No. I am a Jesus follower’. That is basically a kind of obfuscation, and I suppose in that case the passage would apply more specifically. However, I don’t think it covers each and every instance of ‘Christian’ self-labelling.

Then, ‘bearing the name’ and ‘in the name’ and associations to a name in Scripture are not meant literalistically. We all pray ‘in the name of Jesus’ from John 14:13, but I don’t know anyone who insists on a particular pronunciation. We don’t seem to insist on any particular way of saying this so long as we are referring to the same person. Why, then, insist on ‘bearing the (literal) name Christian’? Those who offer alternatives are not, I think, offering theological oddities, but things like ‘follower of Jesus’—which are in fact, synonyms.

If what is offered up is not a synonym then I would probably agree that it is not appropriate. Here’s another one: Much is made of ‘the name’ (YHWH) in the OT, and yet we invariably use other labels to express this and no one seems to have a problem with it.

Then finally, I will hazard a guess that the reason for this particular controversy is *not* any abstract principle that ‘We should all be known as “Christians”’, but simply that the *reasons* some are giving for avoiding the label ‘Christian’ are perceived as inappropriate. That being the case, the discussion ought to be about those reasons,

not about the imposition of a label. The biblical basis for insisting on a particular label is very thin.

Benjamin: My purpose in my earlier reply was not to say, 'Only those who call themselves Christians are standing up unashamedly for Christ' but rather that 'the name of Jesus, Christ and Christian, even follower of Jesus' will always engender unavoidable negative reactions; let's accept that and redeem it to the best of our ability'.

Granted, the name 'Christian' is not prescriptive; no name in the Bible is, but surely we do bear the name of our Lord and of Christ in some unashamed fashion. If someone in the Netherlands, Canada or Niger asks me, 'Are you a Christian?' a simple 'yes' is very unhelpful to the person asking. What I want is a discussion that reflects: 'I am not ashamed of the gospel'. I think the latter will help me best to honour him.

Finally, did not Paul keep the name 'Jew' in spite of the terrible associations with it? Did he not redeem it in Romans 2:28? This is what I seek to do with the name of Christian: rescue it from the garbage heap of past and recent history.

Georges: As I walked in downtown Dearborn, Michigan one day, a volunteer was handing out tracts with Bismillah and Fatiha printed on the top of the front page. I asked him: 'Are you a Muslim?' He said, 'No, I am not a Muslim'. 'So why do you have the Bismillah and Fatiha on the front page?' He said: 'It is a good prayer'. Then I looked inside and found verses from the Bible and the Qur'an. So I asked: 'Are you a Christian then?' 'No I am not', he said. 'What are you?' 'I am a follower of Isa.' So I said: 'Do you believe in both the

Bible and the Qur'an?' He did not know what to say after that.

How many Muslims on the streets of Dearborn really believed him that he is neither Muslim nor Christian? I told him that this tract is confusing and deceptive, and that he must decide who he is and openly say it. To say you are a 'follower of Jesus' does not fool people into thinking that you are not a Christian. If you speak about Jesus and you use the Bible, you are a Christian no matter what you call yourself. All Muslims know that the *Injeel* is the book of the Christians. Who are we trying to fool?

Calling yourself a Muslim and identifying with the Muslim *Umma* is a blatant denial of Christ who said if anyone is ashamed of me, I will be ashamed of him. When Peter denied Jesus, he betrayed Jesus. He was forgiven when he repented but he never again denied Jesus. Identity in Christ; identification with his global church, is what distinguishes us from all others.

Richard: Georges, the word Χριστιανός generally transliterated 'Christian', has (at least according to one scholar) a meaning which can include 'follower of Christ':

The identification of the messiah with Jesus of Nazareth brought the disciples the name *Christianoi*. Compared with other names for the followers of Jesus, like disciple or believer, the word is quite rare in the NT. By its whole formation it is a word which defines the one to whom it is applied as **belonging to the party** of a certain *Christos*, very much as *Herodianos* is a technical term for the **followers** of Herod (Mk

3:6; 12:13; Mt 22:16.)¹ (bold type added)

A recent survey done in the city of Portland, Oregon showed that the average person on the street did not even associate the term 'Christian' with Jesus. In many cultures, the term, commonly used for the 2.2 billion adherents of some form of the Christian religion, has taken on a meaning quite removed from what Peter meant in his letter.

Perhaps the term can still be redeemed. But this is by no means the most common self-identifier used by born again believers in Jesus in the first century. Why impose it on those for whom it hinders rather than enhances their witness for Jesus?

Georges: Of course a Christian is a follower of Christ. But this is not what it means literally. It is only implied. I don't really understand why some people want to throw away the identity (the name 'Christian') that has identified Christ's followers for centuries. The word Christian does not need to be redeemed. It is here to stay. Only a very small number of proponents of IM [socio-religious Insider Movements] are trying to throw it away and with that action, to dissociate the few new converts from their history and global community. I really think this is unfortunate.

What people think of us should not change who we are: *We are Christians*. Peter says, 'Do not be ashamed of this

name. Praise God that you bear that name.' Doesn't Peter have some authority to tell us to praise God that we bear that name? Isn't this the word of God?

III Negative but still with opportunities

Michael: There is very little explanation of the emergence of the term 'Christian' in the New Testament itself, but the evidence that is provided may indicate that the term was one the New Testament believers resisted from the start. It seems that it was never a self-chosen designation. There are three places where the term emerges (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet 4:16). The passage in 1 Peter is the only one that provides much description of the term, and in that place Peter is including the term in a list of judicial charges that believers are suffering in Asia Minor.

In the two passages in Acts, the title 'Christian' is one thrust upon the church by outsiders. In Acts 11:26, the only point being made is that it was about (or against?) the first church in a Gentile city (Antioch) where the title was first coined. Acts 11:26 does not suggest whether it was a welcome or unwelcome term. In Acts 26:28, King Agrippa uses the term in his mocking response to Paul. It is clearly, in Agrippa's mind, a title one does not want to receive.

In any case, when we come to 1 Peter, it is evident the title was one that brought shame upon those so labelled. I think it worth noting that the title 'Christian' may have been troublesome to the church from the very start.

Robin: Michael, although I agree with

¹ K. H. Rengstorf, 'Χριστιανός', in L. Coenen, E. Beyreuther & H. Bietenhard (Eds.), *Vol. 2: New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House), 343.

much of your post, I would differ as to the thrust of 1 Peter 4:16. I do not see anywhere in the New Testament where Christians resisted the term *Kristianos* (Christian). That is an inference that I do not see. I do not think they were tempted to be ashamed of the word 'Christian' itself but that as persecuted believers they might have had a tendency not to identify with Christ as strongly as the apostle Peter would have liked.

Don: All of us admit 'Xristos' is the equivalent of 'Meshiach', meaning 'Anointed One'. Why are we Christian workers with Muslims not seizing the opportunity to ask our Muslim friends what they think the word 'Christian' means? No matter what they say, this opens the door for us to talk about 'the anointing' on Jesus (and its significance) as well as our anointing—our receiving of the Holy Spirit. We are sealed by the Spirit. The Spirit is the down payment on our entrance into eternity in the presence of the Lord.

Muslims have no idea of what the real role of the Holy Spirit was intended to be. (The Quran paints a very confusing picture of 'Ruh ul-Quddus'.) This is our golden opportunity to explain—to teach what the Word of God says. Let us seize every opportunity—and the word 'Christian' is as great a one as we will ever get—to open up the door of life to those sitting in the gloom of their Muslim darkness.

SH: Don, I agree—let us use any opportunity to share Christ and talk about what God's gifts are for us in Christ, the Holy Spirit being the pinnacle as Christ living in us.

By the way, in my part of the world (West Africa and especially Senegal)

Christians have a bad reputation only when our Muslim neighbours do not have a personal relationship with them. They probably just accept the general connotation of Christians as wine drinkers and pork eaters, and are the beach head of Western immorality. Where they come in contact with the few believers in Christ here, however, they are usually very positive and regard them as some of the best friends they can have. So, I think, the responsibility lies with us Christians to come into contact with our Muslim neighbours and share our faith with them. They can discern the people with good intentions and an upright life that reflects Christ. Let us not be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ in word, deed and through our life.

Rob H: Michael, this seems like a valuable insight for the exegesis of 1 Peter 4:16. *Christianos* might be a case of a label that is used by persecutors in the context of persecution as if a modern government had a designation for 'religious deviancy' called A34 (a totally random example). In such a situation Peter might say: 'If you suffer for stealing, you should be ashamed. But if you suffer as an A34, don't be ashamed.'

I suppose we should be cautious here, given the fact that the point of 1 Peter 4:16 is to encourage believers who are being persecuted, not so much telling believers what to call themselves.

Michael: Rob, This is a great point. I don't think the background to the title 'Christian' has much bearing on whether or how we use that specific title today. Rather, I think it illustrates the fact that believers in Jesus don't generally get to pick the titles by which the

culture around them identifies them.

It would appear (from passages like Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23) that the NT believers had adopted some of their own, more desired self-designations, like 'The Way' (along with other self-designations, like 'disciples'). The title 'Christian' is one that was evidently imposed on them from outside (cf., Acts 11:26), and *perhaps* was a less-than-appreciated label. In any case—whether it was a welcomed title or not—it was a designation placed upon them from outside by the culture in which they lived.

You are right; the title could have been 'A34ers' or anything else. But, as the title by which the surrounding society came to know them, Peter urged the believers to own the title *and fill it with good meaning*. The major thrust of the first epistle of Peter is for believers living on the margins of Roman society, under a cloud of misunderstandings about their faith and practices (1 Pet 1:12), to persevere in good works and charity that clears up those misunderstandings and brings honour to Christ. As part of that message, he urges them to accept the title by which the surrounding culture already knows them and fill it with good meaning by the lives and witness they bear.

So, as you note Rob, the point is not so much about the specific title 'Christian', but it does show us something about the way titles for the Jesus-movement develop. Sometimes we have the privilege of creating our own labels; sometimes we are stuck with the labels imposed upon us by the culture where we live, and we need to overcome a title's bad connotations with lives of patience, charity, and goodness.

Richard: This is a great dialogue. It seems to me that the bottom line to this discussion is that any term in whatever language we are working which associates one with Jesus as one of his followers should be boldly embraced—even if it is used in a derogatory manner. On the other hand, terms which associate one with a particular country, politics, lack of morality, etc. may need to be avoided.

Rob H: Michael, I agree that even if Christians did not necessarily own the term, they seemed willing to work with it. The example in Acts 26 is similar to the one in 1 Peter. Paul does not quibble with Agrippa, 'Well, actually, we don't call ourselves *Christianos*, etc...'

Then in 1 Peter there are the parallel formations:

'If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed' (4:14).

'But if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed' (4:16).

Peter connects the two, thus elevating *Christianos* from perhaps a negative connotation to a positive one. As 'Christianity' became Latinized and the original impact of the term faded, one can see how it would have been natural to use it as a self-denomination. Perhaps these examples illustrate the early Christian's flexibility in regard to descriptors? The question, 'What should we call ourselves?' does not seem to be a concern.

Rob A: It seems 'Christian' was a term of derision for the early believers. Probably 'Christian' was not their preferred self-identification but was a pejorative, mocking and demeaning epithet coined in Antioch, where they had a history of minting new clever jargon to cynically label and mock public figures. It is not

surprising that first in Antioch, the new Followers of the Way were condescendingly called 'Christians'.

The context of 1 Peter is clear that it is was a distasteful term to the followers of Jesus. And yet Peter instructs them when it comes to this jab at their identity, not to be surprised at the sufferings but instead to welcome this form of suffering.

If we are faithful in giving glory to Jesus through our actions and our words, then let the community come up with a name that fits. If it is a label that is associated with Jesus Christ that needs redeeming, based on others, misbehaviours, then redeem it through good behaviour. The label that was meant to insult can be turned into a synonym for redemption and forgiveness such as the meaning associated with 'cross'. But regardless, our duty is to follow Jesus in the same way he bore undeserved shame and scorn: so others find redemption.

IV The Apostle Paul's use of 'Christian'

CJ: I would start with the apostle Paul on the denial of the term 'Christian' for Christians. He certainly knew the term 'Christian' (Acts 26:28), but himself refused to use it. In front of the Jewish council, he defended himself as a Jew (Acts 28:17-30). In fact, it's my understanding that in spite of his knowledge of the term and its definition, nowhere in any of Paul's writings does he refer to himself or any of the believers as 'Christians', though sometimes English translations of the Bible misquote him. This did not however seem to cause controversy in the early Church. There are no recorded debates with

Peter over whether or not Paul should have affirmed his 'Christianity' in front of the Jewish Council.

Georges: CJ, I want to only comment on what you wrote, that Paul 'refused to use' the word Christian. I wonder where you got that from? Note Acts 26:28,29.

Why would Agrippa use the identifier 'Christian' referring to Paul? There is a simple answer: Paul was known to be a Christian and it was during the period when he pastored Antioch that 'followers of the way' began to be called Christians (Acts 11:26).

Paul did not deny. Nothing in the text even implies that. I believe he wanted to go beyond the term and said that he wishes everyone to be like him. It may well be, no one knows for sure, that Paul felt a bit limited by the term and without denying it he wanted to point out that there is more to it than an identity. There was no question that he was identified as a Christian.

Peter challenged 'Christians' to be proud that you bear that name (1 Peter 4:16). Christian is 'Christ-one'. There is no escaping that category no matter what we say about ourselves.

CJ: I have to deal with what the Scriptures actually say, not what I think might be implied or what I wish was there. Though I agree with you that I went a bit far using the term 'denial' for Paul's (non)use of 'Christian' as a title, I can't go beyond the term 'avoid' when I look at his witness.

Georges, what you see in the Agrippa exchange is Paul cleverly distancing his 'what I am' from Agrippa's term 'Christian', in order to avoid incriminating himself unnecessarily. It was pragmatic and political, but he avoided

the term 'Christian' even though his testimony did an amazing job of describing his Christianity.

During Paul's discussion with the Jewish leaders in Rome, again and in spite of Paul's knowledge of the movement as being called 'Christian', he presents himself as a Messianic Jew. For the sake of the gospel, he avoided the term 'Christian', once again.

He avoided the term with Agrippa, and with the Jewish Council in Rome, while preaching the gospel in both exchanges! And he does not use the term once in the whole of his writings to refer to any of the believers. Please show me otherwise if I have missed something. He certainly knew the term, and its implications, and yet on the occasions in Acts when he has the opportunity to embrace it, or in his many letters to the believers, he opts out. Paul is very clearly either uncomfortable with the term 'Christian' or is strategically avoiding it for the sake of mission. I cannot say that his avoidance is passive, nor that his overt lack of use or affirmation is accidental or meaningless. He is a scholar after all.

Paul is smarter than to casually forget the already important designation of 'Christian'. I believe he felt that 'Christian' implied something 'other than Jewish', and that's why he avoided it.

What we have in present times is hundreds of thousands of people who affirm for themselves the definition of 'Christian' as Paul did, while avoiding the designation 'Christian' as Paul did, and for the same reasons: 'Christian' is either incriminating (Agrippa), or implies a division between themselves and their cultural alliances to whom they are witnessing (Jewish Council).

Paul was the first to model that in mission, affirming the meaning of 'Christian' is much more important than affirming the form: Christian.

Mark: Dear CJ, you are bold to be so sure about Paul's reasoning. The term 'Christian' is used in the NT, but not all that often: once in Peter, and twice in Acts. This suggests it was rarely used by believers when the NT was being written.

The implication also seems to be that it was a term of derision or stigmatization, used by outsiders. They were 'called' Christians in Antioch—apparently by others. Agrippa also uses the term as an outsider, rejecting the identity it references. The use in 1 Peter 4 also fits: the author is writing about charges laid against believers: better to suffer for being a 'Christian' than as a 'murderer' or a 'thief' or some other kind of 'criminal'.

Kenneth Samuel Wuest took this view (*Word Studies from the Greek New Testament*), that it was a term of derision used by outsiders. This reading also fits with the way the term was used by secular sources from the 1st century.

It seems that perhaps the term only took off for use by believers at a later time, perhaps precisely because, as Peter implies in 1 Peter 4, believers did not wish to be 'ashamed' that they were accused because they 'bear that name'.

So it seems plausible that the term Christian was at first a term of derision and accusation used perhaps by disbelievers, but the believers refused to be ashamed to be accused of bearing the name of 'Christ'.

So on reflection I'm inclined to see Paul and the label 'Christian' differ-

ently from you, but the problem is, the evidence isn't really there. It's all highly speculative. Absence of evidence is not evidence. A bit of epistemic doubt can be a good thing. You are reading a great deal between the lines—boldly going where others fear to tread. I admire your spirit, but am disinclined to walk that road with you.

On balance I think it is pretty hard to know what to make of what Paul thought about this label 'Christian', given the paucity of references in the NT, and the suggestion that it was an outsider's term after all. There's not enough here to provide a foundation for IM practice. And what there is points us towards being willing to accept a negative label if it means we 'bear the name'.

V Historical perspective

Georges: Even if the word Christian was completely absent from the NT, it is not absent from history. The church fathers, annals, historical records have one name for all those who believe in Jesus Christ: they are Christians. *History* is the best argument we have. There is no debating that the label Christian has continued to identify the disciples of Christ until now. It is the one word that unites all Christian denominations and sects, Catholic, Orthodox, Melkite, Nestorian, Jacobite, Protestant, Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal and a myriad others. This is the Holy Cosmic Church.

We may choose many other labels to express what we mean by 'Christian' but it is really playing a game to replace it with any other title, no matter how wonderful that title maybe. It will always return to the fact that we are identified with Christ.

Rick: A review of current word meanings would indicate that 'history' is often not the best argument for communicated meaning. Take the word 'gay' for example—we could happily describe ourselves by that word but even though we could prove that 'historically' it has a certain meaning, it is understood today quite differently.

I do agree with what I think is the central point you were defending, which is that we want to be accurate in our communication with others. If the things you identified as being attributed to those who call themselves 'Christian' were what the person I was talking with understood, than I would be excited to be identified as a 'Christian'.

But if I am uncertain, or suspect that the meaning understood by the person that I am talking with is not as I would describe it, I would not use it. It has nothing to do with shame but rather a recognition that words have multiple meanings and I want to be accurate in my communication. For the sake of accuracy I consider the other person's understanding of the word to be more significant/important than mine.

VI Dealing with negative connotations

Don: Instead of abandoning this word 'Christian' because all Christians sin, why not take advantage of this reality and explain what Christ is doing in us now (forgiving us, redeeming us, transforming us), and point out that the process will be completed at the time of his return? And then invite our Muslim friends to enter into this experience.

Labels are an effort to define a thing or name a person. The word 'Muslim'

connects its bearer to the person of Muhammad, the genius who invented the word and founded a religion upon himself as the pre-eminent Muslim. We have the right to choose a word that defines us in terms of our allegiance to Christ. That word is 'Christian'.

Gene: Don, if we were simply talking about naming objects, I would agree with you. But this discussion is really about naming the 'other': the people from whom we differentiate ourselves.

All societies have some group(s) that are part of their self-identity, but as the antithesis of themselves. For example, for many people who served in the US military during the Cold War the 'other' are Russians. Their 'name' or label represents much more than they are personally, and those representations are for the most part negative.

For many Muslims, Christians are the 'other'. The term means much more than a designation of their religion; it is a statement of everything that makes them different from us. That is the problem that many insiders have with using the term.

I think the insiders I know want to clarify what the differences about them are: i.e. 'following Jesus', and what they are not, i.e. culture. That is why the label Christian does not fit. Again, we must remember that what matters in communication is not what you or I think, but what they and the communities around them think.

Rob A: Gene, I understand what you are saying. I empathize with our brothers and sisters who want to differentiate their true belief from negative associations and misperceptions are about the term 'Christian' or whatever name is used for Christian. What I under-

stand from 1 Peter 4:14,16 is, 'Do not turn away from the term *even though* it is misunderstood or used slanderously.'

Gene: Rob, I think what you cited from 1 Peter 4 is particularly important. But I would urge us to read the verses together. When Peter says, 'if anyone suffers as a Christian' in v. 16, it is directly connected to 'for the name of Christ' in v. 14. Thus, it is altogether important whether or not people are connecting the word Christian to the person of Jesus Christ.

The context of 1 Peter was clearly believers being mocked on account of Jesus, being derided for associating themselves with his person, and it was a blessing precisely because they were being identified with him personally.

This is simply not the same as someone being accused of joining an alien culture, which is what the term Christian often means today in an MBB [Muslim Background Believer] context. Therefore I have trouble with your exegesis as it seems you ignored the context. But perhaps I misunderstood your argument?

Benjamin: I have really valued this stream of exchanges about the term 'Christian'. Allow me to affirm both Rob's text and final conclusion ('I am glad to have this interaction') and Gene's insights that Christianity today is also derided as 'an alien culture'. I would add that this is true both among Muslims and secular-western communities.

This is what I take away from everyone's exchanges: If Paul's reference to 'Christian' in Acts 28 were the only reference in Scripture, we would have a possible case to postulate that he

avoided it—and by extension, we might too, and especially today. That Peter, the apostle to the Jews no less, would endorse this term and override any avoidance of it, converts the ‘derisive name’ into a badge of honour. All of church history has obeyed Peter in this regard; so must we.

VII ‘Negative label’ or ‘essence of belief’

Rashid: Rob, It seems that we have to differentiate Christian as a ‘negative label’ and Christian as an ‘essence of belief’. What Peter says, I think, means ‘Christian’ as an essence of belief, not as a label. The problem for most followers of Jesus in Muslim countries, I think, is that the communities understand the term Christian as a label of ‘alien culture’. Besides, especially in my context, most ‘Christians’ cannot show themselves to be followers of Jesus, so the community sees them only as those who apply ‘alien culture’.

Rob A: Mark and Rashid, I completely understand what you are saying about our faith being confused as a foreign western faith. It is a wrong presumption on their part. However, is this something unusual in history? The path of being a follower of Jesus is to suffer and be viewed negatively much of the time (1 Peter 4:12).

I too wish we could find some way to make everyone understand the difference between western culture associated with our faith and true believers, no matter their culture. But I am not ready to move away from a Name associated with my Saviour even if it is misunderstood.

VIII Conclusion

LDW: Summary

In this valuable discussion, a number of important points have been made. Among them are:

- The name ‘Christian’ does not appear to be one that early believers chose for themselves. They chose for themselves other self-descriptions.
- The point of 1 Peter 4:16 is to encourage persecuted believers not to be ashamed of being associated with Jesus. The goal in this epistle is not to tell believers what label they should use for themselves.
- ‘Bearing the name’, ‘in the name’ and other associations to God’s name in Scripture are not intended to require literal use of a specific word, and we don’t normally apply them that way.
- Throughout church history, ‘Christian’ (and its cognates) has been the most common descriptor of Jesus’ followers throughout the world.
- The connection of the term to the global and historic church has both a positive and negative side.
- A person’s opinion about the use (or non-use) of the term ‘Christian’ often seems rooted in deeply held values and emotional commitment—either to the global and historic church as ‘our family in Christ’ or to a desire to avoid major stumbling blocks that some part of the visible church presents to those outside of Christ.
- Any descriptors believers choose (or have placed upon us) can be used as opportunities to clarify God’s truth and present the reality of life in Christ.

- It's vital to differentiate Christian as a 'negative label' and Christian as an 'essence of belief'. 1 Peter refers to 'Christian' as an essence of belief, not as a label. The problem for followers of Jesus in Muslim countries is that the communities generally understand the term Christian as a label of 'alien culture'.
- Our goal in all our communication should be to convey as accurately as possible to our hearers the reality of the Good News in Christ and our relationship with him. In some cases the term 'Christian' will best accomplish this purpose; in other cases a different description may better accomplish that purpose.

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Understanding and Evaluating the Participation of Francophone Africans in World Mission: Congolesse working in Burundi

Fohle Lygunda li-M

I Introduction

Based on statistical reports in the *Atlas of Global Christianity*, the missionaries that churches in Africa have sent in 2010 represent 5 per cent of all missionaries deployed by the churches of the world.¹ During the same period, the French-speaking African missionaries numbered 3,188, or 15.4 per cent of all African missionaries and 0.7 per cent of all missionaries in the world.²

If, as indicated by Dana L. Robert, the different contexts of the world have shaped the particularities of the missionaries, their identity and tasks

throughout the world,³ it is reasonable to ask some questions about the true nature and the real challenges of the contribution of the French-speaking African missionaries to the worldwide mission. For example, questions may arise about the process of the mobilization of French-speaking African missionaries, their identification, selection, training, their commissioning, deployment, support and evaluation.

The purpose of this paper is to understand and evaluate such a process in a context where churches desire objective information about their involve-

1 Todd Johnson and Kenneth Ross (eds.), *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 261.

2 Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, 261.

3 Dana L. Robert, 'Missionaries Sent and Received, Worldwide, 1910-2010' in Todd Johnson and Kenneth Ross, *ATLAS of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 258.

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ment in global mission. What is meant by 'African missionaries'? What was the process of their engagement, their identification, selection, training, their commissioning, their deployment, support and evaluation? Where and why are they at work now? In what sense and for what purpose are they presented as 'African missionaries'?

This article demonstrates that emigration, voluntary or involuntary, has played and is still playing an important role in the missionary commitment of Africans, and that many more steps should be taken to make this missionary commitment more responsible and transparent. The article highlights some key historical precedents and the current situation of the participation of Africans in global mission before depicting that of Francophone Africans. A case study of Congolese working in Burundi is used to shed light on the discussion. Some concluding recommendations are considered as a way to enhance the missionary engagement of Africa's churches.

II Global Mission by Africans: Historical Precedents and Current Situation

1 Reasons for the presence of African missionaries around the world

The presence of African Christians around the world is caused by several factors, including the pursuit of happiness through studies and business, seeking of safety and political asylum after unwanted wars in several African

nations, and participation in international bodies such as the diplomatic corps and humanitarian workers, to mention a few.⁴ These differing reasons have caused sons and daughters of the continent to scatter throughout the world. They are commonly known under the label of *African diaspora*.

For some, this diaspora is voluntary and planned, for others it is unplanned. It is voluntary because many of these people have personally agreed to emigrate from the continent to other lands. However, while there are those among them who planned the emigration project with specific objectives, many would simply decide to leave the continent with the expectation of accommodating to the new realities of the foreign land where milk and honey would flow.

For others, life in the diaspora has not been a voluntary decision. In the history of Africa, there have been at least two significant periods involving deportation of Africans. First, the painful experience of the slave trade which occurred in the fifteenth century and continued until the nineteenth century. Then even in the twentieth century, there have been cases where Africans leave their countries under different guises—for example, the phenomenon

⁴ Tiffany R. Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelly, 'Unfinished migrations: Reflections on the African diaspora and the making of the modern world' in *African Studies Review*, 43:1, (April 2000), 11-45; Patrick Manning, 'Africa and the African diaspora: New directions of study', in *Journal of Africa History*, 44 (Cambridge: University Press, 2003), 488; Isidore Okpe-who, Carole Boyce Davies and Ali A. Mazrui (eds.), *The African diaspora: African origins and new world identities* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001).

of *ngulu* (pigs) (as it is called in DR Congo) where people pay to join a musical group or sports team travelling abroad but fail to return home; or trafficking of children and young women; then there are so-called charitable organisations and NGOs which prey on orphans, such as the infamous Ark of Zoe case in Chad in 2007.⁵

The second factor that facilitated the movement of Africans, willingly or unwillingly, to other continents, was a number of civil wars. Under the control of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), many individuals and families were sometimes forcibly, and often without choice, moved from one country to another within the continent before crossing the oceans and seas, by air, boat, or canoe. Many Africans have even paid with their lives. Both in the experience of the slave trade or during the hard time of wars, many Africans died before reaching their destination.

In these different experiences of emigration, voluntary or involuntary, certain realities have been experienced. For some, their families have been disrupted; for others, the hope of a return to Africa has faded; for many others, the link with the continent is simply broken. However, it is true that many Africans in the diaspora continue to maintain contact with the continent through financial assistance and return visits. Through cash remittances, many from the diaspora invest either in their own countries or in other African countries. Some studies evaluate Afri-

can remittances as hundreds of billions of US dollars.⁶

In reference to the 'Francophone African missionaries' presently at work in Europe, America, Asia and Oceania, even across Africa, it is noted that their presence may be connected with either of the experiences described above. Some have left Africa on a voluntary basis with or without a missionary objective, the latter being a goal that would have developed as they found themselves in the diaspora. Others have left the continent unwillingly and without any missionary goal, but this goal has been triggered by the opportunities of the new environment. For some, the contact with the church in Africa is maintained. For many others, there is no thought of contact with the mother church in Africa. For others, it is only after starting a church or ministry in a foreign country that contacts are developed with the churches of those left behind in Africa.

In such a context, the concerns raised at the beginning of this article about the meaning of 'African missionaries' and the process of their deployment and follow up become relevant. Let us see first what research has already discovered about the missionary activity of Africans, before moving to other considerations.

5 K. J. S. Bergquist, 'Operation Babylift or Babyabduction? Implications of the Hague Convention on the humanitarian evacuation and "rescue" of children', in *International Social Work*, (September 2009), 52:5, 621-633.

6 Sanjeev Gupta, Catherine Pattillo, and Smita Wagh, 'Impact of Remittances on Poverty and Financial Development in Sub-Saharan Africa', in *International Monetary Fund Working Paper*, WP/07/38, (February 2007), 3; Claire Mercer, Ben Page and Martin Evans, *Development and the African diaspora* (e-book: Zed Books, 2008). ISBN 9781842779019. Website: www.zedbooks.co.uk.

2 The current situation of the missionary commitment by Africans

In the history of mission, the missionary commitment has often been expressed in the crossing of cultural and/or geographical barriers with the purpose of preaching the gospel with the goal of church-planting or simply to provide social services. Sometimes it has been in the form of an itinerant ministry, while in other cases it might be only a mission trip from one to three weeks; the question remains whether the itinerant ministry and mission trips constitute missionary work in the full sense.⁷

While acknowledging that the Christian faith is spreading in Africa and Asia through indigenous missionaries who are crossing cultural barriers within their own countries, the editors of *Atlas* provide data mainly related to foreign missionaries who leave their home countries to serve in other countries within or outside their continent of origin.⁸ For example, a Congolese who serves God in Burundi or in another country outside of Africa is classified as a missionary. On that basis, *Atlas* makes the comparison between the number of missionaries sent in 1910 and those sent in 2010 at the world level, while also specifying how many were deployed by each continent.⁹ Unfortunately, this document does not state how many African missionaries serve in one or another category from those reported above (evangelism, church planting, social services, etc.).

One fact is undeniable—that today the vast majority of those who could be called ‘African missionaries’ work in various countries within the continent. According to some reports,¹⁰ there are many Nigerian missionaries working in at least forty African countries. Missionaries from the DR Congo serve God in many places in Africa. My family and I have served as a missionary family from the DR Congo to Burundi since 2011 after having served in the Central African Republic from 2003 to 2004. One can find similar cases across and out of the continent. Unfortunately, for lack of administrative organization, the ratio of these various missionary movements is not objectively and formally made known to the world through conventional channels.

The last observation relates to the distribution of African missionaries by region. Responding to the concern to know where exactly these missionaries are from and how many they are, *Atlas* reports as follows. The southern part of Africa has always been the region which sends more African missionaries, with the Republic of South Africa sending the most (8,000 missionaries in 2010). The western side of Africa comes second, with Nigeria in the lead (3,700 missionaries in 2010). The eastern region of Africa ranks third with Kenya as a leader (1,000 missionaries sent in 2010). The central part of Africa, despite its position in terms of number of Christians, ranks fourth, with the DR Congo at the top (1,200 missionaries sent in 2010). North Afri-

⁷ Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, 259.

⁸ Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, 290.

⁹ Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, 260.

¹⁰ Patrick Johnston, *The Future of the Global Church: History, trends and possibilities* (Colorado Springs, CO: Biblica, 2011).

ca closes the list.¹¹ As one can observe, Africa consists of different regions and such a reality also affects the missionary movement.

3 A missionary movement in a pluralistic Africa

Without doubt, any observer can still recognize that Africa is not uniform or homogenous. The continent includes within itself several races (black, white and coloured) and several mixed cultures influenced by the diversity of colonial powers (British, French, Belgian, Portuguese, Spanish, Arabic, Italian, German, etc.). The socio-cultural and economic realities in the western part of Africa are not necessarily like those of the central part. The two regions mentioned above are not identical to the part known as the Maghreb, or the one known as the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritrea), nor to the Swahili-land (Kenya, Tanzania, and the Northern part of Mozambique), etc.¹² It is therefore appropriate to say with McNulty that Africa is a continent of contrasts and diversity.¹³

This is true also for the contemporary missionary movement in Francophone Africa. The term *Francophonie* appeared in the late nineteenth century when French geographer Onésime Reclus (1837-1916) used it in the 1880s to designate the geographi-

cal areas where French was spoken as an official language.¹⁴ To this end, *Francophonie* means the gathering of populations spread over the world who use the French language partially or totally in their daily life and communication. Therefore, it is also referred to as *francosphere*.¹⁵ Some authors categorize *Francophonie* in three groups: the *Francophonie* of the North which comprises France, Quebec, Acadia, Belgium and Switzerland; the *Francophonie* of the Arab world consisting of Lebanon, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt; and the *Francophonie* of Africa south of the Sahara.¹⁶

However, as far as the reality is concerned, Francophone Africa could normally be divided into three categories. The first consists of countries which have French as their first official, governmental and educational language. Burundi and Rwanda, once Francophone of Central Africa, have switched to the East Africa Community by adopting English as the official language among others (French and Kinyarwanda in Rwanda, and French and Kirundi in Burundi). The second category includes countries that choose French as a second official language (Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Mauritius, and Tunisia). The third category includes countries that acceded to the International Organization of Franco-

11 Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, 261.

12 Y. Richmond and P. Gestrin, *Into African Intercultural Insights* (Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 1998), 75-213.

13 L. M. McNulty, 'The Contemporary Map of Africa', in P.M. Martin & P. O'Meara (eds.), *Africa*: 10-48, (London: Indiana University Press, 1995), 13.

14 Dennis Ager, *Francophonie in the 1990s: Problems and opportunities* (Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 1996), 1.

15 Ager, *Francophonie*, 1.

16 Chaibou Elhadji Oumarou, 'Francophonie in Africa South of Sahara : Specificity, challenges and perspectives', in *Revue Internationale de Langues, Littératures et Cultures*, no 11, (Janvier 2012), 17-36.

phonie although they are essentially non-francophone (Cape Verde, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe).

While focusing on Francophone Africa, this article retains only the first two categories of countries where French is spoken either as the first or the second language. Nevertheless, the use of 'first' or 'second' language is even questionable in most African countries where several other languages exist. For instance, though I am a citizen of the Democratic Republic of Congo which belongs to the above first category, French is not my first or second language because *Topoke* (my mother tongue) and *Lingala* (the trade language in the region where I grew up) deserve these first two places.

The Francophone part of Africa includes the countries from French and Belgian colonization, divided between Central Africa, Western Africa, Northern Africa (known under the label of the Maghreb), and the extreme Northeast, including the Horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean islands.¹⁷ While acknowledging some similarities in the challenges and opportunities of missionary movement in these different francophone areas, it should also be noted that these challenges and opportunities will differ from one region to another.

With specific regard to the missionary movement in Francophone Africa, such diversity relates to whether it refers to Central Africa, West Africa, North Africa, Africa East, or the Africa of the islands of the Indian Ocean. A

straightforward way to evaluate the missionary movement from one country could be to compare statistical information relating to the Christian population and that of the country, gain and loss in the Christian population, the number of outgoing missionaries and that of missionaries incoming. From these numerical reports, challenges of missionary commitment in Francophone Africa can be broadly understood.

III The Missionary Movement of Francophone Africans

Due to lack of locally-generated data in Africa and data collected by Africans themselves, this article relies on statistical records published in some reference documents outside of Africa. For this there are three major sources: *Atlas of Global Christianity*, *Operation World*, and *The Future of the Global Church*. While *Atlas* reports on statistical data in terms of missionaries sent and received,¹⁸ *Operation World* comments on the main trends per country.¹⁹ In his recent, *The Future of the Global Church*, Patrick Johnstone provides summaries of the contributions of the different streams of Christianity as they occurred in the past and as they take place in the present era with extrapolations for the future. Speaking of the 20th century, Johnstone observes that 'many churches still regard the Great Commission as an optional extra, a fad, an inconvenient relic of the colonial era and not as their core

¹⁷ Francophonie, <<http://www.francophonie.org/-80-Etats-et-gouvernements-.html>> accessed on December 14, 2014.

¹⁸ Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, 267.

¹⁹ Jason Mandryk, *Operation World, Professional Edition DVD-ROM*, 2010.

reason for existence'.²⁰ This observation by Johnstone is very relevant at this point in the discussion.

Thus in Francophone Africa, the historical legacy of colonialism leads some scholars to identify Christian mission with the attempt to colonize people of other cultures. Therefore, many churches in Francophone Africa find it difficult to perceive world mission activities as something which could be carried out by African churches. Consequently, the tendency is for many churches to conceive of 'mission' as any activity associated either with white and rich people from the West, or with something which occurs without clever planning.

Available statistical data depict the above situation more clearly than could be seen in a lengthy survey of literature. The following data are excerpted from *Atlas*²¹ and provide the overall picture of the degree to which Francophone Africa has been involved in world mission.

1 Missionary movement in Francophone Central Africa

Francophone Central Africa includes Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, and Chad. According to *Atlas*, the Christian population (87,863,000) represents 8.6 per cent of the entire Francophone Central Africa (106,280,000). While missionaries received in Francophone Central Africa were 21,860, this region has sent out 1,920 missionaries. The im-

plication is that it takes 45,761 Christians to send one missionary.

2 Missionary movement in Francophone West Africa

Francophone West Africa includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea Conakry, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo. According to *Atlas*, the Christian population (19,112,700) represents 17.5 per cent of the entire Francophone West Africa (109,465,000). While missionaries received in the Francophone West Africa were 6,610, this region has sent out 647 missionaries. The implication is that it takes 29,541 Christians to send one missionary.

3 Missionary movement in Francophone North Africa

Francophone North Africa includes Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. According to *Atlas*, the Christian population (142,600) represents 0.1 per cent of the entire Francophone North Africa (78,354,000). While missionaries received in the Francophone North Africa were 1,780, this region has sent out 39 missionaries. The implication is that it takes 3,656 Christians to send one missionary.

4 Missionary movement in Francophone East Africa

Francophone East Africa includes Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Madagascar, Rwanda, and Seychelles. According to *Atlas*, Christian population (28,401,200) represents 0.1 per cent of the entire Francophone East Africa (43,086,600). While missionaries received in the Francophone East Africa

²⁰ Patrick Johnstone, *The Future of the Global Church*, 63.

²¹ Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, 267.

were 4,795, this region has sent out 672 missionaries. The implication is that it takes 42,263 Christians to send one missionary.

5 Summary: Missionary movement in Francophone Africa

The data displayed above certainly raise questions about any claim that Francophone Africa is a proactive force for the mission. From about 20,700 African missionaries sent in 2010,²² only 3,835 have been sent by French-speaking Africa. That makes 18.5 per cent. If for a total of 135,522,500 Christians in

Francophone Africa, 3835 missionaries were sent, the implication could be that it takes 35,339 Christians to send one missionary (Table 1 and 2 below).

These figures show that Francophone Africa is a geographical area where the gospel is preached (41.1 per cent of the population are Christian), but in general this gospel would be rarely received (4.1% growth in Christian population), only superficially (2,943,350 would abandon their faith), and be passed on to the other unreached people by only a small number of church members (135,522,500 Christians to send only four missionaries). The above figures would also constitute proof that the churches of Francophone Africa seem less likely

²² Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, 267.

Table 1 : Entire population and Christian population

Francophone African Regions	Population (2010)	Christian Population (2010)
Central Africa	106,280,000	87,863,000
East Africa	43,086,600	28,401,200
North Africa	78,354,000	142,600
West Africa	109,465,000	19,112,700
Total	337,185,600	135,522,500
%		40.1%

Source : Generated and adapted from *ATLAS of Global Christianity*.

Table 2 : Missionaries sent and missionaries received

Francophone African Regions	Missionaries sent (2010)	It takes how many Christians to send one Missionary (2010)
Central Africa	1,920	45,761
East Africa	672	42,263
North Africa	39	3,656
West Africa	647	29,541
Total	3,835	121,221

Source : Generated and adapted from *ATLAS of Global Christianity*.

to be active in cross-cultural mission both locally and far off, outside French-speaking Africa as well as outside the continent. Only a detailed research on a case-by-case basis could prove otherwise.

The orientation for such research would focus on the analysis of each of the above statistical tables to indicate the different places where the missionaries from Francophone Africa are deployed, how many were sent out, what they are exactly doing in terms of missionary activities, how they were selected, trained, supported and sent out, etc. While these data are yet to be found, the case study of Congolese working in Burundi can shed some light.

IV Case Study: Congolese Missionaries in Burundi

The aim of this case study was to discover how Congolese working in Burundi in church and para-church ministries have been mobilized before getting involved in cross-cultural mission, how they were identified as missionary candidates by their respective churches, and how they were selected, trained, commissioned, deployed, supported, monitored and evaluated. This case study then provides some insights into the participation of African missionaries in world mission.

The study used the descriptive survey method because it was seen to be the most appropriate approach in obtaining views from a wide range of participants who had been working in Burundi before, during and after 1993. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from all selected participants, some of whom were interviewed.

Interviews were chosen in order to reveal the experiences of participants and the meaning they made of their experiences.²³ They were interviewed also to clarify issues that respondents had raised in their responses to questionnaires.

The following questionnaire (Table 3) was submitted to 100 Congolese among those working in the city of Bujumbura as pastors and evangelists within local churches. The main criteria were: to be a Congolese by nationality, born outside of Burundi and coming from one of the cities in the DR Congo, to serve whether as pastor or evangelist in the context of Protestantism (non-Catholic) with a local church or a para-church ministry, and to have a leadership position as an initiator or a new member of a local church, a denomination or a para-church ministry.

After several meetings (including some key leaders) explaining the reason for the research in the hope of overcoming the initial reluctance of many to participate, sixty responses were received. Unfortunately, as far as their ecclesiastical affiliation was concerned, only a few identified themselves with mainline churches (including Free Methodist, United Methodist, Norwegian Baptist, and Pentecostal Assemblies of God). These people happened not to be included in any of official statistical reports mentioned earlier in this article. However, in light of the result of our research, their contribution to the global mission cannot be ignored.

23 I. E. Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (2nd ed.), (New York: Teachers College Press, 1988).

Burundi has gone through difficult times with civil and army conflicts, resulting in killing, destruction and displacement of populations throughout the country. These conflicts, their root causes and their impact on different societal sectors have been well documented by both local²⁴ and international²⁵ researchers and scholars. From the literature, it is clear that these conflicts occurred in sequence, 1965, 1972, 1988, and from 1993 to 2005. Many observers have regarded the recent crisis, 1993-2008, as the most devastating human conflict in the history of Burundi. For instance, René Lemarchand notes the following about

the 1993 Burundi conflict: ‘Seldom have human rights been violated on a more massive scale, and with more brutal consistency, anywhere else on the continent.’²⁶

Congolese ‘missionaries’ who participated in the present research settled in Burundi in different times, before, during or after 1993. More research needs to be carried out to identify the motivation of each group of Congolese working in Burundi and the nature of their contribution in response to the problems Burundians faced before, during, and after the period of conflict. Another research project could be done to identify to what extent churches and other Christian ministries led by Congolese are really cross-cultural, stating how many citizens from DR Congo attend those churches and how many are from other countries.

Meanwhile, as already mentioned above, the research questionnaire (Table 3) and the findings displayed below shed some light on how African missionaries identify themselves, how they understand their ministries, how they are selected for mission abroad, and how they are supported and monitored.

24 Frederick Bamvuginyumvira, ‘The Influence of the African Public Radio in the Burundi Democratization Process’, Unpublished Master’s Thesis in Science of Governance (Bujumbura, Burundi: ILU Burundi, 2013); Jocelyne Bazahica, ‘Analysis of Leadership Behaviors in Burundi Vis-à-Vis the National Unity Charter: 1988 to 1993’, Unpublished Master’s Thesis in Organizational Leadership (Bujumbura, Burundi: ILU Burundi, 2013).

25 René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (London, Pall Mall Press: Library of African Affairs, 1970); *Burundi: Ethnic conflict and genocide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Jean Ghislain, *Le Burundi entre la peur et la cruauté* (Tournai: Imprimerie Saint-Luc-Ramegines-Chin, 1995) ; F. Reyntjens, *Burundi: Breaking the cycle of violence* (London: Minority Rights Publications, 1995).

26 Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic conflict and genocide*, xxv.

Table 3: Research Questionnaire related to the participation of Congolese in world mission

		Yes	No	Why
01	I consider myself as a missionary from my church of origin (in the DR Congo) here in Burundi	0	N	
02	I have received the missionary vocation due to the mission mobilization event organized by my church in my home country	0	N	
03	As I left the country, I did not think of coming to work as a missionary. The idea came to me as I was here.	0	N	
04	Before leaving my country, I had received an appropriate missionary training specific to the mission (cross-cultural ministry)	0	N	
05	Prior to leaving my country, I knew what I had to do here in Burundi as a missionary	0	N	
06	Before leaving my country, my church had organised a special service of dedication for the mission in my favour	0	N	
07	While I am here, I keep in touch with my home church through the formal and regular administrative reports	0	N	
08	My home church considers me as a missionary and supports me in prayer in an organized and regular manner	0	N	
09	My home church considers me as a missionary and supports me financially in an organized way	0	N	
10	My church (or ministry) here in Burundi considers me as a missionary even though I am not a white person from Europe, USA or Asia	0	N	
11	I know the duration of my mission here in Burundi	0	N	
12	I think my ministry here brings benefits to the global mission	0	N	example
13	My activities as a missionary here in Burundi are:	Your home church: Your church in Burundi:		

Source: Fohle Lygunda li-M, October 2012.

The result reveals the following factual realities:

1 How Congolese missionaries in Burundi were identified and mobilized (Q. 1-3)

Though some respondents consider themselves as 'missionaries' (56.6 per cent), most of them (65 per cent)

recognize that their missionary calling was not caused by their churches back in the DR Congo. While some of them have come to faith while in Burundi, others have lost formal and administrative contact with the churches they attended before leaving DR Congo. Half of the respondents (50 per cent) attest that their missionary commitment was

not made and planned from their country of origin. The most important question is: are they 'missionaries' who are sent or are they better described as 'auto-proclaimed missionaries'?

2 How they were selected and trained for the mission (Q. 4, 5)

The majority of respondents (58.4 per cent) were not formally trained for cross-cultural ministries for several reasons, including lack of mission schools within their respective home churches. Other respondents (41.6 per cent) received formal pastoral training through a biblical or theological school, but not especially for cross-cultural mission. The question is: are they comfortable and knowledgeable in what they do?

3 How they were commissioned and deployed to the mission (Q. 6)

The majority of respondents (58.4 per cent) were not formally or officially commissioned by their home churches for cross-cultural mission in Burundi. Other respondents (41.6 per cent) were instead ordained as pastors for their pastoral ministry in the DR Congo. The question is: in what sense do they identify themselves as 'missionaries' and 'being in mission'?

4 How they are supported, monitored and evaluated (Q. 7-11)

Findings on support, monitoring and evaluation seem contradictory. According to respondents, they are prayed for (51.6 per cent), they have some casual administrative contacts (46.6

per cent), and they receive non-regular financial support (8.3 per cent). After having checked the respondents' explanation of their answers, it is clear that Congolese working in Burundi are not really assessed by any church back home in the DR Congo. For instance, the majority (90 per cent) state that they don't know the duration of their mission in Burundi. Some would even love to move to another country if they had opportunity and means. The question is: what would they do and become if they were forced to return to their country, the DR Congo?

5 What is their contribution to world mission (Q. 12,13)

All respondents are convinced that their ministries bring benefits to the global mission as they get involved in different ministries, such as pastoral, evangelization, preaching, Christian education, Bible and theological school, church planting, discipleship, family ministry, education (primary, secondary and tertiary). The question is: how do they evaluate their contribution to world mission in comparison to God's holistic mission of saving the whole person?

From the above findings, it becomes clear that though missionaries from French-speaking countries may be found in several parts of the world, there is still more to do in terms of their mobilization, training, commissioning, deployment, support, monitoring, and evaluation.

V Challenges and Opportunities to Francophone African Churches

Merely claiming to be 'mission-minded' does not make a church or people a 'missionary movement', nor can it be a simple confession of faith. It is something to be done, an experience to live out, and its fruits should be obvious. In general, and also in light of the foregoing data, it is clear that Francophone Africa still needs to be better mobilized for a responsible commitment to God's global and holistic mission. The eloquent comment from Daniel Bourdanne depicts the current situation:

Because of its colonial past characterized by a low vitality of Protestantism in France and Belgium (the colonizing countries), French-speaking Africa was often regarded as the 'poor man' of the evangelical world. Missiologically, because this part of the world is culturally different and little known by the evangelical world (which is dominated by the American and Anglo-Saxon culture), French-speaking Africa has often been neglected.²⁷

This serious warning from Bourdanne should not, however, force anyone to continue to pity the 'poor man' of Africa. After more than a century of Christian presence, Bourdanne's challenge would be appreciated better if it became a trumpet call to awaken a worthwhile response. In seeking to engage Francophone Africa in mission,

one should consider the following challenges and opportunities:

1 Initiate structures of mobilizing for mission, training for mission and sending for mission

Initiating appropriate structures for mission should be taken up in every church, every country and every region (Central, North, West, and East). These structures can operate within a Christian community (denominational mission) or through an association of Christian communities (interdenominational mission).

For instance, missionary conferences and consultations should be held regularly. A prime example comes from the Movement for African National Initiatives (MANI) which has already held three consultations at the international level: 2001 in Jerusalem, 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya, and 2011 in Abuja, Nigeria. Nevertheless, these forums will need participants willing to popularize and apply the results of their decisions and resolutions. Schools, institutes, colleges and universities of mission studies must multiply.

However, these different training institutions would do well to prepare students for an applied missiology which would include a contextualized biblical reflection and proper missionary practice.²⁸ Mission involvement would mean also that missionaries from Francophone Africa be sent according to Jesus' itinerary. They should go from their Jerusalem to their Judea, their Samaria up to the rest of the earth (Acts 1:8).

²⁷ Daniel Bourdanne, 'The Rising mission force in French-speaking Africa', in *Lausanne Movement Newsletter*, 2011.

²⁸ Fohle Lygunda, *Missiologie: identité, formation et recherche dans le contexte africain* (Bruxelles/Kinshasa: Mabiki, 2011), 86-105.

2 Initiate missionary programs to bring the whole Gospel to the entire person

In the light of biblical history, God has led to involvement in Africa in all three areas of human need: physical need (body), spiritual need (spirit) and psychic need (soul). The contemporary missionary movement in Francophone Africa will play its full role only when it follows the missionary path of Jesus who took care of the whole person: body, soul and spirit (Lk 4:17-21; Mt 9:35-39).

To ensure a responsible and successful missionary movement, missionaries from Francophone Africa will need to be recruited from a wide range of people and professions, including laity, pastors, evangelists, prophets, teachers, business men and women, nurses, medical doctors, lawyers, agronomists, veterinarians, engineers of different specialties, journalists, socio-cultural workers, etc. One of the challenges at this level is to mobilize, identify, select, train, deploy, support and evaluate these potential missionaries for cross-cultural mission.

3 Initiate missionary programs within the Francophone area of Africa

Africa can be depicted as a sphere where more than half of its residents are still without Christ.²⁹ Special emphasis should be put on West Africa and North Africa where the growth of Christianity faces the hegemony of Islam. Major cities across regions of Francophone Africa must also be

of concern to the African missionary movement because of the rate of urbanization which continues to grow.

Similarly, special attention should focus on the mission among children and young people whose presence becomes increasingly greater. Thousands of pygmies, created in the image of God but often overlooked in the jungles of eight countries in Francophone Africa, represent a great harvest.³⁰ Effort should be combined in their favour through a holistic mission.

4 Initiate missionary programs within Africa, but in non-Francophone regions.

In a continent where non-Christians represent 52.1 per cent of the population,³¹ the French-speaking African churches should deploy more missionaries than would be the case with churches from other continents. Due to threats of terrorism and other economic and political considerations, it is obvious that missionaries from the West no longer enjoy the same openness as was the case in past centuries.

Non-Francophone regions are likely to be considered as the 'Judea and Samaria' of Francophone missionaries. Therefore, they will need to overcome language barriers by seeking to learn Arabic, English, Portuguese, Spanish, Swahili, etc. Missionaries from Francophone Africa should be prepared to testify in the context of Islam, animism, secularism, and occultism.

³⁰ These countries are, Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Gabon, Central Africa Republic, Cameroon, and Equatorial Guinea.

³¹ Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, 112.

²⁹ Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, 112.

5 Initiate missionary programs towards other continents

Other continents like America, Europe, Asia, and Oceania should also be part of the preoccupation for mission involvement by Francophone Africans due to secularism, materialism and Eastern religions which keep people in bondage. Therefore, several barriers must be overcome by the Francophone African missionaries: geographical, economic, cultural, linguistic, and spiritual barriers. To overcome these various barriers, partnership in mission, resource management and planning activities are needed at local, national, continental and international levels.

Francophone African churches need to be proactive in this regard. Since the French-speaking countries are united by language and by the institutional organization at worldwide level,³² Francophone African countries could also take the opportunity of the common language to become involved in world mission in Francophone countries beyond the continent. Since the 10th Francophonie Summit held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on November 26-24, 2004, many non-Francophone states have joined the Francophonie. Therefore, some cultural adaptations might be easily undertaken.

VI Conclusion

The current African missionary commitment can be compared to that of the early church which resulted from

the persecution that the Christians endured. The sending of Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 11: 20,21) or Peter and John to Samaria (Acts 8: 14) by the Jerusalem church was only to check what the Holy Spirit had already done via some disciples dispersed following the murder of Stephen. It is therefore clear that mission can be accomplished through well-planned intentional missionary programs, but also through informal ministries independently facilitated by the sovereign action of God. The case of Congolese working in Burundi undoubtedly falls into the latter category.

Given this ongoing informal missionary movement, the churches, especially in Francophone Africa, should act in the manner of the Jerusalem church. They should organize themselves to identify, support, coordinate and direct informal mission activities initiated here and there by Africans. Such an effort needs to be structured from different entities within the same country, at regional, continental and international levels.

Rather than being 'dependent' or 'independent', African missionaries would be better to work as 'interdependent missionaries' who can integrate into the global mission of God by working in synergy with the rest of the body of Christ. They should identify themselves in conventional terms of being 'denominational missionaries', 'interdenominational missionaries' or 'non-denominational missionaries'.³³ Such an effort will allow them to focus

32 Ager, *Francophonie*, 3; Peter Brown, 'The geopolitics of French language and culture and la Francophonie', in *Review*, no 33 (May 2005), 42-57.

33 Dotsey Welliver and Minnette Northcutt (eds.), *Mission Handbook, US and Canadian Protestant Ministries Overseas 2004-2006* (Wheaton: EMS, 2004), 16.

their missionary activities effectively, and humbly to demonstrate what God is doing through their cross-cultural faith adventures.

Training institutions which include missiology as a department could organize and mobilize teachers and students to produce a database aimed at clarifying the contribution of African missionaries to world mission. Teams of researchers by church, country, and region could be set up to initiate and coordinate research.

With such a task force, answers to the following questions could be provided and updated regularly: What is meant by 'African missionaries'? What

was the process of their engagement, their identification, selection, training, their commissioning, their deployment, support and evaluation? Where and why are they at work now? In what sense and for what purpose do they present themselves as 'African missionaries'?

This article has attempted to explain and suggest answers to these questions, but the true nature and the real challenges of the contribution of African missionaries to the world mission remain to be elucidated, from one missionary to another, from one country to another, from one mission field to another.

'Discerning the Obedience of Faith'

A history of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance 2nd edition

David Parker

Introduction

This article contains part of the final two chapters of the second edition of the history of the WEA Theological Commission, 'Discerning the Obedience of Faith' published in 2014 to mark 40 years of activity by the Commission.¹ These chapters cover the ten year period since the first edition was issued. The text of the earlier part is unchanged. It was originally published in book form and also in the pages of this journal (2004, 28:2, 100-118; 2004, 28:3, 196-219, 2004, 28:4, 292-314). The remainder will be published in our next issue.

The updated version has been written by the original author, Dr David Parker, who is well placed to document the history of the organisation with which he has been closely associated since 1986. He was an active member of the TC, representing Aus-

tralia, and participated in several study groups and conferences, before taking on administrative and editorial roles. He was Administrator and then Executive Director until 2009, and has been editor of *Evangelical Review of Theology* for most of the time since 1998, having been called back to this role in 2010; he also edits *Theological News*.

The period covered by this extract involved many changes for the Theological Commission which continues its vital, although new, role within the World Evangelical Alliance, which is also undergoing a transformation as it comes under new leadership in 2015.

*Dr Thomas Schirrmacher,
Executive Chair, TC of WEA.*

Part 1 Reaching the Goal 2005-2009

I Renewed Hopes in 2005

With the TC now 30 years old, there was a quite different context from the time when it had been founded. There was a significant increase in the num-

¹ A PDF version of the full text is available on-line without charge at <http://www.bucer.de/ressource/details/discerning-the-obedience-of-faith.html>

ber of well-resourced seminaries in the majority world, and many more people from these areas had received a high quality theological education.

This new context provided the TC with a greatly increased scope for networking theologians and theological institutions around the world, and the diversity that existed made the task all the more important. Although there were pressures on the TC itself, the decisions made at the 2004 annual meeting provided a good foundation for it to fulfil its vital role. Consequently there began a surge which continued for several years.

There were additional members and new study initiatives such as Ken Gnanakan's work on the environment and Brian Edgar's on bio-theology and public theology. Edgar had also taken responsibility for cooperation with ICETE on the theology of theological education project; the papers from this effort were published in *ERT* July 2005. David Hilborn had already begun working on a review of the WEA statement of faith in association with a similar project for the UK EA; he was also looking at attitudes to other faiths. Dialogues with the Roman Catholic Church were under the leadership of George Vandervelde, and there was hope that a similar move could be made with the Orthodox now that Per Pedersen who was working in Armenia was part of the group.

The TC's prospects were improved with a change of leadership in WEA. In February, 2005, Gary Edmonds resigned as Secretary-General after less than three years in the post. This opened up the possibility of a full scale review of WEA operations. Geoff Tunnicliffe was appointed acting leader

and a top level 'strategic summit' involving all arms of the WEA was held in May 2005 in Orlando Florida. The TC was represented at this event, where the first edition of this book was launched along with Ken Gnanakan's study on environmental stewardship. The plans for a new approach to WEA activity matured at this Orlando meeting. There was further progress in this direction at a meeting of international leaders held in December in Israel. This allowed the TC as with other commissions to plan more firmly and to work together more cooperatively in the overall mission of the WEA.

The core executive group was a key factor in the progress of the TC. However, the size and representation of this group was limited by the long-standing policy of the TC that members would be chosen on the basis of their suitability according to agreed criteria and were to be funded by the TC as needed, rather than being composed simply by those that had the opportunity and means to attend. Because of pressures on the TC budget, this meant that not all regions of the world could yet be represented. There was hope that some sympathetic groups might be interested to assist; FEET, for example, showed interest in helping to sponsor a member from Africa to enable that important area to be represented. Another scheme under consideration was a system of 'extended membership' which would see the possibility of individuals, and representatives of national TC and seminaries contributing their own involvement without putting additional pressure on the TC budget.

Meanwhile, a four-part plan for the annual meeting of the TC was being developed which would produce effective

results. Each annual session would feature the normal meeting in which the TC core members would transact their business, but in addition there would be other elements—a mini-consultation on a topic of global importance, a symposium on a topic of local importance, and finally, fellowship with local theologians and ministry in local churches where possible. Cooperation would always be sought with any theological association and seminaries in the host city.

II Seoul Korea 2005

This plan worked well for the annual gathering held in September 2005 in Seoul, South Korea, where TC member Dr Jae Sung Kim was a key leader in the Korea Evangelical Theological Society. This long standing and active group was instrumental in organising a successful consultation on 'The Task of Evangelical Theology for the Church of the 21st Century' at the Sungkyul University. TC members also visited a number of seminaries, not only in the capital but elsewhere in the country as well.

The business session was able to make considerable progress, updating the TC By-laws in the wake of the developments at WEA level, especially by instituting the new category of extended membership (later known as the Global Membership Scheme). This system would enable national and regional theological commissions, seminaries and individuals to be members of the TC and to be able to contribute to the work of organising by attending meetings at their own expense and to receive in return copies of the TC journal and newsletter and be connected

with other theologians on a regular basis. This scheme proved to be exceptionally beneficial in future years, but meanwhile the TC was looking at ways to fill gaps on its core membership, especially from Africa and Latin America.

Plans were also developed for new task forces to study Jewish evangelism and Integral Mission. There were also plans for new developments in ecumenical discussion, although there was still resistance in some WEA circles to the dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church; these difficulties needed to be resolved before further progress could take place. A project which had been remitted to the TC some years earlier was finalised when it was decided that the revised EA UK statement of faith should be recommended to the WEA for adoption. Dr David Hilborn had been working with both the EA UK and the TC on this project.

Another important step was underway as well with news of the revival of the Lausanne Theology Working Group under the leadership of former TC member, Dr Chris Wright with the prospect of another global conference on evangelisation in view. The TC offered support for this development and anticipated opportunities for cooperation between the two groups.

III Theological Conferences

With these positive steps, it seemed that the plans that had been developing for some time might at last be within reach! The momentum continued into the next year.

Earlier hopes that the TC might be able to conduct a significant event in conjunction with the 9th WCC Assembly at

Porto Alegre, Brazil in February 2006 (as it had done in Canberra, 1991) did not eventuate. However, the TC was represented by David Hilborn, along with WEA International Director, Geoff Tunnicliffe as official observers.

In August 2006, Carver Yu represented the TC at the biennial consultation of ICETE at Chiang Mai, Thailand where he was one of the featured speakers. At about the same time, Dr Rolf Hille was in Prague, Czech Republic, leading a group representing the WEA in the first session of discussions with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This event aimed at establishing points in common between the two groups and clarifying misunderstandings with a view to possible cooperation. A second round of talks was held a year later at Andrews University, in Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA. The findings, released in a statement issued at the close of discussion, indicated that there could be much closer relationships between the two traditions, and also the possibility of Adventist membership in the Evangelical Alliances.

Meanwhile, honorary member of the TC, Thomas Oden, was developing his new Early African Christianity project which had arisen out of his Ancient Christian Commentary series and sought to give recognition to the significant part played by Christianity in this part of the world. This project was linked to TC and provided a backdrop for the annual meeting of September 2006, which was held for the first time ever in Africa. Some of the key early leaders of the TC had come from Africa but there had been no significant meeting of the organisation in that continent.

IV Kenya 2006

The venue was NEGST (now the School of Theology of Africa International University), an important seminary in Nairobi, Kenya and facilitated by James Nkansah-Obrempong, Professor of Theology at NEGST. It followed the new pattern with a consultation on 21 September on 'Religious Fundamentalism as a Global Issue'. Keynote speakers were Dr Yusufu Turaki (Nigeria/Kenya) and TC chair, Dr Rolf Hille.² This successful event was followed the next day by a symposium on African theology, covering topics such as Christology, hermeneutics and comparisons between Christian and Islamic approaches to Scripture. Each of these events attracted about 30 participants.

A pastoral statement issued from the fundamentalism consultation was widely distributed and well received, while the opportunity for local theological college students and faculty to attend the symposium was warmly appreciated. TC members met also with leaders of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and the Kenya Evangelical Alliance; some of them preached in local churches at the weekend.

In addition to these main events, there was a parallel workshop held elsewhere in the city on HIV/AIDS, led by Ken Gnanakan and Professor Danny McCain of Nigeria with the assistance of World Vision (Kenya). An action plan to assist churches was prepared and expectation of further developments in the future.³

² *TW* 35:4 (October 2006) 1, 2 (statement); the papers were published in *ERT* 37:2 (April 2007).

³ *TW* 36:2 (April 2007), 2.

During the business sessions a notable contribution was made by members of the extended membership scheme which had been launched at the beginning of the year. In particular, a proposal by Matt Cook (La Faculté de Théologie Evangélique de l'Alliance Chrétienne, FATAEC, in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire) arising out of his paper to the symposium for a task force on contextual exegesis was firmly adopted and was due to produce fruitful results in later years.

The growth of the TC was now positive enough for some long anticipated changes to take place in its leadership. Dr Hille indicated that after 20 years' involvement with the TC (half of them as Executive Chair), he was wanting to hand over the leadership to a new generation in the next year. Dr Ken Gnanakan also indicated that he was ready to do the same. Dr David Hilborn (EA UK) who had been anticipated to succeed Dr Hille regretfully announced that a change in his employment meant that it would not be possible for him to continue with the TC. Dr Hille was therefore reappointed as Executive Chairman but a firm decision was made to seek a replacement within the year. Dr David Parker's appointment as Director of Administration and Publication was extended by two years to July 2009 with the intention also of finding a replacement by then or sooner.

Dr George Vandervelde's appointment to the TC was also extended by two years so that he could continue to lead the ecumenical dialogue activities which were at a delicate stage with a decision about the publication of documents from the last round of talks with the Roman Catholic Church soon to be made. It was hoped that an understudy

for this important and critical ministry could be found.

Although there were still difficulties to be overcome, the historic session of the TC in Kenya concluded on a positive note.

V Theological Working Group and Other Conferences

In February 2007 some members of the TC, including David Parker, Michael Glerup and Matthew Cook, returned to Kenya for a consultation sponsored jointly by the TC and the revived Lausanne Theological Working Group and held at Limuru near Nairobi. This was an exploratory conference, meeting under the theme, 'Following Christ in a Broken World', to test the feasibility of a conducting a series of consultations to provide comprehensive and detailed theological input for the proposed third Lausanne conference on evangelisation. This event was expected to be held in 2010, to coordinate with the celebration of the centenary of the famous Edinburgh World Missionary Conference.

The Kenya conference was organised by Chris Wright and attracted about 30 participants. Papers were presented covering the wide range of topics. As a result of the discussion, it was decided that there should be three more conferences, one each year until the major Lausanne event. The initial papers were published in *ERT* October 2007, and the TWG arranged for 5000 extra copies to be printed for wide distribution amongst its own constituency and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the TC task forces and other study projects gathered pace. Ken Gnanakan continued work on the

HIV/AIDS project, while Matt Cook's contextual theology group made positive plans for production of their papers and the publication of a book. Similarly, a team of scholars with particular experience and background were preparing for the study on Jewish evangelism, with the organisational assistance of the evangelistic organisation, Jews for Jesus; this was seen as a necessary follow-up to the earlier Willowbank consultation.

There had been some progress on the dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church which had been stalled due to resistance by some of the WEA constituency to such discussions. Following on submissions made by the TC from its 2006 meeting, the WEA IC had decided that the dialogue could be continued with the understanding that the papers were to be considered as study documents rather than official statements. The WEA participants were also to include evangelicals from Catholic dominated countries (but, in any case, these conditions were no problem as the TC had always adopted these policies in the past). The sudden death on 19 January 2007 of the TC convenor, Dr George Vandervelde, who had led the dialogue activity for many years, soon after these decisions were made created difficulties for their implementation, but Dr Rolf Hille was ready to take over and head up the process.

Concerted efforts were made to encourage theological commissions and associations in countries around the world to link themselves with the TC through the Extended Membership scheme, now in its second year. David Parker visited as many as he could on his travels and information, including

Guide Sheets on how to form and operate a Commission, was sent to many national EAs which had not yet formed a group. As a result, there was a steady increase in membership from national bodies as well as individuals and seminaries.

VI Philadelphia 2007

The major event for 2007 was the annual gathering which was held in Philadelphia, USA. On his return from Israel where the annual WEA leaders' meeting had been held, David Parker visited the area in December 2006 and confirmed the suitability of the area. With the assistance of Dr Chris Hall (Eastern University) and Dr Jae Sung Kim, now a pastor of a Korean church in the city, the program was developed.

The major component was a consultation on 31 July at Palmer Seminary where Dr Ronald Sider, a former leading member of the TC, was the well-known Professor of Theology, and president of Evangelicals for Social Action; he had also been recently appointed by the WEA to head its newly formed initiative on global civic engagement. Papers on the topic, 'Providence and Political Involvement' were presented by Dr Sider and Dr Claus Schwambach of Brazil; they were followed by a discussion period led by Dr Brian Edgar resulting in the drafting of a carefully worded 'Philadelphia Statement' on 'Evangelical Social Engagement'.

The symposium was held at Westminster Seminary focusing on 'Theology and Ministry' with addresses by Dr Peter Lillback, President of the seminary, and Dr Dennis Cheek from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.

Previous planning came to a posi-

tive climax at the business sessions conducted during the gathering when several changes and additions were made to the membership and leadership of the TC. Dr Rolf Hille had led the TC in the dual role of Executive Chairman for most of the time since 1996 and was anxious to hand over to a younger person. Dr Brian Edgar, who had been the leader of the Australian Evangelical Alliance theology unit, had been seriously considering the suggestion that he should succeed Dr Hille. However, Dr Edgar had recently taken up a new academic post with Asbury Seminary, USA and was not sure if he would be able to do justice to the TC chairmanship in his new role. So he agreed to become Vice-Chairman with a view to taking on the position in October 2008 when it was hoped that a new leadership team would be finalised within the framework of a 5 year strategic plan.

Dr Hille retained the position of chairman and Dr David Parker was appointed Executive Director (part time) (cutting short his earlier appointment by a year—2009 back to 2008). At this meeting, Dr Ken Gnanakan (India) stepped down from the position of Vice-Chairman, ending more than 20 years of involvement with the TC. Dr David Hilborn, who had been head of Theology for the UK Evangelical Alliance for several years, stepped down in 2006 due to a change in his employment, and was replaced on the TC by Dr Justin Thacker, his successor in UK.

Dr James Nkansah who had played such a strong role in organising the 2006 annual gathering in Kenya was appointed a member of the TC, thus filling a long standing vacancy for African representation. Dr Chris Hall was

also appointed as a North American representative to replace the late Dr George Vandervelde.

Ideas were discussed to fill the remaining regional vacancies on the TC, but its work was strengthened by the active participation once again of several Extended Members representing national TCs and other bodies. It was hoped that soon Dr Edgar would feel able to take over the leadership role from Dr Hille and that a new full-time funded Executive Director could also be found. However, some of the discussions indicated that these plans might not work out smoothly.

For the first time, Geoff Tunnicliffe, International Director of WEA, was present at a TC meeting and he presented a document in the process of finalisation detailing the relationships between the WEA and its Commissions. Clarification of these arrangements was well overdue, and the document generated vigorous discussion, especially when Dr Edgar pointed out the anomaly that it contained. Commissions were answerable to the WEA and existed to further its cause, but they received no funding from the WEA. Dr Edgar pointed out the contradiction of this, and compared it with the situation that existed in the national alliance in which he had worked where the commissions were fully funded by the parent body.

Funding had been a critical issue for the TC, especially in recent years, and it was disappointing that in the new era of the WEA, there would be no relief. In fact, the TC had found that even in its day to day management of finances, WEA rulings created difficulties and imposed extra unnecessary costs and delays. Despite this, there was no pos-

sibility of the WEA changing its policy on the funding of its commissions; the arrangements were cemented when the document was finalised later in the year. This decision set in train a sequence of events that was to have considerable significance for the TC.

The TC was present again for the WEA ILT held in Kenya in November 2007 where planning for the GA to be held late in 2008 was high on the agenda. Some WEA members also participated in the Global Christian Forum which followed. This new ecumenical gathering was meant to draw in the evangelical and pentecostal churches around the world in a way that the conciliar movement had not been able to do. The focus was on individual participation and the sharing of testimonies of faith.

After the success of TC gathering in Africa in 2006, it was planned to expand the TC's activities to another area of the world that had been neglected for so long—Latin America. Some of the early prominent leaders of TC had come from this area and developments there at the time had been a major focus of TC interest. However, as with Africa, it had not been possible in recent years to include this region in the TC's activities. This was all the more critical because of the rapid growth of evangelicalism in the region. A start had been made by the appointment of Dr Claus Schwambach of Brazil to the TC in 2004, and it was hoped that there could be the appointment of a Spanish speaking representative soon.

Accordingly, plans were being prepared for a meeting of the TC in the region in 2008, but the announcement by WEA that it would hold a GA in Thailand in 2008 meant those plans had to

be delayed. In any case, whenever the meeting could be held, a lot of work was needed to make up lost ground and to reconnect with the evangelical theological institutions there and their people.

Thanks to a generous gift from a Hong Kong donor, it became possible for David Parker as Executive Director to make an extensive tour of Latin America in April-May 2008. His visit, which was facilitated in Brazil by Dr Claus Schwambach, covered Chile, several areas of Brazil, Argentina, Peru and Guatemala. Valuable contacts were made, and many opportunities opened to lecture, preach and promote the work of the TC.

A particular feature of the visit was meeting with some of the 'old lions'⁴ of the TC who had made such a notable contribution in earlier times, including Rene Padilla (Argentina), Pedro Arana (Peru), and Emilio Nunez (Guatemala). There was also effective contact with AETAL (the association of Bible schools), Latin American Theological Fraternity and several other organisation, seminaries, universities. Inspections were made of sites that could be suitable for a consultation, ideas about a relevant program were ventilated and potential additional members of the TC were identified.

The reception was encouraging, but the need for definite action was reinforced when the most disconcerting question of all was asked, 'Why have we not had a visit from anyone in the TC before?'

4 For the reference to 'old lions' see Samuel Cueva, 'Missionary Theology in Context: Marks of Mission from CLADE V' (*ERT* 38:1 (Jan 2014), 54-69.

VII Lausanne Theological Working Group

The first of the three planned consultations on the Lausanne theme took place in February 2008 at Chiang Mai, Thailand with the topic, 'The Whole Gospel'. About 30 theologians were present, many of them with connections to Langham organisation; David Parker and Justin Thacker represented the TC. The next consultation was held at Panama in January 2009 with Rolf Hille and Justin Thacker representing the TC where the theme was 'The Whole Church'. The final gathering, focused on 'The Whole World', was in February 2010 at Beirut.⁵

The overall result of this intensive series of conferences was an impressive body of papers which would provide a comprehensive theological foundation for participants at the Cape Town 2010 event. Already many extra copies of *ERT* featuring the papers had been distributed globally and there were plans for a statement from the conferences to be circulated as well. There had also been other input from the conferences such as specific suggestions for the program; as head of the TWG, Dr Chris Wright also had direct input into the planning for the event.⁶ Chris Wright, who was one of

the major speakers at Cape Town, took the main responsibility for organising the TWG conferences but the TC was an active partner.

VIII Productive Program

The TC's own program in 2008 was also a productive one, but difficulties were also encountered which had serious ramifications. The major event would be the annual gathering in Thailand and participation in the GA.

Earlier in the year preliminary meetings for the next round of dialogues with the RC Church were held 26 Feb 2008 in Rome. The Center for Early African Christianity developed its program with its first International Consultation in Ethiopia, 11-12 April 2008. Then in August the two task forces brought their work to a climax. The contextual exegesis group led by Matt Cook held a concentrated writing session at Wycliffe Hall Oxford to finalise papers ready for publication. At about the same time, the Uniqueness of Jesus and Jewish Evangelism group held its consultation at Woltersdorf near Berlin, preparing its papers and issuing a statement which was widely circulated.

In his travels in Asia, Europe and Africa, the Executive Director made good contact with national TCs, theological associations and seminaries. The Global Membership scheme continued to expand steadily.

⁵ Papers from the LTWG sessions appeared in *ERT* 33:1 (Jan 2009); 34:1 (Jan 2010); 34:3 (July 2010).

⁶ *TW* 38:4 (Oct 2009), p 3.

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Book Reviews

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The Future of Evangelical Theology: Soundings from the Asian American Diaspora

Amos Yong

Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014

ISBN 978-0-8308-4060-1

Pb, pp 254, indexes

Reviewed by David Parker, Editor, Evangelical Review of Theology

All theology is contextual, but rarely do we see theological reflection as consciously and intensely aware of, and indeed based on, its context as it occurs in this, the latest book from Amos Yong. Yong was born in Malaysia of Chinese stock, migrating to the United States in mid-childhood where he finished his schooling and undertook his tertiary education, including his theological studies and doctoral work. This makes him a member of the '1.5 generation'. His wife is a fifth genera-

tion Mexican-American. Yong's church context is equally specific—the son of a Pentecostal pastor (a first generation convert) called from a flourishing church in Malaysia to pastor a small church in a migrant Christian community in North California.

Yong himself went on to become a well-known and highly productive theologian in the same tradition, with many publications to his credit, at Regent University, Virginia Beach VA, before moving in 2014 to Fuller Theological Seminary, Los Angeles, where he is Professor of Theology and Mission, and Director of the Center for Missiological Research.

In these 'soundings' he writes as a Pentecostal theologian within the broader Asian American Evangelical context, expressing his personal pilgrimage in a book which aims to help those in his tradition to 'bring something substantive' to the development of evangelical theology, especially in North America.

He believes that this can be done only if members of this tradition take 'seriously the historicity and particularity of Asian American cultures, experiences and perspectives' (p. 117).

After the initial introduction, the book opens with two chapters analysing the wider cultural and theological scene, moving in turn from the global to the Asian, and then to the North American theological world. The first main proposal of the book is found in the third chapter (see excerpt in this issue of ERT) which consists of a discussion of the history and prospects of current Asian American evangelical theological efforts, and then a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of mainline evangelical theology. This ground work is followed up by a statement of the 'mandate' of Asian American evangelical theology as it takes the opportunity to make its own contribution rather than integrating with or aping the mainstream.

Chapter 4 introduces in detail the kind of contribution that Yong believes 'Pentecostal voices' should make to the American scene, focusing especially on the 'biblical image of a divinely ordered diversity and pluralism' (p. 136) arising from the day of Pentecost experience, and also the importance of the incarnation as a pointer to the necessity of theology being contextualised to its cultural and historical environment. This kind of approach Yong describes as 'pent-evangelical', and it is his signature throughout this whole volume (see pp. 135f).

The next two chapters, 5 and 6, take a more specific direction, basing themselves on the particular Asian American experience to develop an 'evangelical theology of migration'. In Chapter 7, the author spreads out a whole vista of possibilities revealed by this 'migrant

theology' approach for 'a globally viable evangelical theology'. This is the second major proposal presented by the author in this book, and it is offered not simply as an alternative or supplement to mainstream evangelical theology, but as the key to its global renewal and reinvigoration (p. 124). This is supported strongly by the author's conviction that global evangelicalism needs the Pentecost day foundation (the variety of tongues/languages as 'vehicles of the gospel' p. 136) to provide it 'with a theological (rather than merely politically correct) rationale for embracing human diversity' (p. 139)—although surely this is not a novel insight!

The final chapter is an epilogue returning again to the author's own personal and family story, showing how that particular context has led to the development of this line of theological reflection. His conclusion is that his personal status among those who are 'aliens and strangers invites us to think about diaspora and hybridity not as marginal or incidental aspects of Christian but indeed *as central to it*' (emphasis added).

The author notes that much of the content of this volume has appeared before in various of his publications, prolifically acknowledged throughout, including this journal, *Evangelical Review of Theology* (2008, 32:1, 22-37; 2009, 33:2, 179-183). Although these earlier writings have been reworked for this publication, the author does concede that 'If I were to write this book afresh It would be wholly different' (p. 12). He also refers to dozens of writers, publications and movements, and gives outline summaries of the contributions and views of many scholarly analyses of these contexts, but they are often not well integrated into the discussion and development of the argument; many parts of the book would benefit from

reworking. Overall, there so many ideas jostling together that it is difficult at times to hold them all in balance; a more straight-forward approach would have been much more persuasive, although there is a good overview of the argument in the introduction and many helpful summaries on the way through.

As creative as the presentation is, it is difficult to see how the author's vision can be an all-encompassing solution for the 'future of evangelical theology'. For one thing—the migration status of its proposed proponents will not be permanent, as the author himself understands—migrants eventually become citizens (p. 220), although apparently at the current rate of human movement, is not likely to subside soon.

Then the particular context for this book, 'Asian American Pent-Evangelicalism', is but one of many such special cultural groups in existence around the world. Each one of them, wherever they are located, needs to apply the same kind of principles of contextualisation of theology to their own situation and develop comparable conclusions. Certainly the heritage of westernised evangelicalism cannot be considered the universal faith but simply one culturally conditioned expression. The virtue of this book is that it shows how rigorous thinking and reflection in a particular context can produce a refreshingly new approach to Christian faith to meet emerging needs and changing circumstances. But to think that any one new approach, however apt or creative, could be universally accepted and endorsed would be counter-intuitive, and destructive of the whole enterprise.

Meanwhile, it is certainly to be hoped that those of the 'Asian American Pent-Evangelical' theological community do take up the challenge of this book to

make their own vital contribution to their wider scene. There are also plenty of themes for others to follow up in the many incidental remarks in this book, not to mention the major challenge of the significance of migration and hybridity which are so typical of the modern world.

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A Change of Heart: A personal and theological memoir

Thomas C. Oden

Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press
Academic, 2014
ISBN 978-0-8308-4035-9
HB, pp384, index

*Reviewed by David Parker, Editor,
Evangelical Review of Theology*

The author and subject of this book, Thomas C. Oden (b. 1931), the American Methodist theologian who is already well known for his many volumes of theology and pastoral care and for his leadership in a wide range of Christian initiatives, has placed us in his debt again with this spiritual and intellectual autobiography. It is of special interest to the WEA Theological Commission, publisher of this journal, because of his involvement with and strong support of our organisation and mission.

Coming from a cotton and wheat farming area of south west Oklahoma, growing up during the 'dust bowl' period in an affirming and encouraging family context with many church and other public connections, and blessed with a supportive and gifted wife, Oden was eventually ordained by his church, and gained a PhD from Yale University. In the process he encountered at considerable depth a gal-

axy of the leaders, theologians and other intellectuals of the day, both in America and also in Europe (His PhD was taken under H. Richard Niebuhr). He soon made a name for himself by throwing his considerable energies, talents and writing skills into a range of newly emerging movements, such as pacifism, ecumenism, and the most avant garde trends in theology, especially its relation with psychology.

After some earlier teaching posts where he honed his teaching and writing abilities, he secured a position at the Theological School of Drew University, Madison NJ, where he taught for 33 years and influenced generations of students, especially doctoral candidates who benefitted from his skilful supervision and personal interest.

But then at the age of 40, after years of being what he called a 'movement theologian', came the 'change of heart' (the apt title for this book) where, as he says, he stopped making 'every turn a left turn', and discovered the strengths and values of classical Christianity. This event coincided with his appointment to Drew, by which time he had become disillusioned with many of his former passions. The dramatic change was largely precipitated by the challenge he received from his fellow faculty member, the conservative Jewish sociologist, Will Herberg, about the necessity of studying the Christian Fathers as a basis for his own theological and spiritual foundations.

Oden then began to make the '180 degree' change of course by reading the early Christian Fathers which he found 'fed my soul' like nothing he had encountered before. In particular, he found that there was a wide consensus about the nature and content of the orthodox faith and spirituality amongst

these Fathers stretching geographically and through several centuries which he had never previously grasped. Soon after he had a dream in which he saw his own epitaph stating that 'he made no new contribution to theology'.

This became the key to the second half of his career, climaxed in many ways in his recent extensive project, the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (ACCS), out of which has also grown the Centre for Early African Christianity (CEAC). The ACCS project (consisting of 29 volumes as well as several spin-off books), of which Oden is the general editor, provides a compendium of exegetical comments by the early Christian Fathers on the entire biblical canon, demonstrating the heart of the consensual orthodox faith, while the CEAC project highlights the extensive but largely unrecognized contribution of Christianity in north Africa to the same faith.

Oden's remarkable pilgrimage has been documented on many occasions before, but this lengthy personal narrative sets it out in full detail, and also puts it in the context of his own life and the theological, intellectual and ecclesiastical developments of his times. Written superbly, as befits one who made the craft of words one of his early passions, this volume is neatly divided into nine chapters covering each of the decades of his life so far (up to the publication date of 2014). It parades dozens of figures and movements in that period, including the author's involvements with the World Evangelical Alliance, along with many other groups. There are extended notes giving invaluable additional detail, along with a bibliography of his writings, commencing in 1962. The extensive list of writings concludes with this 'personal and theological memoir', which is a welcome story of a successful scholar who not only changed his mind in mid-life,

but even more importantly, experienced 'a change of heart' the about the essential nature of the Christian faith.

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Renaissance: The Power of the Gospel However Dark the Times

Os Guinness

Downers Grove: IVP, 2014

ISBN 978-0830836710

Pb, pp193 Index

Reviewed by Hanniel Strebel, Zurich, Switzerland

Does the Christian faith have a future, and if so, what does it look like? To start with, the answer to the first question is a strong 'Yes'. The gospel has still the power to renew. Os Guinness (1941-) sees himself as an intermediary between academic sphere and everyday life. He is equipped with a global perspective, knowing China as well as the USA and Europe. This view is very enriching for me as a continental European. The fact that he was personally acquainted with influential evangelicals of the 20th century such as Francis Schaeffer and John Stott is a further indicator to his sensitivity to the 'signs of the times'.

What is his basic assumption? Guinness believes that we are in an 'Augustinian moment'. Augustine acted as a bridge-builder between an old, declining order and a new, emerging one. Just as the famous church father witnessed the fall of the Roman Empire and the outlines of a looming new era, we now live in a transitional period. The utopian hopes of the Enlightenment have definitely been smashed. Islam is on the rise; (economic) liberalism has showed its ugly head, and the self-produced chaos of ideas and lifestyles provides deep insecurity. Some

Christians—including me—are tired of hearing the perpetually same slogans, such as 'be relevant', 'transform culture' and 'make a difference'. All this points to a deep rooted post-Christian identity crisis.

Which agenda does Guinness follow? In a thoughtful and eloquent style he crosses a well demarcated area. The first zone touches the question: Which global tasks are waiting for the Christian community? Whose 'DNA' includes a genuine global vision? In the second part he deals with the thought pattern of 'Christ against culture' and rates it as inadequate. In the third section, he raises the question of how Christian faith and commitment to truth can lead to sustained spiritual change. This is closely related, fourthly, to the dynamics of the Kingdom, in particular the coexistence of divine sovereign work and of human responsibility. The capstone is set with the message: 'the golden age is still ahead'.

Which answers does Guinness offer to his initial question regarding what a Christian future would look like? Perhaps we would speak not of concrete answers, but basic considerations.

Guinness reminds us of the Augustinian doctrine of the two kingdoms. Our final goal is the Kingdom of God. In all likelihood we will join the ranks of the many faith role models who have spent their lives in unrealized hope (see Hebrews 11). At the same time, Guinness is (in my view justly) reluctant to take a pessimistic look. Thus, he praises the course of western history as a victory of the Lamb over all decisive powers of this earth.

Then Guinness succeeds in finding a balance between the two pages of Christian anthropology: the dignity of man by creation in God's image and its capabil-

ity to introduce cultural development, as well as the perversion and distortion of this development due to sin. With reference to C. S. Lewis, he says that a Christian has to be 'world denying' and 'world affirming' at the same time. This tension must not and cannot be resolved.

The warning sign that shows up throughout the entire book can be described as follows: Our therapists and consultants must never replace our trust in God's powerful action. Unfortunately, we live largely as if we no longer were in need of our Creator.

The book is written in a sober and yet, at the same time, a hopeful style. There are, of course, echoes of earlier works—for example when Guinness describes the mega-trends of modernity and its influence on evangelicalism. Guinness sees the book as something of a 'cover letter' to the 'Evangelical Manifesto' (2008), which is reproduced verbatim in the Appendix. Some of the most fascinating parts of the book are the powerful prayers at the end of each chapter. They form a soothing counterpoint to our same old 'please, please, give me ...' -formulae.

Let me add one last point that comforted me personally: Christian faith involves a unique opportunity for renewal and reflection. In contrast to ideologies such as Marxism, Christians are called to confess their own failures. In the history of the Christian church, this was again and again the beginning of new departures.

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God in the Whirlwind: How the Holy-love of God Reorients Our World

David F. Wells

Wheaton: Crossway, 2014
ISBN 978-1-4335-3131-6

Hb, and electronic format; pp 272,
index, bibliog.

*Reviewed by Hannel Strelbel, Zurich,
Switzerland*

From 1993 to 2008 Wells published five volumes which had a vitalizing effect on me. Wells wrote a systematic theology in the form of an in-depth analysis of the present culture. As he himself said, Wells ventured into the meta-analysis of a time that has just passed or is still ongoing. No wonder there was no shortage of critics who complained that he had not given enough direction on how this counter-culture could be lived out. At this point Wells reacts with this last, sixth book. He asks therein: How can the evangelicals find their way back to basics? As the author states in the Preface, 'This volume reflects on what we have so often lost in our work of framing Christ-and-culture. It is the holy-love of God.'

Wells takes up his core argument that God has lost weight. Therefore, he sets out to develop a 'weighty' view of God in order to win over his readers. Only by recovering a balanced perspective of the holy-loving God himself, can one permanently change one's life. It is, as the title proclaims, a process of re-orientation.

Wells' thesis is the following: In the West, we love the idea that God is love. At the same time we reject the idea of his holiness. Therefore, the intention of the book is to present God in the unity and connectedness of holiness and love.

'He is simultaneously loving and holy in such a way that we never encounter his love without his holiness or his holiness without his love.' (P. 1387-88; *Kindle-Positions*).

With regard to the prevailing view among evangelicals he reverses the order and starts with God's love. '(L)ove is what we most like about God' (1242). Therefore, we tend to project our own idea of love into it. This is blocking our view of the otherness of his love which tends toward us and takes the initiative. 'It is not love in general, not just good will, not simply a general benevolence, not an indiscriminating affection, not romantic love, but love whose heart is sacrificial, self-emptying, and whose connections are with what is moral.' (1393-95) What's more: 'Every act of mercy, then, is at the same time an act of righteousness; every act of wrath has, at the same time, gone hand in hand with patience; every act of kindness, every act of goodness.' (1416-18)

'(W)e naturally associate love with open arms, warmth, listening, caring, healing, and acceptance. With holiness, we associate what is colder, more distant, more alarming, and more impersonal.' (1663-65). Wells sees '*holiness*' as a generic term for the moral perfection of God. It is about what separates God from the sinful creation and elevates him in his glory. Wells works that out by taking a closer look at the characteristics of God's goodness, justice and wrath. His righteousness is linked with the doctrine of justification: the repentant, believing sinner is clothed in Christ with an alien, divine justice. God's wrath is not an aberration. Through God's judgment, his love and his justice are disclosed. The character of love rises out of his justice. This is particularly obvious in what he has done on the cross. In a mysterious way, through an event in time and space,

the righteousness of God was satisfied.

After Wells has worked with bold brushstrokes, he goes a few steps back and turns to the subject of *sanctification*. What does this perspective mean for the lives of those who belong to him? A second application is made for the subject of *worship*. 'Worship is about expressing the 'worth' or the 'worthiness' of God. This is what the word worship means. Its content, therefore, is what God has disclosed to us of himself, his character, and his redemptive work. It is both a response to who he is and a celebration of what he has done, especially in our redemption.' (3111-13) Worship is indeed our response to his wonderful acts. It is not about our needs, our taste and our emotions. Third and last field of application: whenever we catch a glimpse of the glory of our God, our appropriate response is *service*. This service will be proven in a world marked by sin and brokenness. What an appropriate end for such a book series.

Today, we are very accustomed to 'how to' material. Wells leads us to the much more important question: about whom is it? Wells has resisted the temptation to give us another 'how to' book. They already fill libraries and bookshelves. 'Being transformed also means being unconformed.' (259-60) Whoever has been found by our holy-loving God can no longer turn away from him.

ERT (2015) 39:3, 287-288

**Barth's Doctrine of Creation:
Creation, Nature, Jesus, and the
Trinity**

Andrew K. Gabriel

Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014
ISBN 978-1-62032-954-2
Pb, pp 118, biblio, index

*Reviewed by Graydon Cress, Student of
Theology, Talbot Theological Seminary, La
Mirada, CA*

In this short and concise monograph on Karl Barth's doctrine of creation, Andrew W. Gabriel provides a compact yet insightful introduction to the thoughts of Karl Barth and the criticism he has received concerning this doctrine. Gabriel, who is currently Assistant Professor of Theology at Horizon College and Seminary, provides an outlook that is certainly pro-Barthian and can be seen in most places as a defence of Barth's positions, although he does a fine job of fairly explaining the criticisms of others. The work is organized by first establishing the basic tenets of Barth's doctrine of creation, then looking more closely at how that doctrine relates to his understanding of nature, the Trinity, and the historical Jesus.

To begin, Gabriel points out the ways in which Barth treats the doctrine of creation as an article of faith, not a conclusion at which one would arrive using natural theology alone. He shows how Barth maps all knowledge as having its source from God, and consequently the revelation that the universe was created is one that must also come from God by the Holy Spirit. We see how Barth continually relates all of his theology back to the relational person that is Jesus Christ, and how our arrival at all knowledge must come to us by the grace

of God through Christ. Gabriel summarizes the purpose of creation as coming out of the freedom of the Triune God, the love of the Triune God, and the creation of all things *ex nihilo* and not merely out of himself.

Gabriel next takes a lead from contemporary critiques of Barth who claim that his doctrine of creation is so anthropocentric that it fails to account for the good in nature (understood as non-human creation). Gabriel points out the ways in which Barth argued for the goodness of creation and its role in covenant and the relationship between God and man. Barth's understanding of the utilization of nature in Genesis 2 alongside the responsibility that humanity has to care for this good creation is balanced well by Gabriel in this critique.

Critiques against Barth's inconsistent trinitarianism in his doctrine of creation are tackled next. The major tenets of Barth's arguments concern his repeated use of covenantal relationship as the foundation for the work of the Trinity in creation. God created out of his trinitarian relationships and while Barth is explicit only in describing the work of the Father and the Son in creation, his doctrine should not be mislabelled binitarian as it has by others. For Barth, the role of the Holy Spirit is foundational to the work of creation by being emphasized in the unity of the Father and the Son. All three members of the Trinity contribute to the act of creation, and God's very nature of being Triune and relational is what prompts the act of creation in the first place. Although creation was not necessary for God, he created out of abundance in unity and love between the persons of the Trinity.

Finally, Gabriel examines the relationship between creation and the Jesus of history. Many critics argue that Barth

emphasizes the eternal Son in creation-history to the detriment of including the incarnate Christ. Gabriel applauds Barth's balance of the two, however, stating that 'Barth affirms the historicity of the incarnation for he does not argue that the incarnation is eternal and he does not altogether reject the concept of the *logos asarkos*' (p. 93). Barth ties the historical Jesus in with creation by way of the covenant, stating that the covenant between God and creation is one of relationship, and that Jesus Christ, the historical God-man and the eternal Son of God, is the ultimate bridge that allows for such a relational covenant.

Overall, Gabriel does a good job in this short work of defending Barth's doctrine of creation as it relates to nature, the Trinity, and Jesus. By referring to a

wealth of primary source knowledge about Barth and his *Church Dogmatics* along with a plethora of prominent secondary sources to bolster his arguments, Gabriel lays down his argument in an organized and readable fashion.

The only major critique that I have with Gabriel lies with his devotion to Barthian theology—it seems as if Barth cannot go wrong! It would be better to see some critiques or areas of possible improvement from Gabriel in order to legitimize the rest of his arguments, but it is understandable that such an endeavour would be difficult in such a short text. Overall, this is an excellent resource for students of Barth who wish to view the landscape of critiques and rebuttals concerning his doctrine of creation.

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