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Foreword

This issue of *Canadian-American Theological Review* contains a wide array of disciplinary subject matter, ranging from an exploration of the biblical account of the "fall" in Genesis 1–3 in light of human evolution to an intertextual examination of 1 Timothy 2:12 and Philo's *Quod deterius potiori insidiari* 1.78. The articles "Adam as Archetype" by Johnson and "Providence and Probability" by Warren are revised versions of papers presented at the Canadian-American Theological Association and Northeastern Seminary joint conference on Science and Faith, held in Rochester, NY on October 26, 2019. The article by Dykes, "The Genre and Metaphorical Layers of the Song of the Vineyard," is a revised version of her paper that won the 2020 Founders Prize from the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies for the best student paper in Hebrew Bible and cognate disciplines. Butler's article on a Pentecostal theology of common grace rounds out this diverse issue.

Christopher Zoccali,
Editor-in-Chief

Adam as Archetype: Reconciling a Historical "Fall" and Original Sin in the Context of Evolution[1]

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Abstract

Humans routinely use conceptual metaphors to understand complex concepts. On the subject of human evolution, scientists frequently employ the conceptual metaphor of childhood development/maturity as a framework for understanding. This article examines three such examples in the co-evolution of the human brain, language, and morality. Scripture likewise uses conceptual metaphors. Within Genesis 1, for instance, the conceptual metaphor of creation as a temple helps us to understand the meaning of God's creation and the role of humanity in it as *imago Dei*. This article argues that Genesis 2–3 also employs conceptual metaphor to explain humanity's "fall" and subsequent alienation from God. Since the action in the garden narrative begins with *ha'adam* naming the animals (language) and climaxes with the human couple's acquisition of the "knowledge of good and evil" (morality), the conceptual metaphor employed is childhood development. Humanity did not begin with a literal first pair, but the metaphor of maturity reveals many "virtual parallels" between the garden narrative and the evolutionary narrative. The "fall" of the first humans thus mirrors the "coming of age" not just of humanity, but of every individual person. *Ha'adam* therefore functions as an archetype—the "original pattern" that all have followed. Ultimately, these points of contact suggest a time period within which a "historical fall" could have occurred—between 75,000 years ago and the "Out of Africa" departure from the Levant 10,000 years later.

1 I would be remiss not to thank the anonymous peer reviewer and Christopher Zoccali for their invaluable input on the first draft, which greatly improved the final product. A shorter version of this essay was presented at Northeastern Seminary's conference on Science and Faith on Oct 26, 2019. I thank the host, J. Richard Middleton, for his gracious feedback and encouragement on that occasion.

Introduction

In attempting to wrap our brains around complex concepts, humans routinely resort to metaphorical thought. Typically, we take what is complex and compare it to something from everyday experience. The mind requires a familiar peg on which to hang its hat. Following George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's book, *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), this cognitive thought process acquired the name "conceptual metaphor." By definition, "conceptual metaphor is understanding one domain of experience (that is typically abstract) in terms of another (that is typically concrete)."[2] An image metaphor, such as hanging a hat on a peg, simply describes, but a conceptual metaphor forms multiple mental connections from one domain to the other. Thus, if one says, "love is a journey," a whole host of concepts related to journeys become associated with love. "Instead of mapping a single image onto another image (as in an image metaphor), a whole set of concepts from one domain is mapped onto a set of corresponding concepts from another domain; travelers map onto lovers, destinations map onto shared life goals, roads and terrain map onto life events and their circumstances, obstacles map onto relational difficulties, and the vehicle maps onto the relationship."[3]

Scientists often use conceptual metaphors to explain complex subjects. DNA, for example, frequently is compared to written language, which immediately calls to mind words, sentences, punctuation, information, transmission, and change (mutation).[4] In the late 1800s, biologist Ernst Haeckel coined the dictum "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny" to explain his theory that the embryonic development of "higher" life forms provided a step-by-step record of the organism's evolutionary past. Haeckel's theory of recapitulation ultimately proved wrong, but the concept remains useful. Both chicken and human embryos develop gill slits and arches like their fish ancestors,[5] and embryos of cetaceans (whales, dolphins, porpoises) famously grow hind-limb buds that degenerate later in gestation.[6] On the complex subject of human evolution, the conceptual metaphor of childhood development/maturation frequently appears as a framework for

2 Zoltán Kövecses, "Conceptual Metaphor Theory: Some Criticisms and Alternative Proposals," *Annual Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 6, no. 1 (2008): 168–84.

3 Christy Hemphill, "All in a Week's Work: Using Conceptual Metaphor Theory to Explain Figurative Meaning in Genesis 1," *Perspectives on Science & Christian Faith* 71, no. 4 (2019). Conceptual metaphors stated as propositions are conventionally rendered in small capitals.

4 A metaphor used by Francis Collins, founder of BioLogos and former head of the Human Genome Project, in the title of his book, *The Language of God*.

5 "Ontogeny and Phylogeny," Evolution 101: Does Ontogeny Recapitulate Phylogeny? (University of California at Berkeley): https://evolution.berkeley.edu/evo101/IIIC6aOntogeny.shtml. Accessed Sept 30, 2020.

6 J. G. M. Thewissen et al., "Developmental Basis for Hind-Limb Loss in Dolphins and Origin of the Cetacean Bodyplan," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 103, no. 22 (2006): 8414–18.

understanding. This article will examine three such examples in the co-evolution of the human brain, language, and morality.

Scripture likewise employs conceptual metaphor as an explanatory mechanism, whether through Paul exhorting his auditors to put on the "armor of God" (Eph 6:11) or the Psalmist complaining that human life is grass (Ps 103:15). Many times, a single passage will contain more than one such metaphor. Within Genesis 1, for instance, the conceptual metaphors of creation as a temple[7] and creation as work[8] both figure into the interpretation of the text. Rather than a scientific treatise, Scripture provides us with metaphors to help wrap our minds around the meaning of God's creation and humanity's role in it as *imago Dei*. This article will argue that Genesis 2–3 also employs a conceptual metaphor to explain humanity's "fall" and subsequent alienation from God. Since the action in the garden narrative begins with *ha'adam* naming the animals (language) and climaxes with the human couple's acquisition of the "knowledge of good and evil" (morality), it should come as no surprise that the conceptual metaphor in question is childhood development/maturity. Humanity did not begin with a literal first pair, but given a little interpretive latitude, the metaphor of maturity reveals many "virtual parallels" between the garden narrative and the evolutionary narrative. Ultimately, this article will use these points of contact to suggest a time period within which a "historical fall" could have occurred. Following the lead of William Brown and J. Richard Middleton,[9] I use the term "virtual parallels" to distinguish this attempted solution from concordism *per se*. Every detail of the text does not correspond to historical realities, and one must assume the ancient author had no knowledge of contemporary science. The goal is not to allow science to dictate interpretation of the Bible. Instead, the hope is that dialogue with science will open new vistas for biblical scholars and theologians to explore.

Co-evolution of the Human Brain, Language, and Morality

The first steps toward human language required walking on two legs. In four-legged animals, breathing and running are synchronized to one breath per stride as the thorax braces for the impact of the front legs. Weightlifters do the same

7 John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010). Cf. Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 9 (1986): 19–25; Gregory K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2004); J. Richard Middleton, "The Role of Human Beings in the Cosmic Temple: The Intersection of Worldviews in Psalms 8 and 104," *Canadian Theological Review* 2, no. 1 (2013): 44–58.

8 Hemphill, "All in a Week's Work."

9 William P. Brown, *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 14–17. Cf. J. Richard Middleton, "Reading Genesis 3 Attentive to Human Evolution," in *Evolution and the Fall*, eds. William Cavanaugh and James K. A. Smith (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017): 71.

when they hold their breath before hoisting the bar. Bipedalism not only allowed the larynx to descend, it relieved the thorax of its support function while running, which allowed our early ancestors to coordinate their breathing, running, and vocalizing. Human speech and laughter would have been impossible if *Ardipithecus ramidus* had not stood upright almost 4.5 million years ago.[10]

Human language involves two kinds of sharing. First, everyone must agree what words mean and how to use them, and second, we must agree that the information we share is truthful. Without meeting both conditions, human languages could not function. If someone invented his/her own private grammar, no one would understand them.[11] Human languages are thus "socially shared symbolic systems" that rely upon cooperation for their use.[12] This seems to create a problem for an evolutionary explanation of the development of language. Evolution is based on survival of the fittest—the natural selection of individuals or their genes. The evolution of language does not seem to fit that pattern, since language relies on cooperation rather than competition. Human cooperation seems even more difficult to explain when compared to the social lives of other primates. The basic building blocks of primate society are deception, manipulation, and social status/power.[13] If language arose under those conditions, we would expect it to facilitate more complex forms of deception and manipulation, rather than a communication system that relies on sharing and has as its basic motivation "the desire to help others by providing them with the information they need."[14]

Besides language, two other unique features of human social lives rely on cooperation. The first is "intersubjectivity," which is an umbrella term for a suite of capacities that require joint action, joint frame of reference, and empathy.[15] To work together in joint action, people must agree on a shared goal, which involves a bit of "mind reading" that other primates can't duplicate. Furthermore, chimps do not hold up objects for other chimps to consider, but people will say things like, "Look at that beautiful sunset." When we use joint frames of reference such as this to share our experiences or emotions with another person, it goes by the name of "empathy."

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10 Robert R. Provine, "Laughter as an Approach to Vocal Evolution: The Bipedal Theory," *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review* 24, no. 1 (2017): 238–44; and C. Owen Lovejoy et al., "The Pelvis and Femur of *Ardipithecus ramidus*: The Emergence of Upright Walking," *Science* 326.5949 (2009): 71–71e6.

11 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Macmillan, 1968): §243–§271.

12 Jordan Zlatev, "The Co-evolution of Human Intersubjectivity, Morality and Language," in *The Social Origins of Language,* eds. D. Dor, C. Knight, and D. Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 249–66.

13 Satoshi Hirata, "Chimpanzee Social Intelligence: Selfishness, Altruism, and the Mother–Infant Bond." *Primates* 50, no. 1 (2009): 3–11.

14 Michael Tomasello, *Origins of Human Communication* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2008): 191. Cf. Michael Tomasello et al, "Understanding and Sharing Intentions: The Origins of Cultural Cognition," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 28, no. 5 (2005).

15 Zlatev, "Co-evolution."

Morality is the second feature of human sociality that relies on cooperation. For morality to exist, people must agree what constitutes "right" or "wrong" behavior, establishing a joint frame of reference, and they must agree what to do when those standards are violated, which requires joint action. Where does language come into play? Even the earliest expressions of human morality relied on "shared values" and "joint action." It is hard to imagine a group of any size reaching consensus on guilt or punishment without symbolic communication.[16]

Both language and morality also are examples of cultural knowledge passed from one generation to the next. According to Harvard sociologist Orlando Patterson, cultural knowledge can be defined as our "shared meanings about the world,"[17] but what does that include? One aspect is "declarative knowledge" of facts and events. Science is an example of shared factual knowledge, while history is shared knowledge of past events, but these examples hardly scratch the surface. Cultural knowledge also encompasses "procedural knowledge," which could be called "know-how" or skill. Some things can be learned only by practical experience, not by descriptions or rules. In the classic example, there is a world of difference between riding a bicycle and being able to describe a bike and explain how to ride it. The same holds true for speaking a language, knowing good and evil, and falling in love. None of those human activities can be truly understood without practical experience, and each of them is appropriate to a different stage of development. We learn how to speak words as infants, but children don't master the grammar of their native language until about the age of 5. Kids begin learning proper behavior as toddlers, but they are not mature enough to be held morally or legally responsible for following society's rules until they are 10–13 years old. And if a boy that age told his mother he had fallen in love, she likely would smile and explain that what he felt was not love; he is not mature enough for that experience.

What makes something "common knowledge" in a culture? Patterson explains, "Knowledge is common when all persons in a group not only share a given form of meaningful information but knowingly know that all persons know it, ad infinitum."[18] That sort of understanding requires a form of empathy called "theory of mind." Essentially, theory of mind is the ability to make inferences about another individual's beliefs, goals, and intentions. We project our own thoughts into other minds to conceptualize what they might be thinking or experiencing. Without theory of mind, an individual can observe behavior, but inferring a motive is beyond reach. One could observe that "Mary is looking in the drawer," but that would be the end of it.[19] Call this "zero-order" theory of mind. In contrast,

16 Zlatev, "Co-evolution."
17 Orlando Patterson, "Making Sense of Culture," *Annual Review of Sociology* 40 (2014): 1–30.
18 Patterson, "Making Sense of Culture," 8.
19 Harmen de Weerd, Rineke Verbrugge, and Bart Verheij, "Negotiating with Other Minds: The Role

first-order theory of mind allows an individual to supply a motive: "Mary is looking in the drawer *because she wants a fork*."

Both young children and chimpanzees have first-order theory of mind,[20] but around the age of 6, human children start to acquire second-order theory of mind,[21] which allows them to understand a statement such as, "Alice thinks Bob knows Carol is throwing him a surprise party." In simpler terms, "A believes B knows C intends to (blank)." Second-order theory of mind virtually requires recursive syntax and embedding (i.e., modern language). Studies of children between ages 10–11 show they have mastered second-order theory, but their performance at third level is "only slightly better than chance, and at fourth level is at chance. This contrasts with adults, who perform much better than chance at fourth level but not fifth."[22] An example of third order would be "A believes B knows C thinks D intends to (blank)." Mature adults can take this even further. Consider Shakespeare's play, "Othello." By the end of the second act, the audience understands that Iago intends that Cassio believes that Desdemona intends that Othello believes that Cassio did not mean to disturb the peace. How many levels of intention has Shakespeare introduced? Higher orders of thinking are only possible thanks to the recursive features of modern language. Considering children's language development, none of this should come as a surprise. Children acquire complete syntax and grammar, including recursion and embedding, around age 5, and they understand metaphoric thought by about age 10.[23] Higher-order theory of mind thus seems to develop in tandem with children's language capabilities.

The Co-Evolution of the Brain and Language

Who was the first speaker of words? Scientists must rely on indirect evidence, but physically, *Homo erectus* possessed the necessary attributes for speech.[24] Notably, *erectus* also is credited with a host of "firsts" that point in the same direction,

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of Recursive Theory of Mind in Negotiation with Incomplete Information," *Autonomous Agents and Multi-Agent Systems* 31, no. 2 (2017): 250–87.

20 Josep Call and Michael Tomasello, "Does the Chimpanzee Have a Theory of Mind? 30 Years Later," in *Human Nature and Self Design* (Mentis: 2011): 83–96.

21 Bethany Liddle and Daniel Nettle, "Higher-Order Theory of Mind and Social Competence in School-Age Children," *Journal of Cultural and Evolutionary Psychology* 4, no. 3–4 (2006): 231–44.

22 Liddle and Nettle, "Higher-Order Theory of Mind."

23 Andrew Etchell, et al., "A Systematic Literature Review of Sex Differences in Childhood Language and Brain Development," *Neuropsychologia* 114 (2018): 19–31. Cf. N.N Nikolaenko, "Study of Metaphoric and Associative Thinking in Children of Different Age Groups and in Patients with Childhood Autism," *Journal of Evolutionary Biochemistry and Physiology* 39, no. 1 (2003): 77–83.

24 Bruce Bower, "Evolutionary Back Story: Thoroughly Modern Spine Supported Human Ancestor," *Science News*, vol. 169, no. 15, May 6, 2006, 275. Cf. Luigi Capasso, Elisabetta Michetti, and Ruggero D'Anastasio, "A Homo Erectus Hyoid Bone: Possible Implications for the Origin of the Human Capability for Speech," *Collegium antropologicum* 32, no. 4 (2008): 1007–11. *H. erectus'* hyoid is intermediate between *Australopithicus* and Neanderthal, indicating an ability to produce many, but not all, vowel sounds in the human vocal range.

and all are related to a dramatic increase in brain size. These include shortened birth intervals, delayed maturation, sexual division of labor, and, more importantly, social cooperation in the feeding and care of infants, which allowed mothers to share the "metabolic cost" of childbearing with others in the group.[25] Anthropologist Sarah Hrdy credits this transition to cooperative breeding with radically altering our ancestors' interpersonal relations. Sharing the duties of parenthood laid the groundwork for later adaptations in language and intersubjectivity.[26]

The most intriguing evidence of *erectus*' speech capability comes from Pleistocene trade networks. While both chimpanzees and early hominins had a similar home-range radius of 13 km, about 1 million years ago raw material transfers suddenly extended from 13 km up to 100 km, which implies cooperation and trade with neighboring groups. When chimps or other primates encounter a strange male near their territory, a confrontation is inevitable, whether a display of aggression or physical violence. The existence of trade therefore implies both lessened aggression and an improved method of communication at this stage of human evolution.[27]

Seeking to understand this transition, linguist and developmental psychologist Michael Tomasello spent his career studying the differences between primate and human communication, particularly how human infants acquire language. Among primates, vocalizations are inborn, but gestures are learned. Their communication is *dyadic* (one-to-one) and mainly consists of requesting specific behaviors from others. Human communication, on the other hand, is entirely learned. More significantly, it is *triadic* and referential, focused on sharing information and psychological states with others.[28] Such drastic change does not happen overnight.

If *erectus* spoke words, did they possess language as we know it? Definitely not. The first words developed from gestures such as pointing, which also are the first informative gestures that infants make.[29] Linguist Sverker Johansson argues that language evolution followed a similar path to childhood language acquisition: 1) One-word stage; 2) Two-word stage; 3) Hierarchical structure but lacking subordinate clauses and embedding; 4) Flexibility/Recursivity; 5) Fully modern grammar.[30] Children pass through these stages by the age of 5, but they do not

25 Mark Maslin et.al., "East African Climate Pulses and Early Human Evolution," *Quarternary Science Reviews* 101, (2014): 1–17.

26 Sarah B. Hrdy, *Mothers and Others: The Evolutionary Origins of Mutual Understanding* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

27 Ben Marwick, "Pleistocene Exchange Networks as Evidence for the Evolution of Language," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 13, no. 1 (2003): 67–81.

28 Michael Tomasello, *Constructing a Language: A Usage-based Theory of Language Acquisition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005): 8–42.

29 Cathal O'Madagain, Gregor Kachel, and Brent Strickland, "The Origin of Pointing: Evidence for the Touch Hypothesis," *Science Advances* 5, no. 7 (2019): eaav2558.

30 Sverker Johansson, *Origins of Language: Constraints on Hypotheses Vol. 5*. (John Benjamins Publishing, 2005): 240–41.

fully grasp metaphoric thought—the basis of higher-order thinking—until they are between 8–10 years old. *Erectus* likely communicated with a combination of gestures and individual words, but protolanguage such as this lacks symbolic reference. Full symbolicity, with its emphasis on relations between symbols, is not required at the one- and two-word stages, when symbols are processed one at a time.[31]

Drawing upon the work of developmental psychologist Jean Piaget,[32] archaeologist Steven Mithen came at the questions of human language and creativity from a different direction, seeking an answer in the evolution of the mind itself.[33] Piaget observed that until the age of 2, children's minds are like general-purpose learning tools, but from ages 2–5 they seem to rely on specialized learning modules. Following this period of modularity, the domains begin to be integrated to allow a seamless flow of information in the mind—a situation psychologists have variously termed "representational redescription" (Karmiloff-Smith), "mapping across domains" (Carey & Spelke), "transformation of conceptual spaces" (Boden), etc. Mithen refers to the final result as "cognitive fluidity." But regardless of terminology, integration makes creative thought possible. Where knowledge previously had been trapped in one domain, novel thoughts now could arise by forging links across domains.

According to Mithen's hypothesis, human evolution followed a similar path to childhood development. Early *Homo* had a modular mind, like other primates,[34] with domain-specific cognitive skills devoted to tool-making, the natural environment, and the social environment—all overlaid by a "domain-general" intelligence for problem-solving. Among chimps, for instance, social intelligence is a discrete domain. It is easy to identify when a chimp is engaged in social behavior and when it is not. Similarly, early man prior to 100,000 years ago had a modular mind, and the various modules did not "communicate" well, if at all, with one another. (The closest analogy for us is having a "single-minded" focus on a task, which partially blocks input from other areas of the brain.) For early humans, the absence of beads, pendants, and tools with social markings is evidence of an inability to integrate their technical and social intelligences. Prior to the so-called "Great Leap Forward," humans created no specialized hunting weapons or traps

31 Marwick, "Pleistocene Exchange Networks."

32 William Huitt and John Hummel, "Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development," *Educational Psychology Interactive* 3, no. 2 (2003): 1–5.

33 Steven J. Mithen, "The Early Prehistory of Human Social Behaviour: Issues of Archaeological Inference and Cognitive Evolution," in *Evolution of Social Behaviour Patterns in Primates and Man*, eds. W. Runciman, J.M. Smith, and R.I.M. Dunbar (Oxford University Press, 1996): 145–77. Cf. Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind: A Search for the Origins of Art, Religion and Science* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996).

34 Federica Amici et al., "A Modular Mind? A Test Using Individual Data from Seven Primate Species," *PLoS ONE* 7, no. 12 (2012).

because their technical and natural intelligences were not integrated. The Acheulean and Mousterian tools that persisted for hundreds of millennia were relentless in their monotony. In contrast, the social intelligence of modern humans recognizes no boundaries. Amazonian foragers think of the forest as parent. The Inuit consider the polar bear an ancestor. Totemism and anthropomorphism indicate that the social and natural worlds are no longer discrete domains of thought. Mithen attributes the religious impulse to this "mixing up" of domains, an analysis that would please the apostle Paul. Morna Hooker, in her exegesis of Romans 1, observed that idolatry springs from "this confusion between God and the things which he has made."[35] Likewise, James D. G. Dunn notes the "obviously deliberate echo of the Adam narratives" in Romans 1:18–25 and comments that "it was Adam who above all perverted his knowledge of God and sought to escape the status of creature, but who believed a lie and became a fool and thus set the pattern (Adam = man) for a humanity which worshipped the idol rather than the Creator."[36]

A similar approach to Mithen's was taken by Frederick Coolidge and Thomas Wynn, who sought to reinterpret the archaeological record by some standard other than symbolic artifacts. As they put it, "the modern mind is not . . . simply an archaic mind augmented by symbolism and language."[37] In that, they are certainly correct. Their hypothesis is based on a concept in neuropsychology called "working memory," a complex neural network primarily involving the prefrontal cortex and neocortex. The executive function of working memory is just that—the CEO of the mind (or, as another metaphor puts it, "the conductor of the brain's orchestra."[38]) Not only is this where decision-making and planning occur, the executive function takes control when anything novel is encountered.

Besides being the center of decision-making and planning, the executive function is the locus of moral thought. If the prefrontal cortex (PFC) is damaged due to injury or disease, patients often lose impulse control and the ability to connect actions with consequences; many become sociopaths. Schizophrenia and autism, which affects language and social skills, are associated with abnormal growth of the PFC, and in childhood development, the PFC is the last area of the brain to mature, continuing to develop through adolescence and early adulthood.[39]

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35 Morna (M. D.) Hooker, "Adam in Romans I," *New Testament Studies* 300 (1959–60): 301.

36 James D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8,* Word Biblical Commentary 38A (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988): 53. Although this theme cries out for exploration, it would exceed the bounds of this essay.

37 Thomas Wynn and Frederick L. Coolidge, "The Implications of the Working Memory Model for the Evolution of Modern Cognition," *International Journal of Evolutionary Biology* (2011): 1–12.

38 Elkhonon Goldberg, *The New Executive Brain: Frontal Lobes in a Complex World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

39 Adele Diamond, "Normal Development of Prefrontal Cortex from Birth to Young Adulthood: Cognitive Functions, Anatomy, and Biochemistry," *Principles of Frontal Lobe Function* (2002): 466–503.

Similarly, once a child has learned the basics of syntax by age 5, the region of the brain known as "Broca's area," which is crucial for language, begins to grow faster than neighboring regions and continues to do so until age 11. Finally, in comparison with existing primates, human brain evolution is characterized by "distinct changes in the local circuitry and interconnectivity of the PFC." These include increased gyral white matter (better connectivity), a larger BA 10 (executive functions), larger and left asymmetrical BA 44–45 (language functions), and greater spacing between layer III neurons (faster processing).[40] Thus, evolutionary history, brain pathology, and childhood development all point to the PFC and language as key to modern human behavior. Although working memory and executive function vary among populations, both are highly heritable and appear to be under strong genetic control, which led Coolidge and Wynn to propose that an unknown mutation enhanced our working memory to allow fully symbolic language, a change they hypothesize occurred between 100,000 and 50,000 years ago, when cognitive modernity fully flowered.[41]

The improvement in working memory arrived with the final piece of the biological puzzle—our globular braincase.[42] One distinguishing feature of Neanderthal is that it could be described as a large-brained/large-faced species. *H. sapiens,* by comparison, has a relatively small face, a feature that recently came to the fore in a fossilized skull from Jebel Irhoud, Morocco.[43] Dated around 300,000 years ago, the skull initially puzzled scientists, who were unsure how to classify it. Eventually, they decided upon *H. sapiens* thanks to its small face, which clinched the identification. The complicating fact was that the skull was elongated, like Neanderthal and every previous hominin, while that of modern humans is shaped like a globe. Both Neanderthal and *sapiens* infants are born with nearly identical elongated braincases, but in the first year of life, the rapid growth of the modern human infant's cerebellum, parietal lobe, and frontal pole reshapes the skull into our distinctive pattern.[44]

A recent study analyzed endocranial casts of 20 *sapiens* fossils from different

40 Kate Teffer and Katerina Semendeferi, "Human Prefrontal Cortex: Evolution, Development, and Pathology," *Progress in Brain Research* 195, (2012): 191–218.

41 Thomas Wynn and Frederick L. Coolidge, *The Rise of Homo Sapiens: The Evolution of Human Thinking* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009). Cf. T. Wynn and F.L. Coolidge, "The Effect of Enhanced Working Memory on Language," *Journal of Human Evolution* 50, no. 2 (2006): 230–31; M. Martın-Loeches, "On the Uniqueness of Humanity: Is Language Working Memory the Final Piece that Made Us Human?" *Journal of Human Evolution* 50, no. 2 (2006): 226–29.

42 Cedric Boeckx and Antonio Benítez-Burraco, "The Shape of the Human Language-Ready Brain," *Frontiers in Psychology* 5, no. 282 (2014).

43 Jean-Jacques Hublin et al., "New Fossils from Jebel Irhoud, Morocco, and the Pan-African Origin of *Homo Sapiens*," *Nature* 546, no. 7657 (2017).

44 Philipp Gunz et al., "A Uniquely Modern Human Pattern of Endocranial Development: Insights from a New Cranial Reconstruction of the Neanderthal Newborn from Mezmaiskaya," *Journal of Human Evolution* 62, no. 2 (2012): 300–13.

time periods. Although brain volume of the Jebel Irhoud fossil fell within the range of present-day humans, "brain shape evolved gradually within the *H. sapiens* lineage, reaching present-day human variation between about 100,000 and 35,000 years ago. This process . . . paralleled the emergence of behavioral modernity as seen from the archeological record."[45] Computational analysis of the brains of modern *H. sapiens* and Neanderthal found that they had smaller cerebellar hemispheres than us. Although both species have similar total brain volumes, a globular brain confers distinct advantages:

> Larger cerebellar hemispheres were related to higher cognitive and social functions including executive functions, language processing and episodic and working memory capacity. Based on archaeological records, Wynn and Coolidge suggested that NT (Neanderthal) had a smaller capacity of working memory, which is also related to the capacity for cognitive fluidity proposed by Mithen. Moreover, such differences in the capacity for cognitive fluidity were hypothesized to mainly originate from language processing ability. Thus, the differences in neuroanatomical organization of the cerebellum may have resulted in a critical difference in cognitive and social ability between the two species.[46]

The changes in shape and neural connectivity associated with globularity resulted in a "language-ready brain" by creating "the ability to form complex, cross-modular thoughts."[47] Recalling a mental image of a woman or a fish doesn't require integration. Thinking of a mermaid does.

From Innocent Animal to Guilty Human

Jane Goodall famously described chimpanzee society as "order without law."[48] She said this after documenting several brutal incidents of infanticide and cannibalism. There were no consequences for the perpetrators, since chimps have no conceptual category for what they had witnessed. Ultimately, they ignored what happened and returned to their business.

Without fully symbolic language, moral knowledge is impossible. Animals

45 Simon Neubauer, Jean-Jacques Hublin, and Philipp Gunz, "The Evolution of Modern Human Brain Shape," *Science Advances* 4, no. 1 (2018).

46 Takanori Kochiyama et al., "Reconstructing the Neanderthal Brain Using Computational Anatomy," *Scientific Reports* 8, no. 1 (2018): 1–9. Lesser language and social abilities for Neanderthal are supported by the fact that their exchange networks never extended beyond 75 km, which is less than even late *H. erectus*. (Marwick, "Pleistocene Exchange Networks.") In the social realm, I would speculate that Neanderthal also were more aggressive than *sapiens*. Perhaps they resembled the chimpanzee and we are more like the bonobo?

47 Boeckx and Benitez-Burraco, "The Language-Ready Brain."

48 Jane Goodall, "Order Without Law" in *Law, Biology and Culture: The Evolution of Law,* eds. M. Gruter and P. Bohannan (San Diego: Ross-Erikson Publishers, 1982): 50–62.

cannot conceive of abstract ideas such as good or evil. Because they lack language, they are morally neutral. Among human beings, every culture recognizes an age of maturity when children are initiated into adult society and held responsible for their actions. Younger children, being immature, are exempt. Societies do not jail toddlers when they break the law; only a mature person can be morally culpable. Thus, there are three categories of moral culpability: Guilty Adult, Immature Child, and Innocent Animal.

How did humanity transition from innocent animal to guilty adult? What might that evolutionary history have looked like?

The first indisputable signs of symbolic reference appear at Blombos cave in South Africa between 130–100,000 years ago in the form of ochre for body decoration and shell beads worn as jewelry and placed in graves.[49] Concurrently, trade networks, which had extended no more than 100 km for almost a million years, suddenly expand to 300 km.[50] Judging by these indications, the transition from protolanguage to language has occurred. A shell worn around the neck now could represent something—social status or tribal identity.

Speculating on their interior lives, the thinking of these early humans probably resembled modern children between the ages of 5–7. They have acquired the basics of syntax, but they do not grasp metaphoric thought. They experience the same internal, emotional lives as adults, but they cannot analyze their feelings or categorize behaviors into a "moral code." Mature human morality is rooted in our capacities to symbolize and generalize to an abstract category. Cognitive neuroscientist Peter Tse explains, "The birth of symbolic thought gave rise to the possibility of true morality and immorality, of good and evil. Once acts became symbolized, they could now stand for, and be instances of, abstract classes of action such as good, evil, right, or wrong."[51]

While humanity had acquired modern grammar 100,000 years ago, there remained another step toward fully symbolic, modern language. There's a vast gulf between a symbolic representation of something concrete (capable of being perceived by the senses) and an abstract concept, which has no material substance. Cognitive Linguistics, the linguistic theory based on Embodied Cognition, proposes that words are grounded in bodily perception, emotion, and action, but

49 Derek Hodgson, "Decoding the Blombos Engravings, Shell Beads and Diepkloof Ostrich Eggshell Patterns," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 24, no. 1 (2014): 57–69; Francesco d'Errico et.al, "*Nassarius kraussianus* Shell Beads from Blombos Cave: Evidence for Symbolic Behaviour in the Middle Stone Age," *Journal of Human Evolution* 48, no. 1 (2005): 3–24.

50 Marwick, "Pleistocene Exchange Networks."

51 Peter Ulric Tse, "Symbolic Thought and the Evolution of Human Morality," in *Moral Psychology*, ed. W. Sinnott-Armstrong (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008): 269–97.

abstract nouns present a difficult problem for the theory.[52] How did they arise? Perhaps Helen Keller can explain:

> Miss Sullivan put her arm gently round me and spelled into my hand, "I love Helen."
>
> "What is love?" I asked.
>
> She drew me closer to her and said, "It is here," pointing to my heart, whose beats I was conscious of for the first time. Her words puzzled me very much because I did not then understand anything unless I touched it.
>
> I smelt the violets in her hand and asked, half in words, half in signs, a question which meant, "Is love the sweetness of flowers?"
>
> "No," said my teacher. Again, I thought. The warm sun was shining on us.
>
> "Is this not love?" I asked, pointing in the direction from which the heat came, "Is this not love?"
>
> It seemed to me that there could be nothing more beautiful than the sun, whose warmth makes all things grow. But Miss Sullivan shook her head, and I was greatly puzzled and disappointed. I thought it strange that my teacher could not show me love.
>
> A day or two afterward I was stringing beads of different sizes in symmetrical groups—two large beads, three small ones, and so on. I had made many mistakes, and Miss Sullivan had pointed them out again and again with gentle patience. Finally, I noticed a very obvious error in the sequence, and for an instant I concentrated my attention on the lesson and tried to think how I should have arranged the beads. Miss Sullivan touched my forehead and spelled with decided emphasis, "Think."
>
> In a flash, I knew that the word was the name of the process that was going on in my head. This was my first conscious perception of an abstract idea.
>
> For a long time, I was still—I was not thinking of the beads in my lap, but trying to find a meaning for "love" in the light of this new idea. The sun had been under a cloud all day, and there had been brief showers; but suddenly the sun broke forth in all its southern splendor.
>
> Again, I asked my teacher, "Is this not love?"
>
> "Love is something like the clouds that were in the sky before the

52 Anna M. Borghi et al., "The Challenge of Abstract Concepts," *Psychological Bulletin* 143, no. 3 (2017).

> sun came out," she replied. Then in simpler words than these, which at that time I could not have understood, she explained: "You cannot touch the clouds, you know; but you feel the rain and know how glad the flowers and the thirsty earth are to have it after a hot day. You cannot touch love, either; but you feel the sweetness that it pours into everything. Without love you would not be happy or want to play."
>
> The beautiful truth burst upon my mind—I felt that there were invisible lines stretched between my spirit and the spirits of others.[53]

In a culture without a single Miss Sullivan, how long would a few thousand Helen Kellers have taken to express the abstract concept of "love"—to say nothing of fairness, justice, mercy, or cruelty? Like Helen Keller, early humanity's symbolic language remained rooted in the concrete, material world because they had not yet developed a lexicon of abstract words. Lacking that vocabulary, they might be able to sense what was right and wrong, but they could not articulate reasons for those moral judgments. Research in childhood psychology has documented the same phenomena.[54] Routinely, we judge a situation by our "gut reaction" to it, and only *afterward* do we apply moral reasoning to justify those initial feelings.[55] Such instinctive, common reactions are the forerunners of abstract moral concepts. Early humans had the same gut reactions that we do; they simply lacked the vocabulary to express their moral emotions or reason abstractly about them. Humanity was like a young child.

How long did this situation persist? Computer simulations of linguistic evolution suggest the right conditions to generate instability and novelty are small populations under stress.[56] The same holds true in biology, where novelties are far more likely to become fixed in small populations.[57] Such a situation describes the *H. sapiens* population around 75,000 years ago.[58] Following the explosion of the

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53 Helen Keller, *The Story of My Life* (1903, Reprint ed. London: Global Classics, 2020): 20–21.

54 Karen Pine and Dave Messer, "The Development of Representations as Children Learn about Balancing," *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* 21, no. 2 (2003): 285–301. Cf. Daniele Moyal-Sharrock, "Coming to Language: Wittgenstein's Social 'Theory' of Language Acquisition" in *Essays on the Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, ed. Volker Munz (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2010).

55 Jonathan Haidt, "The Emotional Dog and its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment," *Psychological Review 108, no.* 4 (2001): 814–34. Cf. Haidt, "The Moral Emotions" in *Handbook of Affective Sciences*, eds. R. J. Davidson, K. R. Scherer, & H. H. Goldsmith, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003): 852–70.

56 Marwick, "Pleistocene Exchange Networks." Cf. Simon Kirby, "Syntax Without Natural Selection: How Compositionality Emerges from Vocabulary in a Population of Learners" in *The Evolutionary Emergence of Language,* eds. Chris Knight et al., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 303–23.

57 Ian Tattersall, "What Happened in the Origin of Human Consciousness?" *The Anatomical Record* 276B, no. 1 (2004): 19–26.

58 Lucie Gattepaille, Torsten Gunther, Mattias Jakobsson, "Inferring Past Effective Population Size from Distributions of Coalescent Times," *Genetics* 204, no. 3 (2016): 1191–1206. Revising the mutation rate pushed previous estimates of the human population bottleneck back from ~63 ka

Toba super-volcano, South Africa gradually became more arid, and a shrinking population of humans gravitated toward East Africa in search of dwindling food supplies.[59] Additionally, the process of globularity began around 100,000 years ago and extended no later than 35,000 years ago, which places the mid-point around 67,500 years ago. Since modern language and moral codes are universal throughout human cultures, these must have been present before humanity departed the Levant about that time on its worldwide journey of expansion.[60] On the best evidence, therefore, sometime between 75–65,000 years ago, humanity developed the lexicon of abstract ideas, and with it, the capacity for fully mature human morality.

On top of everything else, the same process granted humans the ability to share our thoughts and emotions fully with another person—a type of communication we learned to call "love." Intention-reading, which Tomasello credits with providing the evolutionary motivation to speak, involves not just a shared frame of reference ("Look at that beautiful sunset . . . ."), but an inborn instinct to share our psychological state with others.[61] A performative such as "I apologize" seeks such a shared state. We are not satisfied by the utterance of the words unless we believe the speaker truly *feels* sorry.

The final connection between language and morality is the way humans learn. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein famously compared language to a family of games that we learn by observing as they are played and inferring the rules. In coining the metaphor of the language-game, Wittgenstein "meant to bring into prominence the fact that the 'speaking' of language is part of an activity, or form of life."[62] In other words, our language is embedded in our manner of living, and we learn a "form of life" in the same way and at the same time that we learn to communicate—by learning to make value judgments about the "rightness" of a thing. While children are discovering what makes a particular expression "right" or "wrong" for a given situation, they simultaneously are learning "right" and "wrong" behaviors for their community. Both processes are contemporaneous and virtually identical. Subsequent research has borne out Wittgenstein's insight. As

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to ~75 ka. Alwyn Scally and Richard Durbin, "Revising the Human Mutation Rate: Implications for Understanding Human Evolution," *Nature Reviews Genetics* 13 (2012): 745–53. Cf. W. Amos and J. I. Hoffman, "Evidence That Two Main Bottleneck Events Shaped Modern Human Genetic Diversity," *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 277, no. 1678 (2009): 131–37.

59 Saioa López, Lucy Van Dorp, and Garrett Hellenthal, "Human Dispersal Out of Africa: A Lasting Debate," *Evolutionary Bioinformatics* 11, no S2 (2015). The effect of Toba on climate is debated, but either way, the *H. sapiens* population around 75 kya was likely no more than 20–50,000 people living in small groups dispersed across southern and eastern Africa.

60 Donald Brown, "Human Universals, Human Nature & Human Culture," *Daedalus* 133, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 47–54.

61 Michael Tomasello et al, "Understanding and Sharing Intentions: The Origins of Cultural Cognition," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 28, no. 5 (2005).

62 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §23.

moral philosopher and psychologist Susan Dwyer said, "Moral competence develops through a process analogous to language acquisition. Any systematic explanation of human moral competence must be grounded in a clear sense of the capacities that children possess at various points in development."[63]

Since Aristotle first stated the obvious, everyone has recognized that humans primarily learn by *mimesis* (imitation)—a process that also goes by the name of "social learning." In his research on childhood language acquisition, Tomasello noted that "1-year-old infants use their newly emerging skills of intention understanding not only to predict what others will do, but also to learn from them how to do things conventionally in their culture."[64] The human capacity for social learning is what allows children to absorb such a vast amount of information in such a short time, and this same ability forms the basis of human culture. From cradle to grave, human beings imitate the speech and behavior—both good and evil—of the people around them and model it to the next generation as a form of life. On the grand scale of history, this becomes human language, traditions, and culture—all accomplished by the process of "enculturation," yet another name for mimesis.

Human Origins in Genesis 1–3

Imago Dei

In Genesis 1, the conceptual metaphor of temple construction provides a framework to communicate God's creation of the heavens and the earth.[65] The climax arrives in Gen 1:26–28, which begins, "Let us create *adam* in our image . . . ." This is a statement of purpose, of *telos*. Coming at the end of God's creative activities, the creation of humanity in his image was the goal of his labor. There *is* something special, something unique about humanity in the biblical perspective.

After Gen 9:6, the image of God disappears from the Hebrew Bible before being resurrected in the New Testament.[66] This paucity of information has left interpreters divided on the meaning of the *imago Dei*.[67] The predominant view of the church for many centuries saw it as a structural aspect of the human being, including concepts such as "reason," the "rational soul," or "consciousness."[68] In the 20th century, systematic theologians generally favored the Barthian "relational" model, as exemplified by Reformed theologian Anthony Hoekema: "God has placed man into a

63 Susan Dwyer, Bryce Huebner, and Marc D. Hauser, "The Linguistic Analogy: Motivations, Results, and Speculations," *Topics in Cognitive Science* 2, no. 3 (2009): 486–510.

64 Tomasello et al, "Understanding and Sharing Intentions."

65 Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One*; Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism"; Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*; Middleton, "Human Beings in the Cosmic Temple."

66 Forgive the pun, but the reference is to passages such as Col 1:15; Heb 1:3; 2 Cor 4:4; etc.

67 J. Richard Middleton, "Image of God" in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Theology, vol. 2*, ed. Samuel E. Ballentine et al. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015): 516–23.

68 Aquinas *Summa Theologica* Iq93a2. The Catechism of the Catholic church still describes *imago Dei* in such terms.

threefold relationship: between man and God, between man and his fellowmen, and between man and nature."[69] The current consensus among biblical scholars understands the image as a "functional" calling or vocation to represent God in his earthly temple, "granted authorized power to share in God's rule or administration of the earth's resources and creatures."[70] By its nature, a vocation implies a period of training and apprenticeship; toddlers do not suddenly begin to practice carpentry, for instance. The same principle that applies to the individual also applies to the human race. Therefore, if God intended humanity to serve as his embodied image on Earth, we could not perform that task until we acquired the necessary knowledge and experience. At the least, such representation should reflect the Lord's goodness, justice, and mercy, so we may confidently infer that humanity could not perform its God-ordained task without mature moral knowledge.

Ha'adam as Archetype

An overview of Genesis 2–3 begins with the generic first humans: "the man" and "the woman." Contrary to popular opinion, "Adam" does not appear as a proper name until Gen 4:25 at the earliest.[71] Why would the author use a *de facto* title, *ha'adam*, in the garden narrative rather than the man's presumed name, Adam? The answer is found in the story arc. Chapter 2 relates the man and the woman's creation, naked and unashamed, and by the end of chapter 3, they have acquired the knowledge of good and evil and been barred from the garden of God's presence. Symbolically, the child has left home and become an adult—complete with spouse, offspring, toil, tears, sweat, pain, and, of course, guilt. Every human being has taken that journey. We immediately recognize ourselves in "the man" and "the woman." (As early as the 2nd century, the church father Irenaeus interpreted the first couple as children in the story.[72]) The genius of Genesis 2–3 is that the "fall" of the first humans mirrors the "coming of age" not just of humanity, but of every individual person. *Ha'adam* thus functions as an archetype—the "original pattern" that all have followed.[73]

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69 Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans): 75. Cf. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (London: T&T Clark, 2004): III/1, 193.

70 J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005), 27. Cf. Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2016): 65–66.

71 Richard S. Hess, "Genesis 1–2 and Recent Studies of Ancient Texts," *Science and Christian Belief* 7, no. 2 (1995): 147.

72 *Against Heresies* 3.22.4, 3.23.5, 4.38.1–2 (SC 100:942–50); *The Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching* 12, 14.

73 The change from *ha'adam* to the proper name Adam (without the definite article) in Genesis 4 does not in itself indicate that "the man" has reached maturity. That change in perspective is a function of the narrative shifting focus from the universal pattern to the specific outworking of *ha'adam*'s sinful pattern in his descendants. The story arc of maturity has its climax and resolution in Genesis 3.

John Walton reaches a similar conclusion in *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, but he defines an archetype as "a representative of a group in whom all others in the group are embodied."[74] However, Walton's definition of "archetype" seems to owe more to covenant theology's doctrine of "Federal Headship" than it does to literary analysis. The longstanding definition of a literary archetype is a character or situation that represents a universal pattern in human experience. Thus, the character of *ha'adam* is not an archetype because God chose a particular individual named Adam to represent a group of people, even if that group is all of humanity. Rather, "the man" serves as an archetype because his experience personifies the *universal human experience* of the loss of innocence. The man and woman simultaneously represent the collective (early humanity) and individual (every human) journey from childhood innocence to guilty adulthood.

Opening the Mouth, Hearing a Command, Naming the Animals

In Gen 2:7 God creates *ha'adam* from *ha'adamah* ("the ground") and breathes "the breath of life" into him, and the man becomes *nepeš ḥayyāh*, a "living soul." The majority of Christians believe human beings have a dual nature—body and soul. Traditional interpretations of Gen 2:7 thus usually view the passage as God breathing a soul into the first man.[75] But the phrases "breath of life" and "living soul" are applied to both animals and humanity in the Hebrew Bible. Life is manifested in the breath, which comes from the Spirit of God.[76] This is true of both people and animals, since both come from the ground (Gen 1:24, 2:7) and both owe their lives to the spirit/breath of God (Gen 7:21–22). On this reading, Gen 2:7 does not teach that "the man" was "ensouled" or "enlightened" at his creation. It simply teaches that humanity, like the animals, was made from the earth and given life (breath) by God, our common Creator. In short, the man was not *given* an immortal soul; he *became* a living soul.[77]

A more intriguing interpretation draws upon the *mīs pî/pīt pî* ("washing of the mouth," "opening of the mouth") religious rituals of Mesopotamia, connecting the *imago Dei* in Gen 1:26–28 to the imagery of God breathing life into the man.[78] Before an idol/image of a god was placed in its temple, priests would perform a

74 John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015): 240.

75 Commenting on 2:7, John Calvin said, "Three gradations, indeed, are to be noted in the creation of man; that his dead body was formed out of the dust of the earth; that it was endued with a soul, whence it should receive vital motion; and that on this soul God engraved his own image, to which immortality is annexed." https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom01/calcom01.viii.i.html.

76 Although *nishmah* is used only for humans in Genesis, *ruah* (spirit/breath) is applied to both humans and animals elsewhere. Besides Gen 6:10 and 17, see Ps 104:29–30.

77 Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 196–99.

78 Catherine L. McDowell, *The Image of God in the Garden of Eden: The Creation of Humankind in Genesis 2:5–3:24 in Light of the* mīs pî pīt pî *and* wpt-r *Rituals of Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt* (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2015).

ceremony in a riverside garden to "open" its mouth, awakening the statue's senses so that it could taste the sacrifices, smell the incense, hear the music, and give directions to the priests in the temple. The parallels are obvious, but the man in Gen 2:7 is vivified by the breath of life. This recalls the prophetic parody of idolatry: Their images are a fraud because "they have no breath in them" (Jer 10:14; 51:17; Hab 2:19; see also Ps 135:17). In contrast, the "idol" that YHWH God fashions from the ground and places in his garden/temple is a living, breathing image. Rather than the bestowal of a soul, "the text narrates God's consecration of humanity to bear the divine image."[79]

The question then arises: Does consecration to a task or, to put it another way, calling to a vocation require that a person is prepared to fulfill that vocation immediately? Assume God calls one 16-year-old to the ministry and another to be a physician. Are either of them ready to perform those tasks as soon as they receive God's call? Obviously not. Both still face years of education and training before they gain the necessary knowledge and experience to take up their God-given vocations. And anywhere along the way, something might happen to derail their progress and prevent them from reaching their goals.

As a matter of fact, everyone is born/created in the image of God, but no one has achieved the goal of *imago Dei*. A few, unfortunately, are born with disabilities or suffer injuries/disease that prevent them from reaching full maturity as morally culpable persons. The rest of us, like our forebears in Eden, choose evil and fail to represent the moral goodness of our Creator. Only one person in all human history—the Son of God—lived up to the divine call.

God's consecration of *ha'adam* to the vocation of *imago Dei* did not equal immediate readiness to fulfill it, just as an infant born in God's image is not immediately prepared for that task. By the same token, God's command to *ha'adam* not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge (Gen 2:16–17) does not equate to moral maturity. If *ha'adam* is truly an archetype whose experience is universally applicable, then his experience should parallel the experience of every human. All children are given commands—respect your parents, do not hit, do not steal, do not lie—but that fact alone does not mean they are ethically mature. Every parent knows it is not enough to tell a child a rule. Children learn how to follow all rules, not just moral rules, by trial and error, which involves a long series of violations and corrections/consequences. Like learning language, the process resembles training more than anything else.[80]

Upon his creation, the man's first act is "opening the mouth" to name the

79 J. Richard Middleton, "From Primal Harmony to a Broken World," in *Earnest: Interdisciplinary Work Inspired by the Life and Teachings of B. T. Roberts*, eds. Andrew C. Koehl and David Basinger (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2017): 150.

80 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §5. For his thoughts on obeying a rule see §'s 199, 202, 219, 222, 227, 235, 240.

animals (Gen 2:19–20). While the main point obviously is not to provide an explanation for the origin of language, the action is undeniably linguistic.[81] Interpreters often take the passage as another instance of *ha'adam* being portrayed as an adult, but as previously noted, the first stage of language usage—both in evolution and childhood development—is the single-word stage, which invariably begins with names (Mama, Dada, bottle, etc.). A toddler can give names to her collection of stuffed animals, but no one would interpret that act as an indication of rational or moral maturity.

More telling is the fact that the chapter ends with the man and woman "naked and not ashamed." This seemingly off-hand observation conveys the same message to ancient and modern reader alike, which is the childlike state of the first humans. Again, if *ha'adam* is an archetype, then his experience reflects the experience of every human, and very young children are the only members of society who universally fit the bill for "naked and not ashamed." In summary, nothing in Genesis 2 requires the interpreter to regard *ha'adam* as a fully-formed adult, whether the vocation of *imago Dei*, the receiving of a command, or the giving of names.

The Tree of Knowledge

The "fall" occurs when the man and woman eat the fruit of the tree and become "like God," knowing good and evil. Interpreters fall into four main categories on the question of what the tree represents:

- The tree confers moral discrimination.
- "Good and Evil" is a merism for knowledge only true of deity.
- The tree bestows divine wisdom.
- The tree awakens sexual awareness.[82]

Although all four of these views associate the tree with increased maturity, interpreting the fall as sexual awareness ignores the most obvious aspect of the tree, its name, and the most obvious consequence of eating its fruit, shame. Simply on the level of experience, "knowledge of good and evil" and "shame" immediately call to mind morality, not sexuality. Sexual knowledge is neither good nor evil. Although the reference to marriage in Gen. 2:24 is an interpolation, it serves to highlight another difficulty with the sexual awareness interpretation. If sex were in view, the order of events in the text would reverse the universal experience of humanity. While adults may be ashamed of being naked before strangers, the same

81 I must set aside naming as an act of dominion. The question is complex, controversial, and ultimately tangential to the purpose of this paper.

82 Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26,* New American Commentary 1A (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996): 203–206.

does not (ideally) apply to couples. Sexual intimacy should not cause a husband or wife to be ashamed of being naked in front of the other. If anything, the opposite should be true. So the act of covering themselves cannot be the result of embarrassment at having their nakedness before one another exposed.[83] Rather, covering their nakedness symbolically illustrates an awareness of moral guilt—the shame of realizing that one's misdeeds have been exposed for all to see, including God.

The second and third options both emphasize the fact that the knowledge Adam and Eve obtain is, by inference from Gen 3:22, a form of divine wisdom usually attributed to kings, priests, or God alone. One such example would be the judicial wisdom of David (2 Sam 14:17, 20). The merism interpretation draws upon the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible for its understanding of the tree as mature, practical wisdom for righteous life. A common problem with both interpretations is that prior to humanity's acquisition of moral knowledge, *of course* it was the sole province of deity. Like children, early humanity did not yet possess it, and animals never will. While both "wisdom" interpretations are reasonable, "knowing right from wrong" must precede those higher forms of moral knowledge, both for humanity and for the individual. Whether one considers the tree to represent the judicial wisdom of David or the godly wisdom of Proverbs, both categories subsume the narrower concept of moral discrimination, which is foundational for mature, wise judgment. Societies begin to hold children morally and legally responsible for their actions between the ages of 10–13, but adolescents do not acquire practical experience or mature wisdom until much later. In fact, the prefrontal cortex—the center of decision-making—continues to develop until the age of 25.[84] Prior to full maturity and adult "wisdom," the adolescent brain is characterized by "a heightened responsiveness to incentives while impulse control is still relatively immature."[85] Because of their still-developing brains, teenagers impulsively grasp for immediate rewards and fail to anticipate long-term consequences, and the adolescent always wants to be independent long before he/she is ready. These observations are equally true of the humans in the garden. The man and woman are archetypes of universal moral experience; like teenagers, they show short-sighted, poor judgment in their premature grasp for independence.

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83 Taking the view that Adam and Eve were married in 2:24, Augustine speculated that Adam and Eve did not experience lust before the "fall." He assumes that the "nuptial acts of the primeval marriage were quietly discharged, undisturbed by lustful passion." After they sinned, Adam and Eve covered themselves because an "indecent motion" arose from their bodies, which would not have been the case if they had not sinned. Frankly, Augustine's speculation on this point is prudish and biologically absurd. Cf. David F. Kelly, "Sexuality and Concupiscence in Augustine," *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 3 (1983): 81–116.

84 Teffer and Semendeferi, "Human Prefrontal Cortex." Along those lines, Irenaeus reasoned that Adam and Eve were easily deceived by the devil because of their inexperience and immaturity.

85 Betty Jo Casey, Sarah Getz, and Adriana Galvan, "The Adolescent Brain," *Developmental Review* 28, no. 1 (2008): 62–77.

In the end, the obvious interpretation that the tree symbolizes moral discernment seems best. Both Deut 1:39 and Isa 7:15–16 explicitly state that a child lacks the "knowledge of good and evil," and Isaiah especially emphasizes that good judgment involves knowing "*to reject* evil and choose what is good."[86] The fear of the Lord is to hate evil (Prov 8:13), but that is the just the *beginning* of wisdom (Prov 9:10). Like children, the first humans lacked moral discernment—the knowledge of good and evil.

The Archetypal Sin and Fall

The introduction of the serpent—the craftiest of YHWH God's creatures—abruptly interrupts the idyllic existence of the man and woman in the garden. The temptation the snake represents is threefold: First, it questions the "rightness" of the command; second, it denies the consequences of disobedience; third, it questions the motives of the lawgiver. As the man and woman are archetypes, so is their temptation and fall.

In his 1932 classic, *The Moral Development of the Child*, Jean Piaget studied children of various ages playing games and concluded that the younger ones regarded rules "as sacred and untouchable, emanating from adults and lasting forever. Every suggested alteration strikes the child as a transgression."[87] This matches quite well the attitude of many interpreters toward the command not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. The first humans should have accepted it without question, obeyed it and, presumably, lived forever in paradise. But is unquestioned acceptance of the rule truly a mature moral choice? That condition belongs to the state of childhood.

Updating Piaget's work, developmental psychologist William Kay observed, "A young child is clearly controlled by authoritarian considerations, while an adolescent is capable of applying personal moral principles. The two moralities are not only clearly distinct but can be located one at the beginning and the other at the end of a process of moral maturation."[88] In what could be called the first instance of peer pressure, the serpent introduced doubt from the outside, and the

86 The Deuteronomy text is indisputably related to childhood. Craigie calls it the "age of discernment," and McConville characterizes it as "not morally responsible" and references Isa 7:15. On the latter, I agree with Motyer, who notes the range of possible meanings of "good and evil" (bad/good food, bad/good fortune, moral evil/good) and concludes the time factor and meaning are vague by design. "Within three years, Damascus had fallen to Assyria, and thirteen years later Samaria was taken." Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976): 105; J. Gordon McConville, *Deuteronomy*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary 5 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002): 72; J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993): 86.

87 Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (Simon and Schuster, 1997): 28.

88 William Kay, *Moral Development: A Psychological Study of Moral Growth from Childhood to Adolescence* (New York: Routledge, 2017 [reprint]).

woman determined her personal moral principles vis-à-vis the command. She applied her own moral judgment, a phenomenon that begins in adolescence and continues throughout the rest of life, and weighed whether the rule was hypothetically non-binding and contrary to her own self-interest (the fruit was "good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom").[89] The universal nature of temptation and sin appears at the end of a process of moral maturation that all children undergo. In the end, the adolescent applies her own moral principles, considers her self-interest, and declares her independence, albeit prematurely. In the second instance of peer pressure, the man takes the fruit from the woman and eats it without apparent thought. If everyone else is doing it, me too![90]

Although the Western church traditionally has viewed the first humans as adults at their creation, the nature of their disobedience better fits Irenaeus' conception of them as children. The "fall" as presented in Genesis 2–3 perfectly replicates the moral transition from childhood to adolescence. Another creation text, Proverbs 8, says "the fear of the Lord" is to hate evil. The next lines of the poem provide examples of what that means: "I hate arrogant pride and the evil way and perverse speech." In Proverbs, pride is "a self-confident attitude that throws off God's rule to pursue selfish interests."[91] What happens when a child begins to question the rules, as well as the motives of the rule-givers? Such is the thought process behind every first "morally responsible" sin—and the archetypal "original sin" of the first humans.

Conclusion

Conceptual metaphors are built into the fabric of human thought as tools to elucidate complex concepts. Scientists routinely employ the metaphor of childhood development to explain the co-evolution of the brain, language, and morality. The comparison is apt; the collective human journey virtually parallels the individual journey of every human. Genesis 2–3 employs the conceptual metaphor of moral knowledge as a "coming of age" and applies it to "the man" and "the woman" as literary archetypes in a figurative text. Their symbolic journey from childhood innocence to moral maturity matches the trajectory of both human evolution and every normal child's moral development. The conceptual metaphor of maturity resurfaces throughout Scripture, but it becomes especially prominent in the New Testament, where *teleios* "describes both the consummated reality (the 'perfect' or 'complete') and lives lived into that eschatological hope and energized by its partial

89 Susan Dwyer, "How Good is the Linguistic Analogy," *The Innate Mind* 2 (2004): 237–38.

90 Peer pressure influences adolescents to violate the law but not adults. Cf. Rod Morgan and Elly Farmer, "The Age of Criminal Responsibility: Developmental Science and Human Rights Perspectives," *Journal of Children's Services* (2011).

91 Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1-15,* New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004): 401.

realization (the 'mature'). . . . The new creation is the advent of the 'complete' (*to teleion*) and . . . lives oriented to this coming reality are 'mature.'"[92] Has the choice of metaphor in Genesis 2–3 primed us for an evolutionary understanding of human origins?

In childhood development, the line between child and adult is "fuzzy." The same can be said for the line between human and animal in evolution. While the exact location of that line may remain a secret hidden in God, Christians nevertheless will speculate whether Neanderthal, Denisovan, *heidelbergensis*, all hominins, or only *sapiens* should be considered human. On the analogy of the man naming the animals, I suggest the first speakers of words are *adam*, the first members of the human family. *H. erectus* possessed the physical capabilities for speech, and the appearance of trade networks around 1 million years ago implies communication, probably a combination of gesture and a few simple words. Consequently, all of our hominin relatives from that point would be considered human, although, like children, they were immature and still developing.

A newborn child "made in the image of God" is not capable of abstract thought, cannot speak, makes no moral judgments, has no knowledge of God, etc. Even if one takes the *imago Dei* in the traditional sense as a "structural" aspect of the human being, these capacities still require "normal" development to achieve their potential. The same was true of humanity writ large. In its infancy (*erectus*), humanity could be spoken of as "created in the image of God" and endowed with a vocation. But abstraction, modern language, and mature morality still required millennia of development before they achieved their full human potential. If Jesus had to "grow in wisdom and stature" before he took up his earthly calling, should not the same be true of all of us, including *ha'adam*?

Tomasello identified the human instinct to share our psychological states with others as providing the evolutionary motivation for humans to speak. Ultimately, this sharing of ourselves undergirds the Christian understanding of love. All of us seek to be understood "for who we really are" and to understand who the other truly is. We need that empathy. We crave it. In this life, marriage is the closest bond between two people. Within the spousal relationship described in Gen 2:23–24, humans share themselves most fully with another person—physically, emotionally, intellectually. But even the marriage relationship cannot satisfy. Our inbuilt need to communicate ourselves can be met only in Christ, the God-man who alone fully knows us. As Paul beautifully put it:

> "For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness

92 Miroslav Volf and Matthew Croasmun, *For the Life of the World: Theology That Makes a Difference* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2019): 153–54. It's also worth noting that Jesus routinely called his disciples "children."

> (τέλειον) comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known" (1 Cor 13:10–13).

Thus, our Creator has instilled within us an instinct to share ourselves—our *complete* selves—with others and, more importantly, with himself. The spark set within us a million years ago is still making its way to the powder keg.

Regarding the "fall," when we realize that the state of "innocence" of the immature human race, just like the immature human being, was one of ignorance instead of perfection, it is easy to understand how early man, like a child, could commit sins of ignorance. It is also understandable, then, how God could overlook those offenses without violating his own justice. Even human societies—imperfect as they are—do not hold toddlers accountable for breaking the law. "The man" was never perfect, and neither were we. That explains why the serpent appears in the garden without warning in Gen 3:1. Sinful behavior has been present with us from the beginning, intruding even into Eden.[93] Ponder once again our roots. Primate society is based on deception, manipulation, and social climbing. We did not suddenly outgrow these things. They are the origins of human sinfulness. Evil wove its way into the warp and woof of human culture long before we learned to give it a name.

Between 65–75,000 years ago, humanity acquired the capacity for abstract moral reasoning—the knowledge of good and evil. *Ha'adam* for the first time faced a morally responsible choice. Finally knowing the difference, would people choose the good, or would they judge by their personal morality and choose self-interest? While God previously overlooked humanity's sins of ignorance, somewhere we had crossed a line—the same fuzzy line that each of us crosses in our own lives—and become morally responsible for our actions. Humanity had reached maturity. We had acquired the "divine wisdom" of good and evil, and with it—a conscience. What would we do with this new knowledge?

Since ha'adam as archetype embodies all of humanity, the conclusion is that everyone continued to do what they were accustomed to do—choose evil, even though they now understood those actions as morally wrong. The first boundary violation was violation of the conscience. Conscience is the self reflecting upon itself—both in its thoughts and actions. This ability depends on high-order Theory

93 The objection could be raised that Genesis gives no hint of evil behavior prior to the first transgression. But the serpent comes from outside the garden and is described as one of God's creatures. Those details could be interpreted as the prior existence of evil and its natural, creaturely origins, both of which accord with the scenario offered here.

of Mind and language. First-order Theory of Mind is projecting one's thoughts into the mind of another individual and "walking in their shoes." Empathy opens the door to that possibility, but conscience requires something more. Conscience involves metacognition—thinking about thinking. The requirement for conscience is that the mind steps outside itself and considers its own thoughts and behavior from the perspective of a hypothetical observer. The beginnings of conscience are an awareness of how our community (or larger culture) would view our actions if we did what we were contemplating. These behavioral standards come first from our parents and eventually extend to our elder relatives, peers, and community at large. The problem becomes even more acute when we become sophisticated enough to conceive of an ideal that extends beyond our experience. In childhood development, that ability begins to appear with metaphoric thinking, around the age of 8. Conscience only became possible when the mind became capable of true self-reflection, of stepping outside the confines of its own consciousness and viewing itself from an outside perspective. Such sophisticated thought was not possible until protolanguage became language and basic empathy became second- and third-order theory of mind. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov 9:10), but the fear of the Lord is to hate evil (Prov 8:13). Humanity did not exercise its newfound moral knowledge as God intended, by listening to the conscience and choosing the good. Instead, we chose evil even after we finally saw it for what it was, when we should have hated and spurned it.

The "fall" transpired at a literal time and place between 75,000 years ago and the "Out of Africa" departure from the Levant 10,000 years later. Early humanity's childhood innocence was lost virtually as soon as abstract moral reasoning began. We fall short of the ideal as soon as we conceptualize it. Additionally, our ideas of right and wrong were formed by observing and imitating those around us—their form of life, both good and bad. Without doubt, human morality and conscience were born in the murky waters of human culture, not implanted before birth in every individual heart by God.

Such a scenario does not make God the origin of evil. The metaphor of maturity provides a framework for understanding the connection between moral maturity and moral decision-making. Jim Stump, Vice President of BioLogos, explains,

> Perhaps the evolutionary struggle is the only way to develop moral beings like us. I'd suggest that moral maturity is a quality that can be developed only by making moral decisions. God can no more create morally mature creatures than he could create free persons who are incapable of sin. So to achieve moral maturity, agents must be involved in their own moral formation by making decisions with moral

> implications. . . . It seems that evolution may be the only way to create beings with the capacity to know good and evil.[94]

Finally, just as language could not be invented by one person, the historical condition of "sinfulness" could not be invented by one person. Humans are indoctrinated into sin at the same time and in the same way that we learn language . . . and music, and art, and conformity to social norms, all of which are aspects of human culture. Social learning/mimesis explains how "original sin" arose and was/is propagated. Every generation participates in *ha'adam*'s sin, both individually and collectively. When Isaiah saw a vision of the Lord, he cried out, "Woe is me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips!" Sin, as the prophet realized in God's presence, is *both* individual and communal (Isa 6:5).[95] There never was an original sinner who invented sin, any more than one individual could invent a language, or one breeding pair could start a species. Speciation, language, sinfulness: All require a population.

94 J. B. Stump, "Death, Predation, and Suffering," in *Old-Earth or Evolutionary Creation?: Discussing Origins with Reasons to Believe and BioLogos*, eds. Kenneth Keathley, J.B. Stump, and Joe Aguirre (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press), 71–73. Cf. https://biologos.org/blogs/jim-stump-faith-and-science-seeking-understanding/evolution-and-the-problem-of-natural-evil.

95 The same paradigm applies to salvation, which has individual and corporate aspects. We choose to follow Christ as individuals, but the gathered people of God (the *ekklēsia*) are pictured metaphorically as one body, the bride of Christ, the new Jerusalem, the spiritual temple, the Israel of God, etc.

The Genre and Metaphorical Layers of the Song of the Vineyard (Isaiah 5:1–7)[1]

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Abstract

The genre of the Song of the Vineyard has been a topic of some debate, particularly whether it classifies as a song or a juridical parable. This paper argues that it is both: through genre misdirection, it is a juridical parable concealed within a song until the timely reveal at the end. Likewise, there are multiple metaphorical layers at play in the Song of the Vineyard: the level of the vineyard owner/vineyard, the level of the beloved/bride, and the level of the referents of the metaphors, namely Yahweh and his people. This paper teases out these metaphors in order to identify the interplay between them.

The Song of the Vineyard (Isa 5:1–7) is a masterpiece of Hebrew poetry, especially with regard to its play on genres and its vivid, multi-layered use of metaphors. Yet with those elements also comes complexity, and that complexity has led to significant scholarly discussion and debate as to what exactly Isaiah is doing with his use of genre and metaphor in this text. The majority of the misconceptions about these elements has to do with misunderstanding their multifaceted dynamics. For example, the genre of the Song of the Vineyard is not merely one, but rather two: it intentionally presents one genre in the guise of another in order to conceal the true referents of the Song of the Vineyard until the proper time. Likewise, the metaphors of the Song of the Vineyard are operating on three levels: the level of vineyard owner/vineyard, the level of beloved/bride, and the level of Yahweh/his people. The purpose of this essay, therefore, is to demonstrate how teasing apart the nature of the Song of the Vineyard's genre and metaphorical layers lends to a more robust understanding of the text. I propose that by presenting one genre in the guise of another—what I call genre misdirection—Isaiah invites his audience to imaginatively engage with the two intertwined metaphorical layers and to

1 This paper won the 2020 Founders Prize from the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies for the best student paper in Hebrew Bible and cognate disciplines.

sympathize with the vineyard owner/beloved, obscuring their metaphorical nature until Isaiah unexpectedly reveals the third, non-metaphorical layer. By framing his indictment this way, the prophet leads his audience to indict themselves without them realizing until the very end that this is what they have done.

The Genre of the Song of the Vineyard

It is important to begin with a discussion of the genre of the Song of the Vineyard, as it has been subject to much debate. Some, for example, identify it strictly as a song.[2] John Goldingay suggests that it acts like "a minstrel singing a love song on behalf of his best friend, perhaps as his best man."[3] Similarly, J. Alec Motyer views it as a "marriage song," with the relationship between the beloved and his vineyard serving as a metaphor for a groom and his bride.[4] At the very least, one must recognize that there is some level of metaphorical meaning to the passage. After all, verse 7 reveals an identification of the characters within the Song of the Vineyard with other parties. To take the Song of the Vineyard completely non-metaphorically is nonsensical: who would actually place blame on and punish grapes for not growing properly?[5]

Additionally, the Old Testament uses vineyard imagery elsewhere to symbolize a woman in the context of a marital relationship, particularly in the so-called wisdom literature and Psalms (Ps 128:3; Song 2:15; 4:16). This depiction of the female body according to agricultural metaphors was extant in the broader corpus of ancient Near Eastern literature as well and included allusions to romantic scenarios between the woman and her lover.[6] Although such a romantic connotation is not explicit in Isaiah 5, the wider usage of this imagery does highlight the common connection in ancient Near Eastern literature between agricultural terminology and the female body. It is therefore quite likely that Isaiah's audience would understand his discussion about the beloved and the vineyard to be a metaphor for a bridegroom and bride, which Isaiah then develops into a metaphor for Yahweh and his people. Indeed, calling the vineyard owner the "beloved" (a relational

2 See J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 68; Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Isaiah: On Eagles' Wings*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 54–55; Ivan D. Friesen, *Isaiah*, Believers Church Bible Commentary (Scottdale, PA: Herald, 2009), 53–54.

3 John Goldingay, *Isaiah*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 52.

4 Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 68.

5 Blenkinsopp identifies this as one of the numerous "problems for the modern reader" that are located in this passage (*Isaiah 1–39*, 206). However, as discussed above, this is taking the Song too far out of context. Even if one disagrees on the exact genre of the Song of the Vineyard, there needs to be some recognition of a level of metaphorical meaning in the text.

6 Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 19 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 207; John T. Willis, "The Genre of Isaiah 5:1–7," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96 (1977) 337–62, here 345.

term) instead of the vintner (a viticultural term) is an immediate tip-off to the audience that Isaiah is using metaphorical language. It is also worth noting that Israel is elsewhere identified as both Yahweh's vine (Ps 80) and his bride (Hos 2).[7] In this way, there are three layers interweaving with one another: (1) the vineyard owner and vineyard represent (2) a beloved and his bride, which in turn represent (3) Yahweh and his people.

Part of the challenge in labeling the genre of the Song of the Vineyard is that it shifts before it reaches the end: it begins as a song and concludes in a kind of parable. This has resulted in scholars struggling to name all that the Song of the Vineyard encapsulates.[8] To some, such an overlap of genres displays "deliberate incongruity."[9] Yet this assumes that multiple genres cannot coexist, or that to do so is to be incongruous. The Song of the Vineyard, on the contrary, deftly displays several different genres cooperating with one another. As J. J. M. Roberts observes, "Good poetry is not that univocal, and most scholars would consider the Song of the Vineyard good poetry. One must be open, therefore, to the possibility that the poem operates on several different levels and participates in several different genres."[10] Thus the Song of the Vineyard contains multiple genres, the specifics of which we will discuss below. Each of these different genres is more prominent in certain portions of the Song of the Vineyard than others, but they are all simultaneously extant and vital to one's understanding of the passage.

For those viewing the Song of the Vineyard from a poetic and didactic perspective, it is a rhetorical masterpiece. The layered meaning both obscures and, later, facilitates identification. It invites the audience to sympathize with the singer and to be appalled at the vineyard without realizing that they are themselves the vineyard and Yahweh is the vineyard owner. Given that love songs are timeless in the way they sing of the lover's heartache, the audience believes that they are simply listening to "a harmless piece of entertainment"[11]; they are not expecting a prophetic denunciation of their sin. If Isaiah had simply stood up before the people and began with the woes of verses 8–30, this might have caused the audience to

7 It is worth noting that in both of these contexts as they are found elsewhere in the Old Testament, "erotic connotation" is lacking entirely (Willis, "Genre of Isaiah 5:1–7," 348).

8 For instance, Childs sees in the Song of the Vineyard both the "wisdom components of a parable and the prophetic features of a judgment oracle." Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 44–45. Watts calls it a song, but argues that the "original genre" is that of a "complaint" or "accusation," which then shifts to a pronouncement of judgment. John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word, 2005), 54. In perhaps a prime example of the difficulty of encapsulating all that the Song of the Vineyard is, Brueggemann (*Isaiah 1–39*, 48) tries to cram in all the relevant descriptors by calling it "the love song-become-dispute-become-judgment." In his article "Genre of Isaiah 5:1–7," Willis counts as many as twelve different kinds of genre descriptors given to the Song of the Vineyard throughout the history of its interpretation.

9 Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 206.

10 J. J. M. Roberts, *First Isaiah*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 71.

11 Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 55.

dismiss his claims. Now, however, they become entangled in the imaginative world of the poem; they have already sympathized with the vineyard owner/bridegroom, and therefore they have already agreed with the logical conclusion that the vines/bride have not produced the correct fruit, even though they do not yet know that such a conclusion condemns them. This allows Isaiah to lay out the audience's true reality in verse 7 and, in the several woe oracles that follow (5:8–30), to draw out the consequences of that reality.

A helpful descriptor for the Song of the Vineyard is one coined by Gale A. Yee, namely "juridical parable."[12] The Song of the Vineyard falls under the general banner of "parable" in that it is a story with particular referents primarily meant to convey a singular message.[13] However, Yee argues that the Song of the Vineyard goes one step further, incorporating the elements of a lawsuit (including an indictment and sentence[14]) in order to set up an "intentional decoy which provokes the hearer to condemn himself."[15] The most recognizable comparison is found in 2 Sam 12:1–4, in which the prophet Nathan cleverly describes David's own actions back to him (albeit couched in the description of a different but parallel scenario) and causes David to unintentionally indict himself, only for Nathan to turn around and reveal, "You are the man!" (2 Sam 12:7).[16] In the same way, Isaiah invites the people of Judah to condemn the bad fruit of the vineyard, only for them to realize—too late—that they have just condemned themselves (Isa 5:7).

Yee's label comes the closest in describing the nature of the Song of the Vineyard, yet it still does not quite match for a couple of reasons. First, while she acknowledges that the Song of the Vineyard is identified as a song as well as a juridical parable, her comparison of the two labels leads to unnecessary bifurcations in function between the two genres. She contends that the genre of song "articulates a *real* situation between God and his people" in a way that the juridical parable genre, which portrays "truly fictional situations similar to the king's own predicaments," does not.[17] However, such a distinction is unhelpful. In 2 Sam 12, for example, Nathan is relaying a real situation that happened with David, only in a metaphorical form rather than a non-metaphorical one. The use of metaphor to portray David's sin does not diminish its reality; rather, it initially obscures that the story does, in fact, portray David's sin until Nathan reveals this to be the case.

12 Gale A. Yee, "A Form-Critical Study of Isaiah 5:1–7 as a Song and a Juridical Parable," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 43 (1981) 30–40, here 31. The descriptor is indeed helpful, even though it does not capture all aspects of the Song of the Vineyard, as I will argue below.

13 A point made by Willis, "Genre of Isaiah 5:1–7," 356–57.

14 Yee, "Form-Critical Study of Isaiah 5:1–7," 35.

15 Yee, "Form-Critical Study of Isaiah 5:1–7," 33.

16 All Scripture translations in this article are the author's. Beyond 2 Sam 12:1–4, see also 2 Sam 14:1–20; 1 Kgs 20:35–43. Some point to Jer 3:1–5 as well, but Yee does not see enough similarity to merit such a comparison (Yee, "Form-Critical Study of Isaiah 5:1–7," 33).

17 Yee, "Form-Critical Study of Isaiah 5:1–7," 39.

Thus the genres of both song and juridical parable can, to use Yee's words, articulate "a *real* situation."

Second, the label does not acknowledge that there is an intentional bait-and-switch with the audience in terms of the presentation of the Song of the Vineyard's genre and referents. The same misdirection occurs with Nathan and David in 2 Sam 12. Nathan crafts a parable that can be presented as a historical event, which is how David understands it. The parable has rhetorical impact with David precisely because Nathan presents it as a historical event upon which David can pronounce judgment and only reveals it to be a parable when the time is right. In this way, Nathan's parable embodies what I term genre misdirection. Disguising the genre conceals the referents until Nathan is ready to reveal them.

The same is true for the Song of the Vineyard. Isaiah intentionally hides his indictment inside another genre in order to conceal the true referents of the characters involved until the timely reveal. He begins by presenting it as a song, an innocuous genre that his audience would find attractive and therefore harmless. The parabolic and juridical nature of the Song of the Vineyard becomes apparent by verses 3–4. The judgment Isaiah invites his audience to engage in makes little sense if Isaiah is strictly singing a song about a vineyard, but if the audience takes it to be a parable about a beloved and his bride, then the judgment is understandable. At this point the true genre is revealed, but the referents remain hidden until verse 7. It is only at the very end that Isaiah reveals that the parable has been about Yahweh and his people all along.

Like Nathan, Isaiah employs genre misdirection in order to obscure the referents of the Song of the Vineyard until the opportune moment. This generates the rhetorical sting that Isaiah wants his audience to experience, for he can convince them to accept his premise before they recognize that it refers to them. In light of this multi-faceted nature of the Song of the Vineyard, I label Isaiah's performance as genre misdirection. Rather than attempting to encapsulate every genre involved in the Song of the Vineyard into a lengthy and possibly wordy label, genre misdirection connotes the intentional presentation of one genre in the guise of another for a rhetorical purpose. In this case, Isaiah conceals what is in effect a juridical parable about Yahweh and his people in a song about a vineyard owner/beloved and his grapes/bride.

In the final line of the Song of the Vineyard, Isaiah describes the people's activity as מִשְׂפָּח (bloodshed) instead of מִשְׁפָּט (justice) and as צְעָקָה (a cry of distress) instead of צְדָקָה (righteousness). From an auditory and visual perspective, the difference is subtle, perhaps even going unnoticed if one is not paying too close of attention, yet the meanings of these word pairs could not be further apart. This wordplay (a verbal misdirection, if you will) serves to further reinforce the purpose of Isaiah's genre misdirection. The genre misdirection and wordplay

effectively prove that the people's attempt to ignore or downplay their injustice has been unsuccessful. Their actions have not gone unnoticed by Yahweh's eyes, which have seen their acts of *bloodshed* rather than those of *justice*, and Yahweh's ears, which have heard the people's *cries* more loudly than any purported *righteousness*.

The Layers of the Song of the Vineyard

Beyond the question of genre, another element of the Song of the Vineyard that has led to a fair amount of discussion—and even confusion—is the different metaphorical layers contained within it. Three layers interweave with one another: the level of the vineyard owner and vineyard, the level of the beloved and bride, and the level of Yahweh and his people. Each layer has elements that correspond to the others. Some elements are explicitly identified throughout the Song of the Vineyard, while others are left open to the imagination, although some imaginative options are more likely to be prominent in relation to the overall image than others. In particular, of the three levels of meaning, the marital metaphor is the most indirect and therefore evokes multiple images in connection with it. As the audience continues to ponder the metaphor throughout Isaiah's performance, they have an opportunity to contemplate the related images and consider which of them is more prominent given the context, even as the other images remain. The three levels of the Song of the Vineyard work together, shifting from metaphorical references toward a non-metaphorical one.[18] Therefore, in order to fully understand this passage, it is worth looking at these layers in detail in order to understand the significance and function of each, as well as their relationships to one another. To achieve this purpose, we will examine the metaphorical layers from two different but connected perspectives: first, we will tease apart the metaphorical layers to see how they are distinguished from one another, and second, we will observe how the layers interweave with one another to show how they are connected to each other.

18 It is a frequent habit of scholars to speak of language like this being either "metaphorical" or "literal." In doing so, scholars often – unwittingly or not – create a false dichotomy that places greater value for meaning on the "literal" over and against the "metaphorical," reflecting a belief that the "literal" is more "real" and therefore more relevant to the "true" meaning. Scholars who exercise this language often treat the metaphor like a husk that merely houses the kernel of truth underneath but holds no meaning or value itself: once the kernel is discovered, the husk can be cast aside. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, however, demonstrate that our language is far more metaphorical than we often realize and that utilizing metaphorical language does not diminish the "realness" of that language; Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 3. For this reason, I opt to use the language of "metaphorical" and "non-metaphorical." Although perhaps still imperfect and a bit redundant, I hope by using it to avoid the false dichotomy that the "metaphorical/literal" language often creates and also demonstrate that while metaphors are a different way of discussing a given referent, they are no less significant or relevant to the referent's meaning than non-metaphorical language.

Teasing Apart the Layers of the Song of the Vineyard

The most significant elements of each layer are those used to identify the two main characters. The beloved is, surprisingly, not set in relationship with a bride, as one might expect, but rather with a vineyard. Beloved is a romantic, relational term, yet it is the title given to the one who, in the description of the song, owns and relates to a vineyard. By replacing a more relevant term, such as "vineyard owner" or "vintner," with "beloved," Isaiah gives his audience their first clue to recognizing that he is operating on more than one level. With the audience tipped off to the use of metaphorical language in this song, they can begin to imaginatively expand the use of metaphor to the other descriptors in the song. What is unknown to the audience at this beginning phase is that "beloved," too, is a metaphor; more specifically, "beloved" is a metaphor for Yahweh. This knowledge will remain hidden until the major reveal in verse 7.

Opposite the vineyard owner, Isaiah introduces the vineyard. Since the audience has already been made aware of the interplay between the vineyard metaphor and the marriage metaphor, the natural inference is that the vineyard is also the personification of the beloved's bride. This character is then revealed in verse 7 to be Yahweh's people.

But here some clarification is needed. In the reveal of verse 7, Isaiah declares, "For the vineyard of Yahweh of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah the plantation of his delight." The "house of Israel" and "people of Judah" (v. 7) refer to two different entities. That is, "Israel" refers to the corporate whole of Yahweh's people while "Judah" refers to the people who live in Jerusalem and the surrounding political entity of the Southern Kingdom. Just as the vineyard functions as a container for the vines, so "Israel" is the container for "Judah." The former acts as an umbrella term for the latter, with "Israel" describing the people of God as a whole and "Judah" being the more specific audience.[19]

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19 There is some debate as to the particular referents of "Judah" and "Israel" in verse 7. Is Isaiah using these as technical terms to identify two distinct political identities, namely the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom, or is he simply referring to the same group with two different titles? The other half of the parallelism—that is, "the vineyard of Yahweh of Hosts" and "the vines he delighted in"—sheds some light on the matter. At the level of the metaphor, the two elements, namely, "vineyard" and "vines," share some overlap in that they both represent the thing over which the beloved has labored. Yet looking more carefully at the metaphor, there is some distinction to be noted; they are not strictly parallel lines. The vineyard functions as the collective whole of the object of the "beloved's" labor, whereas the vines are the specific components contained therein. In the same way, Israel is the collective term representative of God's people, and Judah is the particular element within it that is being addressed. Isaiah is a prophet to the people of Judah (and even more specifically in this case, to the rulers who, to some degree, are concentrated in Jerusalem; see v. 3), and therefore his accusations pertain to their sins specifically. At the same time, Isaiah has a tendency to employ the name Israel to refer to the collective people of God (e.g., Yahweh is frequently identified as the "Holy One of Israel"; Isa 1:4), whereas he often refers to the political entity of Israel as the Northern Kingdom more specifically by the name Ephraim (7:2). Judah, along with the rest of Israel, was identified as God's people according to the patriarch

Following this pattern, the marriage metaphor also involves a container. In this case, the corporate Bride acts as a container for the individual brides of the groom/Yahweh. Much as Israel is the collective identity of Yahweh's people and the people of Judah are the individual members of that people, the B/bride can be understood either corporately or individually. Yahweh's people are together his Bride, but through Isaiah's song, they can each identify themselves as the bride, including the men of Judah.

Similarly, the singer of the Song of the Vineyard has a multi-layered identity. The speaker, Isaiah, is already known to the people in his role as Yahweh's prophet, which relates to the third layer of meaning in the Song of the Vineyard. However, for this performance, he introduces himself as the singer, who then becomes identified as a friend of the beloved. It is not until verse 7 that Isaiah connects the persona he has adopted (i.e., the singer/friend of the beloved) to his identity as Yahweh's prophet.

The grapes have diverse referents as well: the vineyard owner expects good grapes (i.e., justice and righteousness, v. 7) from his vineyard and instead receives bad or wild grapes (i.e., bloodshed and a cry of distress). Here our secondhand knowledge of Hebrew presents a challenge to understanding the referent for the good or bad harvest. The term בְּאֻשִׁים leaves room for some debate regarding translation among scholars, particularly because it is such a rare word, and the translation of the term influences the understanding of the metaphor. Given its infrequent usage, the word is likely a technical term used among vintners, and while we may be less familiar with its meaning, it would have been perfectly well understood by Isaiah's audience.[20] Some scholars argue that the term means "wild grapes," meaning that the grapes would be small and sour, leaving a bad taste in the mouth of anyone who consumed them. Conversely, others contend that the term means "rotten/stinking grapes," meaning that the grapes would not be consumable at all. Given the context, I lean toward the translation "wild grapes." From a viticultural perspective, one reason that grapes become unusable for wine is that the vines, rather than sending the nutrients afforded by the sun and rain to the fruit, hoard those nutrients for themselves. This phenomenon is common, for example, when vines are not properly pruned. The result is fruit that is small and sour, and thus quite unusable for making wine.[21]

Jacob's new name, Israel, and so it is perfectly appropriate to employ it in reference to Judah. In doing so, Isaiah reminds his audience of their connection to Yahweh as their covenant God.

20 Per conversation with Knut M. Heim on October 12, 2017.

21 There are other ways that grapes can go bad. For example, diseases and/or parasites could eat away at the fruit, making it inedible. This image closely aligns with the translation "rotten/stinking grapes," since both disease and parasites would spoil the fruit. However, as I will explain in the rest of the paragraph, the close parallels that can be drawn between the bad grapes and injustice/unrighteousness, particularly in regard the means that bring them about, lead me to opt for the translation "wild grapes."

If this is what Isaiah's imagery is meant to imply, it makes the case of this vineyard even more shocking, since the vineyard owner took such great care to ensure a good harvest. It is evident that something has gone wrong in spite of proper care. What is more, the reason for a bad harvest in such an instance is not due to an external threat, but rather an internal malfunction. This image parallels the point of the non-metaphorical level, namely the injustice the people of Judah suffer, especially at the hands of the wealthy within Judah itself. Much like the vines that withhold nutrients that the grapes require for flourishing, the things needed for the people's well-being are instead amassed by the wealthy so that they can indulge themselves (vv. 8–10, 11–12). They are expected to use the blessings Yahweh afforded them to treat others with justice and righteousness, presumably through their trust/faith in Yahweh as well as their obedience to Yahweh's Torah; instead, they take in Yahweh's blessings and produce bloodshed and cries of distress (v. 7) through their disobedience.

At the level of the marriage metaphor, the equivalent to the good/bad grapes and (in)justice and (un)righteousness is a little more undefined. There are a few things that the B/bride might "produce," or fail to "produce." One option is *marital faithfulness*, that is, that the B/bride is expected to remain faithful to the husband who has cared for her so intentionally. The converse, then, is marital unfaithfulness. Texts such as Hosea lend credibility to the relevance of this image. Similarly, another option is *good sex* between the B/bride and beloved, with the alternative being either the deprivation of sex or bad sex. Linking this passage to those found in Song of Songs bolsters the connection between this set of images and that of the B/bride. A third option is that the B/bride is expected to *produce children*. More specifically, the B/bride is expected to both produce children and raise them with love and care. Conversely, the B/bride would either fail to produce children or, despite birthing them, mistreat and abuse the children.

Although each image has merit and could have been brought to mind by Isaiah's words, the context suggests that the third image is most prominent in relation to the other metaphors and referents in play. The audience is specifically indicted for mistreatment of the poor and vulnerable (v. 7; see also vv. 8–10, 23). This suggests an intentional, adverse effect by the hands of those with influence and wealth in the community, not unlike the passive neglect or active harm of an abusive mother toward her children. Rather than using the love and provision demonstrated by her beloved to raise children that are healthy and well cared for, the B/bride instead opts to treat her children with either hate or indifference, withholding the nourishment they need to thrive.

Thus, Isaiah deftly operates within three levels in the Song of the Vineyard: two metaphorical levels and one non-metaphorical. Each level has elements that correspond to those in the other levels, informing one another and adding

dimension to the images overall. At the level of *the vineyard metaphor*, the singer introduces the vineyard owner, who takes great care to cultivate his vineyard/vines, only to see the vines withhold nutrients from the fruit. This leads the vineyard/vines to produce wild grapes instead of the good grapes the vineyard owner expected. At the level of *the marriage metaphor*, the friend of the beloved describes how the beloved demonstrates great love and provision for his B/bride, hoping that the B/bride will produce and raise children with love. However, the B/bride instead shows hate/indifference toward her children, so that the children are neglected/abused instead of cared for well. Finally, at *the non-metaphorical level*, Isaiah reveals to the audience that although Yahweh has blessed Israel/Judah with the expectation that they will act in obedience to him, they disobey. The result is a population treated unjustly rather than justly. These levels are outlined in the chart below in order to summarize my analysis on the passage and the levels contained therein.

Three Layers of the Song of the Vineyard

Singer	Vineyard owner	Vineyard	Vines	Good growth vs. withholding nutrients from the vines	Good, expected grapes	Wide grapes = small and sour
Friend of the beloved	Beloved	Bride	bride = all adult Judeans are conceptualized as brides of Yahweh	Loving relationship, provision vs. unloving relationship/hatred/indifference, lack of provision	Children well cared for	Neglected/abused children
Isaiah	Yahweh	House of Israel	People of Judah	Trust/faith/obedience to Yahweh vs. lack of trust in and disobedience to Yahweh	Positive ethical behavior= justice and righteousness	Negative ethical behavior = bloodshed and cry of distress, resulting in a neglected population

By teasing apart the elements of each of the three levels of the Song of the Vineyard, we are able to discern in greater detail the genius of Isaiah's words. As the audience listens to the Song of the Vineyard, they are invited to utilize their imaginations in drawing connections between the two metaphorical levels and, ultimately, with the non-metaphorical level. The more they have engaged their imaginations with the two metaphorical levels, the weightier Isaiah's reveal of the non-metaphorical level would feel, and this would increase the impact of his indictment of them.

The Interlocking Metaphors of the Song of the Vineyard

Having distinguished the metaphors found in the Song of the Vineyard from one another, it is important to see how they are connected. The metaphors of vineyard

owner/vineyard and beloved/bride are by far the most developed and detailed metaphors of the passage. Both sets of metaphors would have been readily familiar to Isaiah's audience, and would thereby "give the hearers a better opportunity to 'translate' details than if lesser-known images had been used."[22] Isaiah employs the metaphors with great attention to detail, and parallels can be drawn between the individual components in a way that contribute to the overall image. As such, it is critical to examine the various elements of each metaphor, identifying the parallels between them and how they highlight what is being communicated at the non-metaphorical level.

Cultivation and Expectation

The vineyard owner develops his vineyard with care during the entire process: he chooses the land well, makes it sustainable for planting, builds what is necessary to both protect the vineyard and create the wine, and waits with eager expectation. Cultivation requires careful attention over long periods of time. One must prepare the soil, plant in ways that will lead to optimal growth, ensure that the vines receive the nutrients they need, prune them so that they grow in the most productive way possible, and protect them from pests that would weaken them. The vineyard owner not only expects fruit, but fruit of a certain caliber.

The husband also cares deeply for his bride and provides what she needs. Perhaps this includes a good home, an abundance of food, and loving-kindness. He might even build the house himself, as well as grow the food that they eat.[23] A healthy marital relationship would presumably include a healthy sex life as well, as a physical expression of that love that produces intense joy, mutual appreciation, and long-term happiness as well as children.

In the same way, Yahweh has provided for his people throughout their history. As Creator, he gives them sun, water, and plant and animal life for their daily

22 Kirsten Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 65 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989), 99.

23 By its nature, the use of any particular metaphor for the purpose of describing something else "highlights certain features while suppressing others" (Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 141). The same is true for the metaphor of marriage in this passage, and it is important to identify what the use of this metaphor emphasizes in this instance and what it does not. In the modern Western concept of marriage, the relationship is a mutual one, in which both partners (hopefully) contribute equally. In this metaphor of marriage, however, the provision is asymmetrical, with the husband providing everything the bride needs, while the bride primarily contributes by bearing and raising children. This imbalance might have been more likely in an ancient patriarchal society, but this is not the point of the metaphor in this context. The purpose of the marriage metaphor, like the vineyard metaphor, is to demonstrate the total culpability of the people of Judah. The power dynamics between the bride and groom are unequal, because the power dynamics between Yahweh and his people are unequal. The metaphor works because it reflects the close, joyful, and binding nature of the relationship between Yahweh and his people, on the one hand, and the imbalance between the two, on the other. The use of this metaphor does not indicate a normative reflection on the level of agency a woman has or ought to have in a marital relationship.

needs. He brought them to the land in which they can live and thrive. He provided the temple and sacrificial system so that he might be in relationship with them. And as with the marriage metaphor, Yahweh provides these things for his people so that there might be a joyful relationship.

The Tragedy of Internal Harm

The presence of a watchtower in a vineyard is a curious addition. While the watchtower could be a place for the beloved to rest, its primary purpose suggests a need for protection and vigilance. What threat does the beloved perceive that would warrant the strenuous effort of building the watchtower in the first place? There is nothing inherently dangerous within the vineyard that the beloved has so painstakingly cultivated, so the threat must be external. Perhaps the vineyard owner has enemies that would seek to sabotage the vineyard or expects general vandals who would desire to take what is meant to help the vineyard flourish. Or it could be that the vineyard owner anticipates a threat from a foreign enemy: "Destroying the crops and food sources was one of the first strategies of siege warfare."[24] This expectation sets up a level of tragic irony, for in the end, the vineyard is sabotaged not from an outside intruder, but from internal corruption. Even though the vineyard owner goes to great effort to protect his vineyard from harm, the vineyard nevertheless ruins itself.

At the level of the marriage metaphor, there is not much that functions as an exact equivalent to the vineyard's watchtower. Perhaps it leaves the impression that the beloved was vigilant in protecting his wife and, eventually, his children from anyone who would attempt to do them harm. Tragically, harm does come upon the children, but from inside the household rather than any intruders.

Correspondingly, Yahweh has protected his people from many external threats over the years. Israel's history is rich with stories of Yahweh rescuing them from their enemies. Multiple psalms praise Yahweh for this very thing (e.g., Pss 9; 18; 27); the psalmist even calls Yahweh his "strong tower" in Ps 61:3. In the Lev 26:4, "YHWH promises the people abundance, protection, peace, and security if they follow his decrees."[25] Despite all of Yahweh's protection from outsiders, however, his people do harm to each other through acts of injustice.

Dashed Expectations

While the vineyard owner expects large, sweet grapes designed for making choice wine, the grapes instead turn out to be wild grapes. Since wild grapes do not have the benefit of active cultivation, they end up small and sour, and, if they are not

24 Jennifer Metten Pantoja, *The Metaphor of the Divine as Planter of the People: Stinking Grapes or Pleasant Planting?* (Boston: Brill, 2017), 90.

25 Pantoja, *The Metaphor of the Divine as Planter of the People*, 102.

eventually harvested, rotten on the vine or devoured by pests. These vines hoarded the nutrients within their own branches, so that the grapes had no ability to become large and sweet, as the vineyard owner had hoped. The description of the grapes as wild gives the impression that for all of the vineyard owner's work, the grapes end up as if he had never put any effort into cultivating them at all, with the result that they are quite inedible.

With the culturally familiar metaphor connecting agriculture with the female body, it makes sense that one of the connecting features between the metaphor and referent here is fertility. Thus, the beloved hopes that his bride will produce the "fruit" of children, whom the bride will love and help raise with care, so that the children grow up to be healthy and strong. This, however, does not end up being the case. Kirsten Nielsen argues that the wife here is guilty of marital unfaithfulness and illegitimate children, citing comparative passages from Hosea to bolster her argument.[26] Yet it is important to note that the major problem in Hosea is idolatry, which is why the metaphor of marital unfaithfulness works so well there. By contrast, the major problem in Isa 5 is injustice, not idolatry. This gives credence to the idea that the bride's crime in the Song of the Vineyard is mistreatment of the children, not that she had illegitimate children.

Thus, the children are unhealthy, neglected, perhaps even abused, as is evidenced by the metaphor's referent of the abused within Judah and Jerusalem. Like the wild grapes, the children seem as if they never received any care at all. To mirror the image of the hoarding vines, perhaps the bride withholds the things they need for growth in order to indulge herself. The beloved sets up ways to protect from external forces, but the true damage comes from within, from the one who was supposed to supply healthy, vibrant life.

In the same way, the people of Judah, especially the wealthy elite, have harmed those they were supposed to nurture. They were supposed to produce justice and righteousness, but instead produced bloodshed and cries of distress. It is worth noting that:

> The term "bloodshed" . . . means "outpouring," thus the outpouring of lifeblood through exploitative social practice; that is, the kinds of economic transactions that abuse, injure, and slowly bleed the poor to death. The "bloodshed" that concerns the poet is not thuggery and murder, but the more subtle, slower, but equally decisive killing through economic policy against the vulnerable and resourceless.[27]

They have hoarded critical resources – most notably the land – for themselves in order that they might build larger houses for themselves and throw grander parties

26 Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree*, 99.
27 Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1–39*, 48.

with the food and wine that their fields and vineyards produce. From the perspective of the vineyard metaphor, this "fruit" is "as unnatural as it is unexpected."[28] Their wealth provides them with the opportunity to be generous and just (see Prov 3:27; 14:21; 22:9), yet they show little to no concern regarding the people for whom they are supposed to care. For the vulnerable of Judean society, the greatest damage to their well-being comes not from an external invasion, but rather from the ones who have a responsibility to care for them and fail to do so (see Isa 1:17).

Consequences of Failure

In response to the vineyard's disappointing growth, the vineyard owner promises to undo all that was designed to make the vineyard as fruitful as possible. "The vineyard is not only left unattended, it is intentionally razed to the ground."[29] The protection surrounding the vineyard will be removed so that animals can eat it and people can trample it, including any invading army. Without tilling and weeding the earth, thorns will spring up where vines ought to be. Even the rain will be withheld from it, resulting in total desolation. The vineyard will be reduced to what it was before the vineyard owner ever set foot there. Like the inclusion of the watchtower, the declaration of withholding rain is an unexpected addition; in this case, the announcement points the audience toward the impending destruction of the vineyard. Placed right before the timely reveal of the referents, it begins to hint to the audience that the identity of the vineyard owner is not what he appears.[30]

Likewise, the beloved will no longer supply the necessities and blessings for his bride. One might imagine the bride being cast out of the house built for her, or perhaps even watching as the beloved tears it down. She will be left entirely destitute, devoid of the provisions needed to survive and thrive. She will be on her own, with no one and nothing to protect her from the elements and other threats.

So, too, Yahweh will remove the protections he has set in place for Judah. They will be exposed to external dangers (vv. 26–30), and they will lose the abundant blessings that Yahweh has provided for them (vv. 9–10). The metaphor also perhaps hints at the notion that Jerusalem in particular will now be vulnerable, no longer hemmed in by Yahweh's protection.[31] They will be trampled by invading armies (vv. 26–30) and expelled from the land bestowed to them (v. 13). Even the darkness of the clouds will hover over them (v. 30). The image is grim and leaves little in the way of hope.

Interwoven together, the metaphors and non-metaphorical referents of the

28 Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), 266.

29 Pantoja, *The Metaphor of the Divine as Planter of the People*, 131.

30 See Motyer, *Isaiah*, 69; Childs, *Isaiah*, 45.

31 Suggested by Mary E. Mills, *Alterity, Pain, and Suffering in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 45–46.

Song of the Vineyard create a tune that is none-too-pleasant to hear. The Judeans receive abundant provision from Yahweh, given with love, generosity, and the hope that it will cultivate additional benefits for others. However, instead of inspiring generosity, Yahweh's blessings are withheld by some at the expense of others. As a result, those blessings will be taken away from them all. The metaphors are designed to demonstrate total culpability on the part of the audience, as well as the inevitability of the consequences.[32] They provide the "why" for the woes that are about to follow. Before Isaiah can describe the coming judgment, he must explain the reason it will occur in the first place. The metaphors stress that Yahweh is not acting unjustly, but in response to the injustice that they themselves have inflicted on others, despite the good things Yahweh has given to them. The images create a sense of dismay at the indictment given and the subsequent punishment described, but they can blame no-one but themselves for what is to come.

Conclusion

The genre and metaphorical layers of the Song of the Vineyard are complex, but it is that very complexity that contributes to the terrible beauty of the Song. By employing genre misdirection, Isaiah cleverly convinces his audience to acknowledge their own sin and condemn themselves before they even realize that the Song of the Vineyard is about them. By interweaving the vine/vineyard owner and bride/beloved metaphors, Isaiah engages his audience's imaginations and causes them to contemplate the ways they have rejected Yahweh's blessings and engaged in injustice toward their neighbors. The result is a potent piece of poetry, one that is just as compelling today as it must have been to Isaiah's audience then.

32 Nielsen, *There Is Hope for a Tree*, 101.

"The Untrammeled Development of Our Life": Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Common Grace

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Abstract

While a force for evangelism and missions that has had an enormous impact on global Christianity, the Pentecostal movement has not historically prized cultural engagement. However, this has begun to change somewhat over the past several decades, with many younger Pentecostals in particular exhibiting a more positive view of culture. At is on this point that the doctrine of common grace, as articulated in the Reformed tradition, has strong potential to inform a Pentecostal theology of cultural engagement. This is particularly true if the doctrine of placed in conversation with Pentecostal pneumatology, which highly prizes the activity of the Holy Spirit in the individual life of the believer. Indeed, adopting some form of the doctrine of common grace may expand the Pentecostal vision of the Spirit's work in society much more than at present, leading to a more robust theology both of the Spirit and of cultural engagement.

As a restorationist movement that believed in the imminent return of Christ from its infancy,[1] Pentecostalism has not historically held an especially positive view of culture or, consequently, placed significant emphasis on cultural engagement. Early denominational literature, often interpreting global events with an eye to the Second Coming, demonstrates little optimism concerning the larger society.[2] And, in his analysis of Richard Niebuhr's renowned *Christ and Culture*, Andrew Walker, a scholar of Pentecostal theology, observes that "it is quite clear that all things Pentecostal would fit his rubric of 'Christ against Culture,'" noting that

1 Harvey G. Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 47.

2 For a prime example from World War I, see "The Great and Speedy Return of the Lord." *The Weekly Evangel* 184a (April 10, 1917), 1–3. Blasting those nations that battled one another, the author declares: "The nations, in God's sight, are regarded as great antagonistic world powers, who act at the instigation of Satan, and by whose authority will be terminated by the sure and certain coming of Christ."

there "have been few sociologists who have not viewed Pentecostalism and its many charismatic mutations as 'culturally denying' in some sense."[3] However, Pentecostalism's emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit has proven a remarkable driving force in its evangelistic efforts, with a zeal matched by few other Christian traditions.[4] There is good reason to believe that this vibrant pneumatology is the prime reason for the movement's rapid spread, particularly in the Global South where, as Philip Jenkins observes, "Pentecostals retain a strong supernatural orientation and are by and large far more interested in personal salvation than in radical politics."[5] Yet, Jenkins also notes that part of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement's appeal, especially among the poor and oppressed, is the deeply held conviction that the living God is active among his people. In Pentecostal churches, he observes, "There is a firm belief in God's intervention in everyday life."[6] Adherents have a faith that can be described as "otherworldly"—in the vein of the historic Pentecostal tradition, which has always heralded the soon return of Christ—yet not "escapist, since faith is expected to lead to real and observable results in the world." Though there is, within the Pentecostal ethos, a clear sense that this Spirit empowered faith ought to have an impact on one's life here and now, it seems that the movement has yet to come to a full understanding of how this same faith ought to affect social engagement "in the world" as well.[7]

The Reformed tradition, on the other hand, has often excelled in the area of cultural engagement, grounding its public theology in what has frequently been called the "cultural mandate" given to Adam and Eve Genesis 1.[8] This was a distinctive that marked out the early Protestants from the ecclesiastical establishment of their era. Unlike their Catholic counterparts, Luther, Zwingli, Bucer, and Calvin all spent the bulk of their ministries in urban contexts, and were forced to

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3 Andrew Walker, *Notes from a Wayward Son: A Miscellany*, 1st ed. (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2020), 33.

4 Cox, *Fire*, 195.

5 Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, 3rd ed., Future of Christianity Trilogy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9. Jenkins goes on to note that "Christianity grows and spreads in highly charismatic and Pentecostal forms, ecstatic religious styles that are by no means confined to classical Pentecostal denominations, but which span churches with very different origins and traditions. Pentecostal expansion across the Southern continents has been so astonishing as to justify claims of a new Reformation."

6 Jenkins, *Christendom*, 84.

7 Some within the broader Charismatic Renewal who claim the label "Pentecostal" may challenge this assertion. However, those is in view here are not primarily those from more established Christian denominations whose congregations have adopted a charismatic pneumatology via the renewal movement, but the classical Pentecostal movement. For a brief discussion concerning this distinction, see Andrew Walker, "The Charismatic Movement," in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*, eds. Ian McFarland et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 94–95.

8 James K.A. Smith, *Letters to a Young Calvinist: An Invitation to the Reformed Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010), 110.

grapple extensively with the issues that faced the laity.[9] In contrast to medieval clergy and monastics, who frequently frowned on those who pursued "secular" careers, Reformation theology affirmed with enthusiasm the notion of calling, or vocation, encouraging laypersons to serve God in such spheres as business and politics, previously regarded as unspiritual.[10] This view of culture, remarkably positive considering their strong view of human sin, was upheld by a firm commitment to the ideas encapsulated by the doctrine of common grace, defined by Wayne Grudem as "the grace of God by which he gives people innumerable blessings that are not part of salvation."[11] Common grace, he explains, "is different from saving grace in its *results* (it does not bring about salvation), in its *recipients* (it is given to believers and unbelievers alike), and in its *source*. This grace, according to Abraham Kuyper, manifests itself in the ways in "which God . . . . relaxes the curse which rests upon (his creation), arrests its process of corruption, and thus allows the untrammeled development of our life in which to glorify himself as creator."[12] Common grace is not in any sense salvific for the individual soul; its purpose, rather, is for the general blessings of the human race, its cultures, and its institutions, to the glory of God the creator. This article will argue that Pentecostalism's emphasis on the work of the Spirit uniquely positions the movement to view this ancient doctrine from a fresh perspective. Though on the surface Pentecostalism may not seem like fertile ground for the appropriation of a Reformed distinctive, its pneumatology, which prizes the Spirit's activity in the world, makes the movement a natural home for the doctrine of common grace.

Whose Reformed Theology?: Dutch Calvinism as a Key Pentecostal Conversation Partner

Before proceeding further, it will be helpful to clarify exactly which wing of the "Reformed" tradition is in view here. In its broadest sense, the word could be taken to denote a Baptist church that holds to the five points of Calvinism, a liberal mainline congregation in the Presbyterian tradition, or the relatively novel New Calvinism popular among millennials of various evangelical backgrounds.[13] While the Reformers themselves planted the seeds for the full development of the doctrine of common grace, it was the Dutch strand of Calvinism in particular

9 Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 254.
10 McGrath, *Reformation*, 254.
11 Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 1994), 657.
12 Smith, *Letters*, 98.
13 See Jamin Hubner, "The Diversity of Contemporary Reformed Theology: A New Encyclopedic Introduction with a Case Study," *Canadian-American Theological Review* 8, no. 2 (2019): 44–45. The author notes, "Clearly, the term 'reformed' is not as meaningful and/or precise as many imagine," pointing to the vast theological diversity of those who all lay claim to the label.

that articulated it most clearly and concisely, applying its relevance to the various spheres of human society.[14] Jamin Hubner, in a 2019 piece on the various strands of Reformed theology, refers to this wing of the Reformed tradition as "Neocalvinism," explaining that:

> Generally speaking, Neocalvinism is (a) Dutch Reformed theology tempered by modernism, and (b) the more direct theological and intellectual descendant of John Calvin, having sidestepped both the entrenched scholasticism of Turretin and the fundamentalism of American evangelicalism. . . . While the eschatological emphasis in Confessional Reformed theology points towards converting more people to reformed confessionalism, Neocalvinism focuses more directly on the creative development of God's kingdom and the restoration of all of creation under Christ's Lordship.[15]

Moreover, Hubner highlights several distinctives of Neocalvinism relevant to a discussion of common grace, noting it "insists on a comprehensive and integrated understanding of creation, fall and redemption," and "emphasizes God's good and dynamic order for creation."[16] Unlike some strands of Reformed theology such as, say, Calvinistic Baptists who are more combative in their approach to cultural engagement,[17] the Neocalvinist approach tends to be much more culture affirming. Thus, while the idea is not exclusive to Dutch Calvinism, when speaking of the "Reformed" doctrine of common grace, it is this tradition that will prove especially pertinent.[18]

Considering Jenkins's observation about their awareness of God's activity in every area of one's life, Pentecostals would do well to further engage with the idea of common grace through the lens of its pneumatology in order to develop a uniquely Pentecostal theology of common grace. As Pentecostalism matures and broadens, it would do well to further probe questions of engaging culture

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14 This is not to say the Dutch tradition alone owns this doctrine. As will be demonstrated, both Calvin and Edwards made lengthy statements concerning the idea of common grace. However, it was the Dutch Neocalvinist strand of Reformed theology in particular that developed the doctrine the most fully, thus making it the most important branch of the Reformed tradition for the purposes of this conversation.

15 Hubner, "Diversity," 64–65.

16 Hubner, "Diversity," 64.

17 See Hubner, "Diversity," 59. He notes here that "Calvinist Baptists seem to have a louder voice in public 'culture wars'" than many other strands of Reformed thought. Interestingly, some within this strand of Reformed thought also share some commonality with the Pentecostal movement in their dispensational eschatology —anything but a catalyst for a robust concept of common grace.

18 This will be especially true in engaging with the work of James K. A. Smith, a self-professed Pentecostal Calvinist. In the introduction to James K. A. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, Pentecostal Manifestos (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), Smith recounts the shock expressed by some acquaintances during his graduate work that a Pentecostal like him would be studying philosophy in the Dutch Reformed tradition.

and exerting influence in such spheres as science, politics, medicine, business, and other dimensions of the so-called secular realm with a view to where God may already be at work. Speaking to the church's need for a renewed approach to civic engagement, Walker makes the argument that "Christians do need to recapture a sense of civic responsibility, but by being the church again, not by attempting to become model citizens of a secular society."[19] While he clarifies that he does not wish for a "theocratic" or "Constantinian" society, neither is retreat from societal involvement —which he terms "Anabaptist retrenchment"—a proper way forward either.[20] Pentecostalism's pneumatology, the hallmark for which the movement is known, may allow it to approach these matters of civic engagement in a fresh light. While Pentecostals do have an eschatologically driven approach to faith that, in Jenkins' words, could be termed "otherworldly," their appreciation for the Spirit's activity in the here and now could enable the movement to strike this delicate balance between withdrawal from the public sphere and the inappropriate pursuit of power which has often seriously damaged the church in the past.

Moreover, it has been observed by some within the Pentecostal tradition that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has long been treated as relatively peripheral in Western theology compared to the attention afforded the Father and the Son.[21] Yet, this is hardly true of Pentecostal theological method, wherein the Spirit often serves as the starting point for reflection. In a 2011 essay exploring Pentecostal theological method and intercultural theology, Mark Cartledge observes that some within the tradition "have argued for a method of doing theology that works with a triad of sources: the text of Scripture, the community of the Church and the person of the Holy Spirit. All three sources are expected to work together in order to generate theological reflection and inform ecclesial decisions in relation to missiological praxis."[22] Pointing to the work of scholars within the Church of God (Cleveland) such as Kenneth Archer and John Christopher Thomas in particular, he explains how these three sources are understood to complement one another, noting at one point that, "The voice of the Holy Spirit is heard through the community and Scripture, and permeates the hermeneutical process." Pentecostal theologian Amos Yong, in a similar vein, argues that "Christian theological

19 Andrew Walker, *Telling the Story: Gospel, Mission and Culture* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2004), 189.

20 Walker, *Telling*, 189.

21 See Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids.: Zondervan, 2009), chapter 4, as he argues that in "Western theological heritage . . . the Spirit is implicitly expected to play a subordinate role."

22 Mark. J. Cartledge, "Pentecostal Theological Method and Intercultural Theology," in *Intercultural Theology: Approaches and Themes*, eds. Mark. J. Cartledge and David Cheetham (London: SCM, 2011), chapter 4.

reflection in a postmodern world starts with the experience of the Holy Spirit,"[23] and that, "it is time for the West to consciously resist the subordination of the (Spirit to the Word)" in this task.[24] A prime example of this approach in Yong's own work is his call for a "pneumatological theology of religions,"[25] which "allows us to ask the soteriological question within a different, and perhaps broader, framework," that is, by considering where the Spirit may be at work in religious communities outside Christianity.[26]

Through this very method that Yong employs with a theology of religions, Pentecostals are well positioned to develop their own distinct conception of common grace. If Pentecostals frequently approach the theological task itself from the vantage point of the Spirit's person and work, then it stands to reason they would do likewise with this doctrine. While Kuyper speaks of common grace as the way in which God "relaxes the curse" upon creation with the redemption of each sphere in view, Pentecostals may emphasize how the Spirit specifically accomplishes this work. A pneumatologically grounded doctrine of common grace could provide an excellent framework for conversations surrounding God's activity not just in the church, but the culture, potentially serving as a fruitful contribution to the wider Christian tradition. Questions of cultural engagement are even more crucial considering Pentecostalism's rapid global spread, as believers across diverse contexts grapple with how to engage their particular locale.

This work will focus particularly on how the doctrine of common grace could help Pentecostals better engage in the political realm, the sciences, and, in true Pentecostal form, more effective evangelism. The work of Amos Yong and James K.A. Smith, in particular, will be highlighted, the former in order to understand a

23 Amos Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002). It is worth noting that Yong's work in this volume is focused not on theological method but theological hermeneutics. Nevertheless, the core idea —that theological reflection can, and should, begin with an experience of the Holy Spirit —is still pertinent to the discussion here.

24 Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 16. See also Stephenson, Christopher Adam. "Pentecostal Theology According to the Theologians: An Introduction to the Theological Methods of Pentecostal Systematic Theologians" (Ph.D. Diss, Marquette University, 2009). The author provides an overview of Yong's theological method in the fifth chapter of this work, asserting that it is "is formed by pneumatology from first to last, a characteristic due in part to the fact that he is a member of a younger generation of Pentecostal scholars" (157).

25 Yong, *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2003), 21. Yong's theology of grace in general, also approached from a pneumatological angle, will be discusses at a later point in this article. For now, Yong's approach to developing a pneumatological theology of religions will serve as a model for the development of a pneumatological theology of common grace. It should be noted that the concept of a theology of religions in general is not a Pentecostal distinctive. Drawing on the work of Paul Tillich, it is "the attempt to understand the human ultimate concern within a theistic framework" (Yong, *Impasse*, 18).

26 See Yong, *Impasse*, 22. He argues that, since the Holy Spirit "blows where it chooses," as per John 3:8, "why would the Spirit 'blow' outside the church but not in all the religions, especially if the religions themselves are never only (or purely) the religions but are already culturally, socially, and politically informed in some way?"

classical Pentecostal response to this challenge, as well as the latter on account of his deep roots in both classical Pentecostalism and the Dutch Reformed tradition. Both have written at length on matters of science and culture, and Smith has, at times, referred to himself as a "Reformed Charismatic" or a "Pentecostal Calvinist."[27] His work reveals a deep appreciation both for Pentecostalism's dynamic pneumatology as well as the Reformed zeal for cultural influence and transformation, making him a capable conversation partner in the development of a Pentecostal theology of common grace.

An Historic Doctrine, A Contemporary Imbalance

Before bringing common grace into conversation with Pentecostal pneumatology, it will be helpful to probe more deeply into how the former has been understood in the Reformed tradition historically. Bearing in mind Kuyper's comments, God's common grace operates in every sphere of life; while not sufficient for personal salvation, it restrains evil in the human heart, endowing them with gifts and abilities for the betterment of their society, working toward the redemption of each cultural sphere for the glory of God. Perhaps the quip for which the Dutch statesmen is best known, and that which encapsulates his understanding of common grace, is that "[t]here is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: Mine!"[28] James Smith expands on Kuyper's theology of creation in his 2010 work *Letters to a Young Calvinist* by explaining that

> [e]very life-system, according to Kuyper, not only spells out how "I" can be saved but spells out an entire vision of and for the totality of human life, ultimately articulating an understanding of three "fundamental relations of all human life": our relation to God, our relation to other persons (and human flourishing in general), and humanity's relation to the natural world . . . he later emphasizes in his fourth Stone lecture, while "the Christian religion is substantially soteriological"—that is, concerned with salvation— "the object of the work of redemption is not limited to the salvation of individual sinners, but extends itself to the redemption *of the world*" (119, emphasis added), the renewal and restoration of this groaning creation (Rom. 8:18–23).[29]

27 See, for example, "Teaching a Calvinist to Dance." *Christianity Today*, May 16, 2008. https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/may/25.42.html.

28 James D. Bratt, *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 488.

29 Smith, *Letters*, 97–98. In the same volume, he chides fellow Calvinists, especially young newcomers to the Reformed tradition, who admire preachers that "spend more time bashing other Christians than they do denouncing the idolatries of our age. In fact, if these sermons and lectures are any indication, you'd think these folks see Pentecostalism as more of a danger to our souls than capitalism—or Willow Creek as more of a threat than the temptations of nationalism" (See Smith, *Letters*, 91).

Keeping in mind Kuyper's worldview, God's purposes are not constrained to individual salvation, but the broader redemption of society. The Pentecostal tradition has historically been strong on the individual, yet often neglecting societal, transformation. The goal in engaging Reformed theologians like Kuyper, then, is to consider how it may retain its emphasis on the former while developing a robust conception of the latter.

It is worth noting that, for all his contribution to the doctrine's development, the actual substance of common grace was not an invention of Kuyper's. The real roots of the concept lie in the Reformation and the rather culture affirming stance its leaders adopted.[30] John Calvin, in his landmark *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, points to Paul's Acts 17 appeal to the Athenians to argue, in essence, for the doctrine of common grace;[31] the apostle asserts to his audience that God "is not far from any one of us" and that humanity "might feel after God to find him." For Calvin, this nearness to each member of the human race, believer and unbeliever alike, pointed to the fact that every individual has "within himself undoubted evidence of the heavenly grace by which he lives, moves, and has his being."[32] This evidence is not given exclusively to followers of Christ, but even the pagan philosophers to whom Paul made his address. Calvin further points to the restraint of sin in society[33] and the gifts of intellect and artistic ability,[34] as evidences of common grace, which both prevents what is evil and actively promotes what is good. He spells this out even more clearly in a later section, addressing how a sinful individual may perform virtuous acts by explaining that such actions

> [a]re not common endowments of nature, but special gifts of God, which He distributes in diverse forms, and, in a definite measure, to men otherwise profane. For which reason, we hesitate not, in common language, to say, that one is of a good, another of a vicious nature; though we cease not to hold that both are placed under the universal

30 Recall Hubner, "Diversity," 64, and his claim that Dutch Neocalvinism is "the more direct theological and intellectual descendant of John Calvin," than Reformed fundamentalism or scholasticism. Thus, the commonality between Dutch Neocalvinism and Calvin himself on this point is not surprising.

31 For a detailed account of Calvin's doctrine of common grace, see Herman Bavinck, "Calvin and Common Grace," trans. Geerhardus Vos, *The Princeton Theological Review* 7, no. 3 (1909): 437–65.

32 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2017), 1.5.3.

33 Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.3.3.

34 See Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.2.17. Here he claims common grace expresses itself in that "some excel in acuteness, and some in judgment, while others have greater readiness in learning some peculiar art, God, by this variety commends his favour toward us. . . . For whence is it that one is more excellent than another, but that in a common nature the grace of God is specially displayed in passing by many and thus proclaiming that it is under obligation to none." Under such circumstances, he is clearly not speaking of the Lord "passing by" or electing an individual for salvation, but in granting them a particular ability during their earthly life.

> condition of human depravity. All we mean is that God has conferred on the one a special grace which He has not seen it meet to confer on the other.[35]

Calvin points to the example of King Saul over Israel as an object of this grace. This clearly implies Calvin understands one operation of this common grace is when God grants a political leader the necessary competence to fulfill their duties. Indeed, he goes on to state that "[t]he virtues which deceive us by an empty show may have their praise in civil society and the common intercourse of life, but before the judgement seat of God they will be of no value to establish a claim of righteousness."[36] So, while repudiating the idea that an individual may attain salvation through any work, they may accomplish what is praiseworthy as it concerns civic duty.

Jonathan Edwards, writing two centuries after Calvin, likewise made a distinction between God's saving grace—effectual for salvation, and granted only to the elect—and common grace, which referred to "that kind of action or influence of the Spirit of God to which are owing those religious or moral attainments that are common to both saints and sinners, and so signifies as much as common assistance."[37] While Edwards's description of common grace as "assistance" to "both saints and sinners" highlights once again how this grace is indiscriminate, note here the emphasis on the Spirit. Even the upright actions of sinners are due to the "influence of the Spirit of God." This may sound surprising to those who hold the Spirit works only through believers; not only would this position affirm that the Spirit thus blesses all of humanity for a common good, but Edwards's comment about the "religious attainments" of sinners would imply the Spirit can be at work in non-Christian faith communities, albeit non-salvifically. Indeed, his statements sounds not so different from Yong's proposal for a pneumatological theology of religions on this point. Edwards's explicit focus on the Spirit not only aligns with the essence of that which Calvin, Kuyper, and the Reformed tradition broadly understood of this doctrine, it also highlights why, and how, it may be well suited to the Pentecostal worldview as well.

The Pentecostal Connection

If one holds to common grace, it follows that they ought to look for ways in which the Spirit of God is at work in every area of life. This is a natural fit for a tradition in which theological reflection is approached from the vantage point of

35 Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.3.4.
36 Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.3.4.
37 Jonathan Edwards, *Treatise on Grace and Other Posthumously Published Writings*, ed. Paul Helm (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1971), 25.

one's experience of the Holy Spirit as Yong proposes.[38] While some within the movement may be slow to look to the Reformed tradition on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, it is worth highlighting that all three theologians from that tradition surveyed thus far give sustained attention to the Spirit's person and work. Calvin has, in the past, been labelled "The Theologian of the Holy Spirit" given how he intertwines his work within virtually every aspect of his larger system.[39] A hallmark of Edwards's theology was the place of religious experience, and as noted above, his pneumatologically grounded conception of common grace would appear to be very conductive to a development of a Pentecostal theology of the doctrine. And Kuyper himself, in his volume on pneumatology published in 1900, commends Calvin especially for how his doctrine of common grace emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit.[40]

Yong interacts with Kuyper's theology of common grace in his work *In the Days of Caesar,* quoting him favourably in regards to his political theology, ordered around the concept of multiple interacting spheres.[41] He notes that such a concept is quite compatible with the Pentecostal tradition if viewed through a distinct pneumatological lens; while Reformed theology views the triune God as active in such fields of Economics, Politics, and Culture, a distinctly Pentecostal position would emphasize particularly the work of the Holy Spirit in these realms. Reflecting on Yong's analysis, it seems that his emphasis on the Spirit's activity is just one application of Jenkins's observation that, for Pentecostals, "There is a firm belief in God's intervention in everyday life." If the Spirit of God is active in the life of the individual, does it not follow that he would be unceasingly active in a society composed of individuals? And if God himself is at work to redeem his entire creation, not just the individual soul, should not his people be concerned with this mission as well? The drive that has characterized Pentecostal evangelism would be instrumental if applied to cultural engagement and redemption as well.

Smith has likewise written extensively on public theology and common grace

38 And, again, as Cartledge has noted is characteristic of the movement (See Cartledge, "Pentecostal Theological Method," chapter 4).

39 The individual first credited with coining this phrase was conservative Reformed theologian B.B. Warfield. See Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Calvin and Calvinism*, ed. Ethelbert Dudley Warfield (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931), 374. Victor Shepherd concurs with this assessment, arguing in his discussion of Calvin and the Christian experience that "Calvin, it must always be remembered, has long had the reputation of being *the* theologian of the Holy Spirit." See Victor A. Shepherd, *A Ministry Dearer Than Life: The Pastoral Legacy of John Calvin* (Toronto: Clements, 2009), 10.

40 Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. John Hendrik De Vries (Funk & Wagnalls: New York & London, 1900), xxxiv.

41 Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology*, The Cadbury Lectures, 2009 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 82–83.

in his 2017 work, *Awaiting the King.*[42] Common grace, he writes, not only restrains sin but also sustains societal instructions, not the least of which is the state.[43] In light of the reign of Jesus Christ, which has already been inaugurated, believers ought to conduct themselves with confidence as they engage their society, recognizing the presence of God as active in his world. Thus, while the church must not neglect the salvation of individuals, he argues, Christians are also called to work toward the flourishing of the culture itself.[44] Granted, some Pentecostals may be skeptical of Smith's approach; given their apocalyptic eschatology, many might conclude that the culture itself is simply not salvageable, and that in light of Christ's soon return it would be best to focus on the salvation of individuals. Yet, it would not only be short-sighted to reject Smith's approach outright, but it would not even be consistent with the entirety of historic Pentecostalism. Despite the heavy influence of dispensationalism—which typically relegated the reign of Christ to a future millennial age—within the movement, some early Pentecostal leaders identified the church itself with the Kingdom of God. Myer Pearlman, for example, claims that "the church age is a phase of the kingdom,"[45] in contrast to the pessimistic outlook concerning church and culture typical of old school dispensational thought. He describes Colossians 4 as "Paul's description of Christian work as being in the sphere of God's kingdom"—terminology one could mistake for that of Kuyper and his Dutch Reformed understanding of the world. Perhaps, then, the potential to develop a Pentecostal theology of common grace has existed from the movement's very beginning.

Beyond Christendom: Pentecostalism and the Political Sphere

Given the bloodshed and division that has characterized much Christian involvement with the state over the past 2,000 years, many believers may be hesitant to support the Church's involvement with politics. Non-Christians, all too aware of the Church's frequent abuse of political and cultural power in the past, may well be hesitant to trust professing Christians with such power in the present and future. Yet, the Bible itself refers to the brutal Roman authorities as "God's servant,'" demonstrating his ability to work through even the most depraved of humanity on occasion (Rom 13:4).[46] Smith argues that, while Christians may be conditioned to see "secular" spheres such as government in a negative light—and sometimes with good reason given the corruption that frequently characterizes them—believers

42 James K.A. Smith, *Awaiting the King: Reforming Public Theology*. Cultural Liturgies, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017).
43 Smith, *Awaiting*, 97.
44 Smith, *Awaiting*, 22.
45 Myer Pearlman, *Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible* (Springfield: Gospel, 1937), 351.
46 Recall John Calvin's previously mentioned comments concerning the common grace afforded unregenerate political officials; see Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.3.4.

ought to see them as a gift, a structure ordained and upheld by God.[47] In his work on Pentecostalism and philosophy, creatively entitled *Thinking in Tongues*, Smith notes that much fruit has been borne out of the church's influence in Western politics, not the least of which is the concept of liberal democracy itself. The Pentecostal view of the Spirit's involvement in the world should naturally produce a robust theology of culture, he argues, including in the political arena. "Pentecostal spirituality, we've noted, is bound up with an expectation that the Spirit operates *within* the created order," Smith claims, and that beyond ecclesiology, "implicit in Pentecostal theology is also a unique theology of creation and culture."[48] Aware of its skepticism of culture, yet optimistic concerning the potential the Pentecostal worldview holds, Smith explains:

> Even though Pentecostals have often accepted such dualistic rejections of "the world," a core element of the Pentecostal worldview—the affirmation of bodily healing—actually deconstructs such dualism. One of the concomitant effects of this should be a broader affirmation of the goodness of embodiment and materiality, and therefore an affirmation of the fundamental goodness of spheres of culture related to embodiment.[49]

Thus, in Smith's view, on account of this "affirmation of the goodness of embodiment"—inherent in one of its core distinctives—Pentecostals are well positioned to develop a more robust theology of the Spirit's work in culture. "including," he charges, "the spheres of politics, commerce and the arts." [50] Smith's language, in discussing the Pentecostal worldview, is quite similar to the manner in which Calvin speaks of common grace, or how Kuyper outlines his doctrine of "sphere sovereignty." Recall once again how Edwards defines common grace as "influence of the Spirit of God to which are owing those religious or moral attainments that are common to both saints and sinners, and so signifies as much as common assistance."[51] Surely political involvement would fall under this definition as much as any sphere. Moreover, if Smith's observation that Pentecostalism understands human culture to be "charged with the presence of the Spirit,"[52] a more fully developed Pentecostal theology of common grace would be well positioned to inform Christian political engagement.

This application may be timely given the increasing influence secularism

47 Smith, *Awaiting*, 96.
48 James K.A. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, Pentecostal Manifestos (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 38–39.
49 Smith, *Thinking*, 41.
50 Smith, *Thinking*, 39.
51 Edwards, *Treatise*, 25.
52 Smith, *Thinking*, 39.

enjoys in the West. Certainly, some conceptions of "Christendom" must be emphatically rejected, those that would suppress the religious freedom of others or endorse coercion in spreading the faith. Yet, Smith's vision of Christendom as articulated in his work on public theology, *Awaiting the King*, is rather "a *missional* endeavor that labors in the hope that our political institutions can be bent, if ever so slightly, towards the coming kingdom of love."[53] This involves not just the redemption of individuals involved in the institution, but the institution itself. Recall his earlier charge that the Pentecostal worldview is "charged with the presence of the Spirit." If the biblical assertion that government is a divinely ordained institution were infused with the understanding that the Spirit is continually active in the world, this movement could be uniquely positioned to influence the political landscape of a society skeptical of old school Christendom yet still open to the "coming kingdom of love" of which Smith speaks. A fresh perspective on common grace that grants more explicit attention to the Spirit's presence within the existing structure means that believers may work within the established system to redeem it, rather than impose a structure of Christendom by way of force, as in the days of premodern Europe, for example.

Recall that globally, Pentecostalism has made some of its greatest inroads among the marginalized and impoverished.[54] With a history of challenging the ecclesiastical establishment, a Pentecostal theology of common grace might uniquely enable the movement to approach politics from a strongly prophetic standpoint. Yong complements Smith's public theology by noting that, while Pentecostalism may have branded itself as apolitical in times past, its critique of established structures has actually served as a prophetic type of political action itself.[55] In a 2019 volume co-edited by Yong and Steven Studebaker, Edmund J. Rybarczyk draws on the likes of Kuyper and Edwards to inform a Pentecostal theology of church and culture, explaining:

> For its part the Reformed tradition is renowned for embracing the cultural mandate (Gen. 1:28-30). God, per Abraham Kuyper, even gives common grace to facilitate culture-making and the common good. The Reformed tradition recognizes that making culture, or even Christianizing culture (considering the Puritan enterprise), is an important way to be salt and light, and to obey Christ's commandment to make disciples of the nations. Specifically, because he was amazingly attuned to beauty's existence—particularly such that beauty is

53 Smith, *Awaiting*, preface.
54 See Cox, *Fire*, for example, as the author includes a respective chapter on the movement's growth in Latin American, Africa, and the Asian Rim.
55 Yong, *Caesar*, 11.

> rooted in the Holy Spirit—Jonathan Edwards may serve as a fitting interlocutor for Pentecostals' aesthetic consideration.[56]

One may already observe past examples of Pentecostals realizing how conductive their own ethos can be to a prophetically oriented theology of church and culture. Yong highlights the opposition of Nicaraguan Pentecostals to the oppressive regime of the Sandinistas, voicing their disapproval of its Communist ideology.[57] Moreover, it might surprise many Canadian and British Pentecostals to learn that in the early twentieth century, adherents of their movement were fierce critics of militarism and nationalism, willing to critique their Empire when few others would.[58] What kind of potential could Pentecostalism hold, then, if it were to take this type of action not simply to oppose existing structures and ideologies but to actively promote Christian values within those existing structures? If the Spirit of God is at work in all spheres of life, it follows that common grace will be present in areas such as finance and education, constant grounds for debate in the political arena. As their brethren have previously spoken out against communist governments, Pentecostals who enjoy the benefits of liberal democracy may do well to speak out in favour of sound fiscal and education policies that benefit the poor and contribute toward a stable economy for all its citizens.[59] Those in politically powerful nations might leverage their political capital to influence foreign policy toward a more compassionate stance regarding those which are impoverished or war-torn.[60] While no government in the present age can ever be fully Christian, common grace already present in the political realm through the working of the Spirit should embolden believers toward redeeming the structure despite its fallen character; a point at which the prophetic voice so characteristic of Pentecostalism could be of even greater value.

This is My Father's World: Common Grace, the Spirit and the Sciences

A professor of mathematics and a pastoral advisor at the University of Oxford, John Lennox makes the charges that "Science—far from making God redundant and

56 Edmund J. Rybarczyk, "Edwards and Aesthetics: A Critical and Constructive Pentecostal Appropriation," in *Pentecostal Theology and Jonathan Edwards*, T&T Clark Systematic Pentecostal and Charismatic Theology Series, eds. Amos Yong and Steven M Studebaker (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 181.

57 Yong, *Caesar*, 12.

58 See Murray W. Dempster, "The Canada—Britain–USA Triad: Canadian Pentecostal Pacifism in WWI and WWII," *Canadian Journal of Pentecostal–Charismatic Christianity* 4 (2013): 1–26.

59 Steven M. Studebaker, *A Pentecostal Political Theology for American Renewal: Spirit of the Kingdoms, Citizens of the Cities*, Christianity and Renewal-Interdisciplinary Studies (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 254.

60 Studebaker, *Political Theology*, 225–26.

irrelevant, as atheists often affirm—actually confirms his existence."[61] Unfortunately, in a tragic twist, it has become commonplace within contemporary Christendom to pit science and religion against one another, with the assumption that placing confidence in one precludes real interest in the other. Not only is this a false dilemma, but it also betrays an appallingly weak theology of general revelation.[62] It also fails to consider how the Spirit may be at work in the scientific world, exerting his common grace for the betterment of society in this sphere.[63] Yong's theological method proves helpful again on this point; in his 2012 monograph on grace, he approaches his subject by claiming that, "starting with the Spirit contributes to a more fully and robustly trinitarian theology which also adjusts our doctrines of creation in an eschatological dimension."[64] If it is indeed the case that approaching the doctrine of grace with the Spirit as a starting point "adjusts our doctrine of creation," it is inevitable that a Pentecostal theology of common grace would expect to see the Spirit at work throughout the sciences, and in the work of those who study creation as a vocation.

In contrast to those who would pit science and religion against one another, Smith and Yong present a compelling case for Pentecostal engagement with the sciences, noting that this sphere displays the glory of God in that he is the creator and redeemer of the natural world, and is another example of his common grace.[65] Once again, it is worth bearing in mind Smith's argument that implicit in

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61 John C. Lennox, *Seven Days That Divide the World: The Beginning According to Genesis and Science* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 13.

62 Telford Work, "What Have the Galapagos to Do with Jerusalem? Scientific Knowledge in Theological Context," in *Science and the Spirit: A Pentecostal Engagement with the Sciences*, eds. James K.A. Smith and Amos Yong (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 21–23.

63 See Jason Byassee, *Surprised by Jesus Again: Reading the Bible in Communion with the Saints* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 165, for a discussion of how Augustine acknowledged that even unbelievers, merely on the basis of "reason and experience" could know something of the created world. He quotes Augustine as noting that while he could observe some Christians "presumably giving the meaning of Holy Scriptures, talking nonsense on these topics," the unregenerate could often display a decent grasp of them. Although Byassee's discussion here is not centred on the idea of common grace, his discussion raises the question of how unbelievers could display more competence in the realm of science than many believers, and whether common grace could be implied in Augustine's thought here.

64 Amos Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012), preface.

65 For a Q&A with Smith on the topic of Pentecostalism and the Sciences, see Myrna Anderson, "Q&A with Jamie Smith on Pentecostalism," *Calvin University*, September 17, 2010, https://calvin.edu/news/archive/q-a-with-jamie-smith-on-pentecostalism, accessed June 22, 2020. Of his and Yong's book on Pentecostalism and the Sciences, Smith asserts, "Both science and Pentecostalism are 'globalizing' forces, and while one might expect there to be an inherent tension between the two, we try to show otherwise. . . . on the one hand, we wanted to show how and why Pentecostals should engage and pursue science; on the other hand, we also wanted to show that sometimes scientists try to smuggle in assumptions about science that would seem to preclude certain Pentecostal beliefs, such as belief in divine healing or the realities of demons. So the book's not just about getting Pentecostals to submit to the unquestioned authority of science. We're also encouraging Pentecostals to think critically about some of the assumptions in the sciences."

Pentecostal spirituality is the concept that all of creation is "charged with the presence of the Spirit."[66] Indeed, the Scriptures themselves describe the Spirit of God as present in the very creation of the natural world (Gen 1:1). This indicates, then, that what is learned from its study is not strictly the result of human reason but also of natural revelation. While most orthodox Christians would likely agree on such principles, Smith also asserts that Pentecostalism is uniquely positioned to critique certain biases in the scientific community. Claims that divine revelation, tongues, miracles, or bodily resurrection cannot occur are philosophical claims, borne out of a rationalistic worldview, not empirically demonstrated fact.[67] Such claims cannot be tested; they are, rather, a matter of experience. This raises an interesting point, namely, that Pentecostals are often accused of erring in constructing a worldview on the shaky foundation of experience. Yet, is it not also a mistake to construct a worldview without reference to experience? Science's failure to discover consistent patterns of miracles does not disprove their existence, but rather suggests they are rare—not unlike in the Scriptures themselves.[68] Moreover, if put to the test, the lack of empirical, scientific explanations for their occurrence may well help confirm the Pentecostal testimony.

Elsewhere Amos Yong notes that the birth of the Pentecostal movement in the early 20th century took place around the same time as the fundamentalist/modernist divide over the role of science occurred.[69] Pentecostals, siding with the fundamentalists, unfortunately, developed a deep suspicion of academia that lingers in the movement to this day. Yet, as Telford Work — contributing to Smith and Yong's volume on Pentecostalism and the Sciences —suggests, there is a viable path to shake this reputation, as Pentecostal spirituality uniquely helps explain those things for which science cannot account.[70] What medical technology fails to remedy, divine healing may accomplish perfectly. Where naturalistic discourse fails to satisfy the soul, charismatic gifts such as tongues and prophecy signify a deeper connection with reality than a strictly secular worldview could afford. The reason for this is that both science and theology study God's revelation of himself; they simply do so through different means of revelation. The former studies what God has revealed about himself through his creation, the latter through is written word.[71] Thus, while the Pentecostal openness to that which lies beyond the natural realm may appear opposed to scientific inquiry on the surface, it does not

66 Smith, *Thinking,* 40.
67 James K. A. Smith, "Is There Room for Surprise in the Natural World? Naturalism, the Supernatural, and Pentecostal Spirituality," in Smith and Yong, *Science*, 39.
68 Work, "Galapagos," 29.
69 Amos Yong, *The Spirit of Creation: Modern Science and Divine Action in the Pentecostal-Charismatic Imagination*. Pentecostal Manifestos (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 2.
70 Work, "Galapagos," 19.
71 Work, "Galapagos," 27.

necessarily need to be. On the contrary, when analyzed more carefully, it appears that one beautifully complements the other, one reflecting God's common grace and another his redeeming grace.

In addition, while the "enchanted" Pentecostal worldview may provide a fitting complement to the technological and scientific advances of the past century,[72] the development of a distinctly Pentecostal doctrine of common grace may help believers see such developments themselves as a work of the Spirit.[73] Charging that Pentecostal theology, rightly understood, should inform and strengthen scientific inquiry rather than diminish it, Yong explains:

> A Pentecostal pneumatological theology of divine action would understand the work of the Holy Spirit as bringing about the coming reign of God in the present age. it would hence be a language of faith that need not displace scientific explanations, even while such a discourse may potentially inform the presuppositions of scientific research, contribute to the formulation of scientific hypotheses, and shape scientific interpretations.[74]

Recall Calvin's assertion that common grace is expressed through the exercise of abilities that "[a]re not common endowments of nature, but special gifts of God, which He distributes in diverse forms, and, in a definite measure, to men otherwise profane,"[75] and then consider Yong's proposal that the activity of the Spirit might "inform the presuppositions of scientific research, contribute to the formulation of scientific hypotheses." By placing this understanding of the Spirit's work in the sciences in dialogue with Calvin's position that even "profane" individuals may be especially gifted by the common grace of God in a certain area, one now has the framework to construct a Pentecostal theology of common grace that views scientific discoveries and technological advances as a direct result of the Spirit's activity in the world—even in a sphere often derided as overly "secular" by its detractors. Not only would this perspective be a markedly positive shift for Pentecostalism; it may also help Christians from a variety of traditions consider afresh how God may be at work in the scientific disciplines.

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72 Work, "Galapagos," 27.

73 See Walker, *Wayward*, 43. Walker notes that "Pentecostals have been open to modern technologies, advertising, and management techniques," and thus have had "far more at home with mass media and consumer culture than many of their mainline counterparts." Yet, despite this observation, it is worth noting that there is little in the way of a Pentecostal theology of technology itself.

74 Amos Yong, "How Does God Do What God Does? Pentecostal-Charismatic Perspectives on Divine Action in Dialogue with Modern Science," in Smith and Yong, *Science*, 62.

75 Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.3.4.

Common Grace, Evangelism, and Cultural Engagement

While Pentecostalism has not historically been strong on cultural engagement, its zeal for mission has been unparalleled since its birth. This is one area where the culturally savvy Calvinist wing of the church has often been criticized, doubtless in part due to its doctrine of election, but also the cessationist pneumatology of many within the tradition.[76] Perhaps the contemporary church—Pentecostals in particular—would do well to draw on the strength of both wings of the church in order to sharpen its effectiveness in global missions. One reason this will be crucial moving forward has been briefly alluded to: the spread of Pentecostalism in traditionally non-Christian areas of the globe. While it may be easy for Western Christians to neglect the public sphere, inculcated with the notion that the religious/private and public spheres must remain separate, the challenge is much more complex outside the boundaries of historic Christendom. Yong is particularly helpful here, reminding believers that global Pentecostalism is not traditional, homogenous, and Americanized, but quite diverse and even pluralistic in a sense.[77] And, as Pentecostals navigate how to evangelize these contexts while simultaneously considering how to reach a new generation in North America and Europe—both with deep Christian roots and a secularizing populace—it would be wise to bear in mind Kuyper's conviction that "redemption is not limited to the salvation of individual sinners, but extends itself to the redemption of the world."[78] Pentecostal evangelism would indeed only be empowered by the development and application of a Spirit-filled theology of common grace that expanded the movement's passion for the salvation of souls to entire societies.

In Singapore, for example, some Pentecostals have recognized great potential for cultural engagement in a cosmopolitan, diverse metropolis with little gospel witness. Though Christians in the region have been labelled as aliens to the culture, the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement's rapid growth has been noted for its evangelistic zeal—not unlike the New Testament church.[79] Yet, the virtue of tolerance reigns supreme in Singapore, embedded in the culture and credited with sustaining the multi-faith, multi-ethnic harmony.[80] Perhaps in part due to this, evangelicals in the tiny nation have proven hesitant to engage in interfaith dialogue.[81] Could the Pentecostal adaptation of the Reformed doctrine of common

76 See Derrick Mashau, "John Calvin's Theology of the Charismata: Its Influence on the Reformed Confessions and Its Implications for the Church's Mission," *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Mission Studies* 36, no. 1 (2008): 86–97.
77 Yong, *Days,* 37
78 Bratt, *Kuyper*, 488.
79 MayLing Tan-Chow, *Pentecostal Theology for the Twenty-First Century: Engaging with Multi-Faith Singapore*. Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology, and Biblical Studies (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 15–16.
80 Tan-Chow, *Pentecostal Theology*, 13.
81 Tan-Chow, *Pentecostal Theology*, 21.

grace speak to this tension, allowing believers to recognize the virtue in their society, including other religions, while maintaining its zeal for the exclusivity of the gospel? A Pentecostal public theology, in order to be relevant there, must recognize the common grace of God at work in the fields of business, education, economics, and every other sphere of life, all of which may be redeemed for the extension of God's kingdom.

To be sure, Pentecostalism will need to be careful to guard against the dangers of syncretism while looking for signs of common grace in other religious—or even secular—circles. Yong himself notes in his work on a theology of religions, "there is always a fine line between contextualization and syncretism," yet goes on to argue that "this line needs to be recognized as a dynamic one, to be renegotiated at every turn as Christians encounter religious others."[82] While Yong may be correct that, at times, this line may indeed need to be "renegotiated," Pentecostals would do well to be aware of the syncretistic tendencies that have arisen in some segments of their global movement. Wolfgang Vondey, in a 2010 monograph on global Christianity notes that some segments of "Global Pentecostalism" allow for "the ritual, even sacramental, use of glossolalia, prophecies, healing, dreams, and visions, patterned after spiritual practices, on the one hand, and the indigenous, spiritual beliefs and practices that seem to border on syncretism, on the other hand."[83] Harvey Cox, though not an insider to the movement like Vondey, has also noted the tendency of some Pentecostal communities to integrate traditional religious beliefs into their form of Christianity. "Pentecostals," he observes, "often succeed in being highly syncretistic while their leaders preach against syncretism"[84]

Certainly, it must be acknowledged that, in every corner of the globe, Christianity will inevitably reflect its surrounding culture to one degree or another;[85] Pentecostalism will be, and should be, no exception. Thus, the charge of syncretism should never be levelled lightly. That said, it must be kept in mind that, in the Reformed tradition, common grace is not salvific. Thus, even if classical Pentecostals were to grant that the Spirit bestows his common grace by working within clearly syncretistic movements, outside of orthodoxy, they must be careful not to

82 Yong, *Impasse*, 19.

83 Wolfgang Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism: The Crisis of Global Christianity and the Renewal of the Theological Agenda*. Pentecostal Manifestos (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 195.

84 See Cox, *Fire,* 246–47.

85 See for example Vince L. Bantu, *A Multitude of All Peoples: Engaging Ancient Christianity's Global Identity*, Missiological Engagements (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2020), 219. "All theology," he charges, "is contextual; it is impossible to interpret the Scriptures or speak about God apart from one's historical-cultural context. Yet the common assumption is that theological and ministerial production emerging from the dominant white culture should be seen as normative, free from the situatedness of cultural specificity." Thus, when surveying the global Pentecostal movement, Western adherents would do well to bear this in mind before immediately assuming a resemblance to traditional spirituality at any point is necessarily evidence of syncretism.

shift toward affirming the salvation of its adherents. If, at any point, any supposed formulation of common grace adopts the position that the Spirit's work among other religious communities is sufficient for salvation, it is no longer a theology of common grace at all.

This does not mean, however, that the Spirit of God may not already be at work within non-Christian religious circles. Amos Yong speaks to this issue as well in *Beyond the Impasse*, noting that while some segments of the church have demonstrated "undue optimism with regard to common grace," others have displayed "an undue pessimism with regard to theological anthropology.'[86] His solution? A more pneumatologically robust theology of religions, committed to recognize where the Spirit of God may already be at work in various non-Christian faith communities, which may provide a model for a Pentecostal understanding of common grace. Indeed, though Yong does not explicitly propose a pneumatologically grounded theology of common grace in this context, it does seem inherent in his proposed theology of religions. This understanding of the Spirit's work in non-Christian religions, he claims,

> [o]nly asserts what has long been affirmed by the traditional doctrine of common grace: that human life and experience is dependent only on the prevenient presence and activity of the Spirit of God, and that this should put us on the alerts for possible experiences of the Spirit and alternative specifications of the pneumatological imagination outside of explicitly PC or even Christian contexts.[87]

Yong also discusses this concept in a later work, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, in which he encourages his readers "to discern the Spirit in the world of the religions," looking for evidence of his activity in Islamic, Buddhist, and Hindu contexts where 'there may be essential elements . . . that are not contradictory to the fruits of the Spirit and the marks of his kingdom.'[88]

On the one hand, it is imperative that the concept of common grace at work in society, particularly among other religious communities, is not articulated in such a way as to be detrimental either to the Pentecostal zeal for mission or the doctrine of Christ's exclusivity. Having said that, given that Pentecostalism—and indeed the evangelical tradition broadly—has traditionally been skeptical of the concept of divine activity in other religions out of a fear of syncretism or doctrinal compromise, a pneumatologically driven doctrine of common grace could greatly help the movement in its missional endeavor. Consider, once again, the traditional

86 Yong, *Impasse*, 21.
87 Yong, *Impasse*, 79.
88 Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 255.

Reformed understanding, and how it may enrich Yong's pneumatological theology of religions (and vice-versa). If Calvin was right that common grace is bestowed on the believer and nonbeliever alike in the form of intellect and artistic ability; if Kuyper's claim about God's sovereignty over every sphere of creation is accurate; and if Edwards was correct in claiming that the "moral and religious" accomplishments even of the sinner is due to the gracious assistance of God; then what Yong advocates is simply a logical conclusion. A Spirit driven theology of common grace would allow Pentecostals to celebrate some achievements of non-Christian religious communities as a work of God, while providing further encouragement toward taking the gospel to such communities with confidence that the Spirit is already at work among them.

In short, while recognizing the truth present in other religions, Pentecostals must not react by immediately affirming the salvation of adherents or uncritically embracing syncretistic tendencies. Yet, it would also be a profound mistake to overlook the truth and beauty present in a community simply because it has not yet accepted the Christian gospel. Rather, they would do well to understand that the virtue in such communities is a direct result of the Spirit's work, and that the same Spirit is also working to open their hearts to receive the good news of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

It seems that if the Pentecostal movement, with its evangelistic passion, could adopt the Reformed doctrine of common grace and infuse it with its distinctive pneumatology, the benefits could be remarkable—not just for their own movement but Christendom on the whole. Does anyone doubt that a public theology that emphasizes the dynamic empowerment of the Spirit—not only to reach the broken individual but to speak to the wider culture—would make a dramatic, tangible impact on behalf of the Kingdom of God? These two traditions, while undeniably quite distinct from one another, would do well to learn from one another on this matter: the Reformed from the Pentecostals on the dynamic work of the Spirit and the near obsessive passion for evangelism and mission, and the Pentecostals from the Reformed in engaging, rather than avoiding, thoughtful cultural engagement. Recognizing God's common grace in ones' societal context, could indeed go a long way toward accomplishing this goal.

Providence and Probability[1]

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Abstract

Divine providence is an important topic in Christian theology and piety. However, there is much misunderstanding. Many people, partly because of the nature of normal cognitive processing, view creation and God's interaction with it using a simple "cause and effect" model; this often leads to confusion and inconsistency. The reality is that almost all processes in the world involve multiple interacting factors, including random ones. Consequently, creation is best understood using the mathematical tool of probability. Furthermore, many biblical texts suggest that randomness and complexity are part of God's good creation. In this paper I review probability theory and mathematical randomness, then discuss common errors in human judgment. I consider randomness and probability in Christian theology and discuss varying views of providence. Divine providence and probability theory are considered compatible. I propose that probability theory is a helpful tool for Christianity; if understood and employed with humility, wisdom, and discernment, it can improve our judgments and inform our pastoral care.

Canada recently had an election. The outcome was determined by a majority of individuals voting for a party leader. Political forecasters used statistical analysis, including probability theory, to predict the result. Many Christians voted and prayed for divine guidance, using the electoral system while simultaneously stating that the outcome is "in God's hands." Of course, after the fact, many claimed that God's will was done. Much of daily life, because it involves multiple unpredictable factors, is best described in terms of probability rather than certainty. This includes both the natural and the social world; all of God's creation. Weather forecasters tell us there is a 60% chance of rain, surgeons tell us there is a 99% chance

1 This article is related to E. Janet Warren's recently published book *All Things Wise and Wonderful: A Christian Understanding of How and Why Things Happen, in Light of COVID-19* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2021). She would like to thank the editors and reviews of *CATR*, as well as Christian Barrigar for his feedback on a draft of this article.

our surgery will succeed, and farmers scatter seeds in random patterns knowing that only some will sprout. We play games using probabilities, such as dice and coin flips. Even biblical characters "cast lots."

Yet, often Christians discuss God's will and action in their lives in terms of certainty, denying any possibility of coincidence or randomness. People confidently claim: "It's up to God if my crops succeed," "God answered my prayer for sunshine at my party," "God blessed me with a baby." We make retrospective judgments, broad generalizations, and focus on positive outcomes. We fail to distinguish between the mundane ("God told me what socks to wear today") and the miraculous ("God healed my cancer"). Even those who speak less confidently are often inconsistent, appealing to the mystery of providence. I suggest that a better understanding of the complex and probabilistic nature of the world can inform our understanding of divine providence, our discernment of divine action, and can foster spiritual growth.

Of course, mathematics and theology have different languages, methods, aims, and categories of knowledge. Nevertheless, the world reflects its Creator, if imperfectly, and we are called to understand it and image God as best we can. Scientist-theologian John Polkinghorne famously claims that "epistemology models ontology"; what we know of the world approximates what it actually is.[2] Statistics can therefore be viewed as a tool for acquiring knowledge about the created order. In this article, I first review the science of probability and randomness, and human difficulties in judging event causation. Then I review probability and randomness in the Bible, and theological concepts and models of providence. Finally, I propose some pastoral applications from this research.

Probability and Randomness in the World, and Human Perception of it

Creation, although often delightful, is complex. Much of the natural and social world involves dynamic processes characterized by multiple interacting factors, self-organization, self-perpetuation, and emergence of new processes that are irreducible to their substrates.[3] Causation is dispositional, often redundant, and

2 E.g., Polkinghorne, *Exploring Reality* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005): 34.

3 Much of this has been discussed within the framework of chaos-complexity theory. Reductionism, characteristic of classic science, is no longer considered valid, and much remains unknown in all aspects of science. E.g., Ian Stewart, *Does God Play Dice? The New Mathematics of Chaos*. 2nd ed. (New York, London: Penguin, 1997); John Polkinghorne *Quarks, Chaos and Christianity,* 2nd ed. (New York: Crossroad, 2005); Leonard Smith, *Chaos: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); R.J. Russell, *Cosmology: From Alpha to Omega.* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008); Len Fisher, *The Perfect Swarm: The Science of Complexity in Everyday Life* (New York: Basic, 2009); Peter M. Hoffman, *Life's Ratchet: How Molecular Machines Extract Order from Chaos* (New York: Basic, 2012); Nancy Cartwright and Keith Ward, eds., *Re-thinking Order after the Laws of Nature* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).

includes bottom-up as well as top-down processes. Many systems involve random processes, providing flexibility and multiple potentialities that enrich the world. There are many levels of reality that are self-sustaining, and do not require meticulous divine oversight. Processes and events in our complex world are best understood through statistical theory, but human cognitive processes are not well equipped to easily understand this science. We examine these two factors in turn.

Statistics, Probability, and Randomness

Like it or not, we are surrounded by numbers in our daily lives: costs, rates, sizes, frequencies, and risks. Statistics, a branch of mathematics, is the practice of collecting and analyzing numerical data in large quantities.[4] It can be descriptive (mere observations) or inferential—drawing conclusions about a large group from a smaller but representative sample of that group. Observations can be used to make predictions or develop theories to explain data. Statistics is sometimes known as a theory of ignorance because it is used when we lack knowledge, especially about causation. It quantifies some aspects of reality and attempts to measure uncertainty.

One important aspect of statistical analysis is sample size. The so-called law of large numbers states that as the number of trials (or randomly generated instances) increases, its average outcome approaches the theoretical mean or expected value. In other words, the more information collected, the more accurate our knowledge. A coin toss may show heads five times in a row, but after 100 or more tosses, heads and tails will be equal. Of course, exceptions and outliers are also important, but we need to be very careful in making conclusions from exceptional cases.[5] Furthermore, the larger the sample size, the higher the probability of strange things happening.[6]

Another important concept is rate: a measurement of one value for a variable in relation to another, usually larger, measured quantity. For example, the birth rate in Canada in 2018 was 10.1 live births per 1000 population.[7] The base rate, or

4 Statistical concepts have been around since about 500 BCE, but their contemporary form is often attributed to John Graunt, whose 1662 study of mortality patterns in London led to life tables. E.g., StatSoft, Inc. *Electronic Statistics Textbook* (Tulsa, OK: StatSoft, 2013), http://www.statsoft.com/textbook/; Barbara Illowsky and Susan Dean, *Introductory Statistics* (Houston, TX: OpenStax, 2013), https://openstax.org/books/introductory-statistics; Stephanie Deviant, *The Practically Cheating Statistics Handbook*: *The Sequel* (ebook, 2019), https://agomedia.press/med-16066/B007OWPFDE, https://www.statisticshowto.datasciencecentral.com/

5 Points made by Nicholas Nassim Taleb, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*. 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, 2010).

6 As mathematicians Diaconis and Mosteller conclude, "There are 7.6 Billion people on Planet Earth. Strange things are bound to happen once in a while." P. Diaconis and F. Mosteller, "Methods of Studying Coincidences," *Journal of the American. Statistical. Association* 84 (1989): 853–61.

7 Statistics Canada, "Crude Birth Rate." Table 13-10-0418-01; https://doi.org/10.25318/1310041801-eng

prior probability, describes the usual occurrence of an event, and is sometimes described in terms of "odds." This is important because one cannot evaluate causation without knowing the probability of something happening before a change occurred.

This leads us to mathematical probability, which applies to events that have uncertainty (actually most of life!), and is measured by the ratio of favorable cases to the total number of cases.[8] This is usually expressed as a number between 0 and 1, a percentage, or an odds ratio. Probabilities are a way of expressing ignorance, taming unpredictability, or quantifying uncertainty. They allow us to make decisions about individual occurrences based on knowledge of large numbers, or group behavior. For example, automobile manufacturers know the typical life span of an engine and offer guarantees based on this information. Probabilities only give information about groups, not individuals; for example, we can know human life expectancy in a particular location and time period, but we cannot know the life expectancy of a particular individual (this is a good thing). Epidemiologists commonly use 2x2 tables to help understand and predict disease causation, or evaluate the effectiveness of tests.[9] Probabilities are often surprising, as in the "birthday problem": If there are 41 people in a room, there is a 90% probability that two of them will share a birthday (date and month, not year). This is easier to understand if one considers that there are actually 820 pairs of people in the room.

Another important issue is whether probabilities are independent or dependent. In a coin toss, the outcome of each event is independent of previous ones. In this case, probabilities can be multiplied; e.g., the chance that a coin lands "tails" is 50%; and that it lands "tails" twice in a row is 25% (0.5 x 0.5). Note that the probability is still 50% for each subsequent toss (this often leads to confusion, for example, when a woman has three sons in a row—the probability of her fourth child being a boy is still 50%). However, in many events involving interacting factors, the calculation is more complex. Agent intervention changes probabilities, and calculations change and improve as we acquire more knowledge. What we do on one occasion may depend on what we did on a previous one. We assume

8 E.g., Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); J. S. Rosenthal, *Struck by Lightning: The Curious World of Probabilities* (Toronto: Harper Perennial, 2005); Peter Coles, *From Cosmos to Chaos: The Science of Unpredictability* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

9 E.g., A.G. Dean, K. M. Sullivan, and M. M. Soe, *OpenEpi: Open Source Epidemiologic Statistics for Public Health*, www.OpenEpi.com, updated 2013/04/06; Phyllis McKay Illari, Federica Russo, and Jon Williamson, "Why look at Causality in the Sciences? A manifesto," in Illari, Russo, and Williamson (eds.) *Causality in the Sciences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 3–22; Peter Rabins, *The Why of Things: Causality in Science, Medicine, and Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); Sara E. Gorman and Jack M. Gorman, *Denying to the Grave: Why We Ignore the Facts That Will Save Us* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

people learn from mistakes and change their behavior. Our probability calculations will change and improve as we acquire more knowledge.[10]

Although we place more weight on occurrences with higher probabilities, we should not always reject those with low probabilities.[11] Rare events can be meaningful; for example, credit card companies will notice unusual spending and alert owners to possible fraud. These can sometimes clump together—shark attacks, or receiving three party invitations one weekend, and none the next.[12] But we should take care in overinterpreting these. They are not all that surprising, given the law of large numbers. Coincidences are similar to low-probability events, but the term is used more when new meaning is ascribed to the occurrence and/or cause cannot be determined. Accidents can be considered an unhappy form of coincidence.

If probability is difficult to understand, its relative, randomness, is even more so. It describes occurrences that lack a pattern of organization or a discernible cause and are thus unpredictable. Although "chance" and "randomness" are often used interchangeably, the term randomness is more precise. Ontological (intrinsic) randomness, sometimes called "pure chance," claims that randomness is inherent in some aspects of reality. This occurs at the quantum level, the prototypical example being radioactive decay. The position and velocity of subatomic particles cannot be known simultaneously; they spin in a superimposed state with a 50% chance of being either "up" or "down."[13] Such particles nonetheless yield stability at visible levels. Epistemological (apparent) randomness states that randomness is only perceptual, a result of our lack of knowledge, much of which is unobtainable. Classic examples include the roll of a die, the weather, and most biological processes, such as illnesses, all of which are dependent on so many causal factors interacting over space and time that detection is impossible, and effects are uncertain.[14] In fact, the distinction between actual and perceived randomness is more theoretical than practical, and pseudorandom number generators

10 This known as Bayesian probability—a combination of conditional and total probabilities allows us to revise our decisions according to the information we have. It thus incorporates prior beliefs and reasonable expectations.

11 Taleb, *The Black Swan.*

12 This is known as Poisson clumping.

13 Known as the Heisenberg uncertainty principle; e.g., Coles. *From Cosmos to Chaos*, 121–35; John Polkinghorne, *Quantum Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

14 The Augustinian monk Gregor Mendel was one of the first to note random transmission of genetic information.

Wilton H. Bunch describes randomness as the "confluence of deterministic causal streams that lead to an unpredictable outcome"; Bunch, "Theodicy through a Lens of Science," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith,* 67, no. 3 (2015): 189–99; Antony Eagle, "Randomness is Unpredictability," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 56, no. 4 (2005), 749–90; see also N. N. Taleb, *Fooled by Randomness: The Hidden Role of Chance in Life and in the Markets* (New York: Random House, 2005); James Bradley, "Randomness and God's Nature," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 64, no. 2 (2012): 75–89; Joseph Mazur, *Fluke: The Math and Myth of Coincidence* (New York: Basic, 2016).

yield the same effects as truly random process. As before, outcomes are best described in terms of probability.

As with probabilities and large numbers, random events at small or individual levels can nevertheless yield patterns and predictability in aggregate or groups. The adult population in North America will get four to six colds per year (base rate), but how many times an individual gets sick is random and unpredictable. Sometimes order develops out of chaos (indeterministic, probabilistic, unpredictable processes), and sometimes chaos develops from orderly (deterministic, predictable) processes. Theologian Thomas Oord summarizes the world well: "from quantum events to genetic mutations to human interactions and beyond, existence bubbles with randomness."[15]

Random processes are useful in many areas of life. Most games rely on chance to ensure fairness, reduce bias, and allow less experienced players to win. An element of uncertainty can add surprise, excitement, and enjoyment to games. People sometimes seek out randomness and the risk it entails. They climb mountains, walk tightropes, and play slot machines. We all benefit from some degree of risk and uncertainty in our lives to allow flexibility, alleviate boredom, and challenge personal growth. Randomness is also used in many scientific methods, as with sampling. In a simple random selection, each possible sample has an equal chance of selection, which eliminates bias and allows fair representation. Extrapolation of conclusions to large populations from this method is likely the most important use of chance. In agriculture, cheap random scattering of seeds, some of which will randomly sprout, produces better outcomes than orderly processes. Some animals will lay multiple eggs, knowing that only a few will survive (relying on the law of large numbers, and also illustrating redundancy in creation). Spray paint uses a random scattering method to evenly coat a large surface. Random processes are used in politics (voting, surveys), economics (stock market), and many other fields.

However, randomness affects us emotionally. It can cause shock and fear (airplane crashes), irritation (machines breaking the day their warranty expires), or amusement (meeting someone when we were thinking of them). It can cause us to feel we lack control over our lives. Although coincidences are more common than we realize, they incite and interact with many beliefs and theories, such as karma, fate, and conspiracies.[16] Statistical data is notoriously misinterpreted and misapplied, as in this humorous statement attributed to George Burns: "If you live to be one hundred, you've got it made. Very few people die past that age." "Fortune tellers" often take advantage of probability theory (as well as people's

15 Thomas Jay Oord, *The Uncontrolling Love of God: An Open and Relational Account of Providence* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015): 151.

16 E.g., Gorman and Gorman, *Denying to the Grave,* 7, 35–64.

ignorance of it). When they announce to a crowd, "someone here has an illness that will be healed soon," this has a high likelihood of being true, given the high rate and variety of illnesses, and their high rate of spontaneous remission.

Overall, knowledge of probabilities can help us plan our days and add a sense of security to our lives. In a world filled with multiple interacting factors, including some chance occurrences, probability theory allows us to increase our knowledge of God's world. Most philosophers endorse probabilistic models of causation,[17] and most scientists favor a non-deterministic and complex view of causation, best understood through probabilities.[18] Statistician David J. Bartholomew contends that "chance was God's idea and he uses it to ensure the variety, resilience, and freedom necessary to achieve his purposes."[19] In fact, some processes operate better through randomness than detailed determinism; it makes more sense for God to create random processes than to oversee every simultaneous event in the interconnected universe using a random number generator; this implies a furtiveness to the deity. Bartholomew insists that "Chance plays a positive role in the world and . . . does not undermine God's sovereignty."[20]

Human Judgment of Event Causation

However, as already mentioned, probabilities can be difficult to understand. Consequently, people tend to adopt simple "cause and effect" explanations for events, especially when they have personal meaning. We prefer certainty to probability. Our misunderstanding of probability in causation is largely unrelated to education or intelligence but thought to be related to our normal cognitive processing abilities.

Judgment and decision making are important in all areas of life, and especially relevant for Christians desiring to follow the will of God. Decisions for the future, as well as appraisal of the past (which may affect future decisions and/or lead to

17 Steven Sloman notes that a "causal relation is probabilistic or is affected by random factors if the combination of known causes isn't *perfectly* predictive of the effect"; *Causal Models: How People Think about the World and Its Alternatives* (Oxford Scholarship online, 2007): 41; see also J. L. Mackie, *The Cement of the Universe: A Study of Causation* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1974, 1980); Stathis Psillos, *Causation and Explanation* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002); Stephen Mumford and Rani Lill Anjum, *Causation: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

18 Illari, Russo, and Williamson, "Why look at Causality in the Sciences?"; Rabins, *The Why of Things*.

19 Bartholomew, *God of Chance* (London: SCM, 1984): 14. Similarly, philosopher Peter van Inwagen acknowledges that God is sometimes a direct causative agent, but denies that he has specific reasons for not preventing every individual misfortune. Since we are all subject to chance, then it is unfair that we should be subject to unequal chances (i.e., that God should help some but not others); van Inwagen, "The Place of Chance in a World Sustained by God," in Thomas V. Morris, *Divine and Human Action: Essays in the Metaphysics of Theism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988): 211–35.

20 Bartholomew, *God, Chance and Purpose: Can God have it Both Ways*? (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 197; see also 124–32.

assumptions of causation and blame) are mediated by our views of how the world works. Making a judgment is complex, involving multiple levels of processing—sensation, perception, identification, association, memory, and rationality. Two cognitive processes can be described: a fast, intuitive one, that makes automatic associations and relies on emotion, and a slow, rational one that relies on logic.[21] Making quick, automatic judgments is often useful but prone to error. Lack of awareness of the complexity of human judgment has potentially serious consequences.

Judgment errors are common when complex processes are involved and are often a result of faulty logic or using intuitive processes when logical ones are needed. First, we ignore the law of large numbers. For example, when judging the sequence of boys and girls born in a hospital (which are independent events), people incorrectly assume that the sequence, BGBBGB is more likely than BBBGGG or GGGGGG.[22] In fact, psychologists Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman titled an article "Belief in the Law of Small Numbers," to describe the observation that most people intuitively assume that the "law of large numbers applied to small numbers as well."[23] In another study, people judged a disease that kills 1,200 out of 10,000 to be more dangerous than one that kills 24 out of every 100 (the second one is actually twice as lethal, but people are impressed by large numbers and forget the denominator).[24]

Second, we ignore base rates and misjudge probabilities. This is illustrated by Tversky and Kahneman's famous "Linda problem":

> *Linda is 31 years old, single, outspoken, and very bright. She majored in philosophy. As a student, she was deeply concerned with issues of discrimination and social justice, and also participated in anti-nuclear demonstrations.* Which is more probable? 1. Linda is a bank teller. 2. Linda is a bank teller and is active in the feminist movement.

Most people incorrectly choose the second option. But the likelihood of two events occurring together is lower than the probability of either one occurring alone. This is also an example of a conjunction fallacy, assuming things occur together

21 Some of the pioneering work on this was done by Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky. See Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2011); Dan Ariely, *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces that Shape our Decisions* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008); Jonah Lehrer, *How We Decide* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009); Edmund T. Rolls, *Emotion and Decision-Making Explained* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

22 Kahneman, *Thinking*, *Fast and Slow,* 115.

23 Tversky and Kahneman, "Belief in the Law of Small Numbers," *Psychological Bulletin* 76, no. 2 (1971): 105–110.

24 K. Yamagishi, "When a 12.86% Mortality is More Dangerous than 24.14%: Implications for Risk Communication," *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 11 (1997): 495–506.

more commonly than alone, and a representative heuristic, our tendency to make judgments based on typicality. This last example, although often correct, is also a source of stereotypes, and has been demonstrated in multiple different studies.[25]

Third, we discount the role of randomness, being biased towards seeing patterns and meaning where there are none. We are surprised when someone wins a large sum at a casino, when a coin lands on tails four times in a row, or when someone's cancer resolves. A classic study showed subjects randomly moving geometric shapes; invariably people attributed agency and motive to these objects.[26] The instinct to find meaning occurs in multiple areas of life that require statistical understanding.[27] We assume causal effects when there is merely a correlation, and prefer to attribute happenings to an external agent rather than multiple, possible random or unknown, factors. Philosopher-statistician Nassim Taleb uses the term narrative fallacy to describe our preference for simplified stories over raw truths.[28] Indeed, we often invent explanations, or weave a causal web to connect a sequence of facts. But our stories are reductive and our explanations often distorted. Taleb points out potential costs to this fallacy, such as our outrage at an extreme act of terrorism while we ignore the subtle but overall more harmful effects of environmental neglect. He is especially concerned about our tendency to neglect "silent evidence" or focus only on what is known or seen. In a story told by Cicero about a painting of worshipers who survived a shipwreck after praying, a non-believer asked rhetorically to see the pictures of those who prayed and then drowned.[29] This relates to our tendency to ignore base rates in favor of meaning (especially when positive).

Psychologists have noted some tendencies, including well-known biases, that

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25 E.g., Kahneman and Tversky, "On the Psychology of Prediction," *Psychological Review,* 80 (1973): 237–51; Kahneman and Tversky, "Subjective Probability: A Judgment of Representativeness," *Cognitive. Psychology* 3 (1972): 430–54; see summary in Kahneman, *Thinking*, *Fast and Slow,* 146–65.

26 Known as the Heider-Simmel illusion; F. Heider and M. Simmel, "An Experimental Study of Apparent Behavior," *The American Journal of Psychology* 57, no. 2 (1944): 243–59.

27 Human difficulty with interpreting statistics extends to experts, who are also often inconsistent in their judgments. It has been demonstrated in multiple areas that statistics are superior to clinicians with respect to judgments, perhaps because experts are overconfident. The classic work was done by Paul E. Meehl, *Clinical Versus Statistical Prediction: A Theoretical Analysis and a Review of the Evidence* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954). See also Matthew Fisher and Frank C. Keil, "The Curse of Expertise: When More Knowledge Leads to Miscalibrated Explanatory Insight," *Cognitive Science* 40 (2016): 1251–69; Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow,* 222–33.

28 Taleb, *Black Swan*, 62–84.

29 Taleb, *Black Swan*, 100–101. Reid Hastie and Robyn M. Dawes give another example: 90% of airplane-crash survivors surveyed had studied where the exits were; but of course, those who died were not interviewed; Dawes, *Rational Choice in an Uncertain World,* 2nd ed. (San Diego: Harcourt, 2009), 123.

lead to errors in decision making. We are "cognitive misers,"[30] making broad generalizations and quick judgments in order to avoid thinking. We are persuaded by anecdotes more easily than by statistics; the former offer meaning and are also more readily available. Kahneman and Tversky found that people deemed "a massive flood somewhere in America in which more than a thousand people die" to be less likely than "an earthquake in California, causing massive flooding, in which more than a thousand people die." The second, being more specific, even if less probable, offers an easily imagined and meaningful cause.[31] Generally, cause trumps statistics in decision making.

Our judgment is informed more by emotions than logic, and we favor certainty almost pathologically.[32] We have an illusion of understanding and tend to seek conclusions that make us feel good about ourselves and the world. As Taleb notes, we frequently confuse luck with skills, probability with certainty, randomness with determinism, conjecture with certitude, coincidence with causality, and theory with reality; "we favor the visible, the embedded, the personal, the narrated, and the tangible; we scorn the abstract."[33]

Even when confronted with their lack of logic in judgments, people tend to be defensive.[34] Our reluctance to acknowledge mistakes is evident in the hindsight bias, or the "I knew it all along" phenomenon.[35] People make a logical fallacy by affirming the consequent and ignoring all the other possible outcomes. We also sometimes get the arrow of causality backwards by assuming that our good qualities cause our successes, rather than that success shapes character. Our self-confidence extends to our personal characteristics, knowledge, and abilities. We often give greater weight to information that shows us in a favorable light and assume that we are better than average in most ways. One study showed that people

30 A term used by Keith E. Stanovich, *What Intelligence Tests Miss: The Psychology of Rational Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 70–85.

31 Tversky and Kahneman, "Extensional Versus Intuitive Reasoning: The Conjunction Fallacy in Probability Judgment," *Psychological Review, 90*, 4 (1983): 293–315; Kahneman, *Thinking*, *Fast and Slow*, 160.

32 E.g., Kathryn Schulz, *Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margin of Error* (New York: Harper Collins, 2010).

33 Taleb, *Fooled by Randomness*, 262; Taleb also points out that history books describe a much clearer and meaningful story than empirical reality; *Black Swan*, 8.

34 Jonathan Haidt has observed people inventing bizarre explanations in attempts to explain moral choices that are illogical, such as why they refused to drink juice in which a sterile dead cockroach had been dipped; *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012): 43–45.

35 E.g., Baruch Fischhoff, "For Those Condemned to Study the Past: Reflections on Historical Judgment." *New Directions for Methodology of Social and Behavioral Sciences* 4 (1980): 79–93. This relates to our illusion of understanding; Taleb, *Fooled by Randomness*, vii–xvii; Kahneman, *Thinking*, *Fast and Slow*, 199–207.

applying for marriage licenses correctly stated the divorce rate to be 50% but predicted the success of their own marriages to be close to 100%.[36]

Also, somewhat self-serving, and related to our need to meaning, is the confirmation bias: we only consider information that supports our viewpoints and fail to seek evidence to disconfirm our judgments (Taleb calls this naïve empiricism). The illusion of control describes how people tend to overestimate the degree of personal control we have over events.[37] Uncertainty leads to psychological distress; consequently, people use multiple means to increase a sense of control and reduce discomfort (known in psychology as cognitive dissonance theory[38]). This relates to our preference for skill (which we can control) over luck. We make causal associations between unrelated things and choose what we want to believe, thus decreasing uncertainty.

Although beyond the scope of this article, it is important to note that these errors in judgment are not necessarily sinful, but often simply a consequence of using fast cognitive processes for situations in which slower ones are more accurate. As psychologist Gerald Clore concludes: "The genius of human thought is that despite its unconscious, automatic, emotional, and heuristic nature, we nevertheless generally arrive at rational, defensible conclusions."[39] However, some aspects of our cognitive mistakes, such as self-serving biases, may fall within the Christian category of sin. Many secular writers note human pride as a factor in judgment errors. Kahneman thinks we have an "almost unlimited ability to ignore our ignorance,"[40] and Taleb suggests that we have hubris with respect to the limits of our knowledge (epistemic arrogance).[41] Philosophers and theologians have noted the relationship between belief, character, desires, and choice regarding acceptance of evidence; the term willful spiritual blindness has been used.[42]

In sum, the world we live in is complex, characterized by multiple, sometimes random, factors interacting to produce broadly predictable effects over time and

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36 L. A. Baker and R. E. Emery, "When Every Relationship is Above Average: Perceptions and Expectations about Divorce at the Time of Marriage," *Law and Human Behavior* 17, no. 4 (1993): 439–49. In reality, the actual divorce rate is variable and challenging to determine; it is likely lower than 50%.

37 This concept was developed by Ellen J. Langer, "The Illusion of Control," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 32, no. 2 (1975): 311–28; see also Suzanne C. Thompson, "Illusions of Control: How We Overestimate Our Personal Influence," *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, Association for Psychological Science 86 (1999): 187–90.

38 The theory was developed by Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (California: Stanford University Press, 1957).

39 Clore, "Psychology and the Rationality of Emotion," in *Faith, Rationality and the Passions*, Sarah Coakley, ed. (Chichester, Suffox: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 213.

40 Kahneman, *Thinking*, *Fast and Slow*, 201.

41 Taleb, *Black Swan*, 138; see also Schulz, *Being Wrong*.

42 E.g., Kevin Kinghorn, "Spiritual Blindness, Self-Deception and Morally Culpable Nonbelief," *Heythrop Journal* 48 (2007): 527–45.

space. It is inadequately understood if probabilistic concepts are not part of the total understanding. However, humans have difficulty understanding statistics, probability, and randomness. We tend to apply rules for large numbers to personal, individual circumstances. Our judgment is informed more by emotions than logic. We generally overestimate causality and view the world as more explainable than it actually is; partly because we dislike uncertainty. We make quick, lazy judgments, and tend to be self-serving, seeking conclusions that make us feel good about ourselves and the world. Next we consider Christian theological conceptions regarding divine interaction with our probabilistic world and its flawed inhabitants.

Providence

We inhabit the same universe as that of biblical authors, although we have developed new language to describe occurrences and interactions within it. Given that occurrences in our world include random elements and that the Bible portrays a God who is intimately involved in the world, our understanding of providence needs to allow for both the probabilistic nature of the world and the personal nature of God's relationship with it. Obviously, this issue relates to large theological topics such as the problem of evil, suffering, and omniscience, which cannot all be addressed here.

Randomness and Probability in Christianity

In the Bible, random methods (e.g., casting lots to make decisions) were used on occasion (e.g., Josh 18:6–10; Jon 1:7, Acts 1:26). Many of the disciples, as fisherman, knew that their catches would vary from day to day, and that having a full net after hours of nothing was improbable (John 2:11–6). The Bible also acknowledges that some things occur by chance, not the hand of God (1 Sam 6:9), and that much is uncertain; "Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let your hands not be idle, for you do not know which will succeed . . . ." (Eccl 11:6); "time and chance happen to them all" (Eccl 9:11). Possible random causation is implied in the story of the tower of Siloam (Luke 14:2–5). Regular and predictable processes are described in a general sense but seldom applied to individuals; for example, "The sun rises and the sun goes down" (Eccl 1:5); rain falls "on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matt 5:45).

Biblical stories also provide illustrations of the law of large numbers, and predictions or general statements often apply to groups rather than individuals. With respect to divine election, the Bible frequently uses corporate terms. God chooses the people of Israel (not individuals) to be his people (e.g., Deut 7:6; Ps 33:12), and they choose him (Josh 24:22). God also chooses followers of Christ to be his

people (1 Pet 2:9); they are described as the "bride" of Christ (Rev 19:7).[43] Individuals, like Abraham and Paul, are chosen and directed for specific purposes related to furthering the kingdom of God. At times God holds a group responsible for the behavior of an individual. Peter, in his Pentecost speech (Acts 2:22–24) accuses the Israelites of crucifying Jesus, according to God's plan. This does not mean that God "planned" for a specific individual but one of a group. The language of individual and community are used somewhat fluidly in the Bible. For example, both Solomon and thousands of laborers built the temple (1 Kgs 5–6).

Of course, there are also many statements in the Bible that refer to divine direction and certainty. When God needs something done, it happens (e.g., his promise to Abraham, his covenant with Israel, the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection). Certainty is also used broadly with respect to God's judgment of sin, his forgiveness, his love for us, our salvation, and his promise to listen. However, occasions of direct intervention always have a theological and/or eschatological purpose. Consequently, many such divine statements are addressed to a community (i.e., Israel, followers of Christ), although commonly misapplied to individual situations; for example, "I know the plans I have for you . . . ." (Jer 29:11). In this verse, the prophet is addressing the nation of Israel (which includes individuals who may choose to turn away from God), yet many people apply it to specific circumstances in their individual lives. (Recall our biases toward meaning and certainty.)

Many Christians assume that randomness is incompatible with divine providence and associated with purposelessness. The Heidelberg catechism, with respect to divine providence, states, " . . . all things come to us not by chance but by his fatherly hand." There appears to be a false dichotomy between "God" and "Chance." For example, R. C. Sproul believes that the "mere existence of chance is enough to rip God from his cosmic throne. Chance does not need to rule . . . (it is) a humble servant."[44] But chance is not a servant, nor any type of personal being. Randomness simply describes patterns of behavior in the world. Personifying

43 Clark Pinnock emphasizes that the purpose of election is for the "chosen" people to be a vehicle of salvation for all people; Pinnock, "Divine Election as Corporate, Open, and Vocational," in *Perspectives on Election: Five Views*, Chad Brand, ed. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006): 276–313; see also Gregory A. Boyd, *Satan and the Problem of Evil* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2001): 117–21. Maurice Wiles notes that Old Testament prophecies point to wider pattern of fulfilment, rather than to individuals; *God's Action in the World* (London: SCM Press, 1986): 54–69.

44 Sproul, *Not a Chance: The Myth of Chance in Modern Science and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994, 2014), 3; see also Vern S. Poythress, *Chance and the Sovereignty of God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014). Biblical scholar Bruce Waltke states that providence often appears as chance but "nothing happens to Christians by chance." However, the focus of his book is that God does not intervene when we seek his will (his will for us is to mature in Christ), and we should not read too much into circumstance. Waltke, *Finding the Will of God: A Pagan Notion?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995, 2002): 121–42. This view is common at a popular level; e.g., Rick Warren claims that "because God is sovereignly in control, accidents are just incidents in God's good plan for you." *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 195.

chance risks diminishes the sovereignty of God. This view of randomness, and by implication probability, is associated with a strong view of divine determinism and an omni-causality model of providence. I believe it does not fully reflect the biblical witness and does not reflect the nature of created reality.[45]

Others view randomness as not only compatible with but beneficial to Christian theology. William Pollard, in his classic work, states that "the key to . . . providence in the form in which we as Christians perceive it, is to be found in the appearance of chance and accident in history." "Only in such a world could the course of events be continuously responsive to the will of its Creator."[46] Biblical scholar Terence Fretheim suggests that God created the world with some disorderliness and to allow for human participation and creativity.[47] Creation is reliable, but not static and predictable. Albeit from different perspectives, both scholars point to the importance of randomness to the God-world relationship. Theologian Gregory A. Boyd similarly observes that life appears arbitrary because it "embodies an element of chance," which is "a beautiful mystery."[48] Because there are multiple causes for events, it is hard to know where to assign responsibility. Rob A. Fringer and Jeff K. Lang develop a "theology of luck," which "shapes a worldview that makes it possible to move from fate (which he equates with a deterministic view of providence) —through chaos—to faith." It is a loving God who creates a world with both purpose and possibility, and there is not necessarily an overarching reason for every occurrence in life.[49] Christian philosopher Christian J. Barrigar points out the degree of randomness and indeterminacy in the universe and suggests that God created the world with statistical laws to allow for "predictability-within-freedom." "The universe constitutes a massive 'multidimensional probability space,' created by God to provide the conditions for an

45 The view of divine determinism has been much critiqued; e.g., Clark H. Pinnock, R. Rice, J. Sanders, W. Hasker, and D. Basinger, *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994); David J. Bartholomew, *Uncertain Belief: Is it Rational to be a Christian*? (New York: Clarendon Press; 1996); Jerry L. Walls, and Joseph R. Dongell, *Why I am not a Calvinist* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004); Oord, *Uncontrolling Love*.

46 William G. Pollard, *Chance and Providence: God's Action in a World Governed by Scientific Law* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), 66, 73.

47 Terence E. Fretheim, *Creation Untamed: The Bible, God and Natural Disasters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).

48 Boyd, *Satan and the Problem of Evil,* 387; he includes an appendix on the theology of chance (386–93).

49 Rob A. Fringer and Jeff K. Lang, *Theology of Luck: Fate, Chaos, and Faith* (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2015): 62, 44. Peter van Inwagen also claims that not everything that occurs in the world has a particular purpose. He cautions against confusing God's care for and knowledge of the world with God directly causing every event; e.g., there is a difference between God counting the hairs of our head (Luke 12:7) and the number of our hairs being part of God's plan. Because the physical world appears to be indeterministic, many things occur apart from the divine will; van Inwagen, "The Place of Chance."

equally-massive directed random walk."[50] These theologians point to the value of chance in the created order and its reflection of a flexible God who values interaction with his creatures and his creation.

Many scientist-theologians acknowledge the importance of randomness and indeterminacy in a world that involves multiple factors interacting in complex manners. Contemporary scientific observations mean that the universe is open, and best viewed as indeterministic. Recalling Polkinghorne's claims about ontology, if there appear to be random occurrences, there probably are. He views randomness in a positive light; it represents freedom, not purposelessness. Creation is gifted with both reliability and independence; both order and disorder and needed. "Chance is the engine of novelty. Necessity is the preserver of fruitfulness."[51] Arthur Peacocke similarly describes chance as "the search radar of God, sweeping through all possible targets of its probing."[52]

Although this discussion is necessarily brief, it does seem that the indeterministic, probabilistic nature of the world is affirmed within the Bible and Christian thought. It should be emphasized that randomness does not equal disorder or purposelessness and does not negate God's love for us. Life is more complex than we would like it to be, but Christians can trust in a sovereign God who cares deeply for creation. We now consider how to understand the theological notion of providence.

Definitions and Models of Providence

Providence is commonly viewed as the benevolent guidance of God. Thomas Jay Oord's definition is succinct: "the ways God acts to promote our well-being and the well-being of the whole world."[53] It includes ideas of sustenance, continuing creation, preservation, governance, and concurrence or cooperation. Providence is often categorized into general and special, ordinary and extraordinary, natural and supernatural, or indirect and direct divine action.[54] God usually acts generally, preserving creation, but also acts directly and specifically on occasion. However, these categories are not easily separated. This can be illustrated through a brief foray into the much-misunderstood concept of miracle.

Miracles are often considered a type of special divine action or intervention. There are problems when it is viewed too narrowly, such as restricting the concept

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50 Barrigar, *Freedom All the Way up: God and the Meaning of Life in a Scientific Age* (Victoria: Friesen): 47. He focuses on origins and suggests that the emergence of humans was a highly probable event based on the conditions God created initially.

51 Polkinghorne, *Quarks, Chaos and Christianity,* 53; he further notes that "novelty emerges at the edge of chaos," *Exploring Reality*, 144.

52 Peacocke, *Creation and the World of Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 95.

53 Oord, *Uncontrolling Love,* 16, 17.

54 E.g., Michael J. Langford, *Providence* (London: SCM, 1981).

to verifiable violations of natural laws,[55] because this minimizes the theological import associated with miracles, overemphasizes divine transcendence, implies God is little involved in the ordinary, natural world, and comes close to a demythologized or deist view. Narrow views of miracles also risk viewing God as capricious, randomly acting in the world, as opposed to recognizing the presence of randomness within creation. There are also problems with viewing miracles too broadly because this again minimizes biblical and theological associations, overemphasizes divine immanence (or panentheism), can be very subjective, and may trivialize the concept. Perhaps the term "miracle" should not be used, along with the equally unclear, unbiblical distinction between "natural" and "supernatural." As William Pollard notes, "If a miraculous event could only happen outside the natural order of things, then it would necessarily imply that it would be unnatural for God to exercise providence over his creation. Such an idea is, however, clearly un-biblical."[56] Broad definitions of miracle are more palatable, such as Oord's: "an unusual and good event that occurs through God's special action in relation to creation."[57] In general, miraculous events demonstrate consistency with God's character as depicted in the Bible, have spiritual/theological significance, inspire awe, and are counterintuitive. It also may help to recognize the distinction between general and special providence as simply theoretical. In reality, these intertwine, as the Spirit flows over, within, and through creation.

Thomas F. Torrance, using scientific analogies, suggests that miracles involve *recreation* of original order in situations where decay and disorder have occurred, rather than *suspension* of natural order.[58] He implies that counteracting the natural randomness and unnatural sin in the world is a form of miracle, and that God acts from within creation as opposed to acting from outside of it. I suggest it may be more fruitful to focus on divine presence rather than divine action, which are

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55 Miracles were defined by Hume as occurrences that violated the laws of nature; e.g., Evan Fales, *Divine Intervention: Metaphysical and Epistemological Puzzles.* (London: Routledge, 2010), esp. 22–39; Juuso Loikkanen, Juuso. "Does Divine Action Require Divine Intervention? God's Actions in the World and the Problem of Supernatural Causation." *Research and Science Today* 2 (2015): 17–27; Oord, *Uncontrolling Love*, 187–216.

56 Pollard, *Chance and Providence,* 118. Further, the majority of "miracles" recorded in Scripture "are the result of an extraordinary and extremely improbable combination of chance and accidents. They do not, on close analysis, involve, . . . a violation of the laws of nature" (83). Harrison and Roberts note that prior to Aquinas, there was no "natural/supernatural" distinction; the distinction developed partly as a result of the formal evaluation of miraculous events; Peter Harrison and Jon H. Roberts. *Science Without God?: Rethinking the History of Scientific Naturalism.* (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2019).

57 Oord, *Uncontrolling Love*, 196. New Testament scholar Graham H. Twelftree defines miracle as an astonishing event "carrying the signature of God." *Jesus the Miracle Worker.* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1999): 24–27, 350.

58 Torrance, *Divine and Contingent Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981)*,* 116–22; he also suggests this helps with the problem of evil, which may occur at the edge of contingent realities bordering on nothing.

perhaps two sides of the same coin; a presence that cleanses creation, instills holiness and wholeness, gifts grace, and prods toward perfection.[59]

Returning to providence in general, multiple models have been proposed.[60] Some scholars claim that we cannot know anything ("God's ways are not our ways"), but I think agnosticism is unhelpful, although we always need to accept some degree of mystery. Somewhat similarly, various versions of deism and process theology, which discount special providence, do not explain the many biblical and experiential stories of God lovingly interacting with his world. This leaves two primary categories.

The traditional (classic, Augustinian-Calvinistic) view of providence, in its extreme form, can be described as deterministic; God exhibits omni-causality, and meticulous control.[61] There is consequently little distinction between general and special providence. However, this view is often inconsistently held; for example, people often claim determinism with respect to providence but free will with respect to salvation.[62] A traditional view is difficult to reconcile with freedom, moral responsibility, and randomness. Although some find this view comforting, we should not sacrifice accuracy for comfort.[63] A variation on the classical view is the Thomistic idea of double agency or concursus. In this understanding, God is the powerful, primary cause who may also direct free will; humans are only secondary causative agents.[64] This is an improvement on a strict deterministic view in that it allows for human agency, but leaves multiple conundrums, such as human refusal to cooperate with the divine will, and the potential arbitrary nature of divine action.

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59 Jürgen Moltmann states, "the presence of the infinite in the finite imbues every finite thing . . . with self-transcendence." Moltmann, *God in Creation.* 2nd ed., trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993): 101. The sacramental nature of creation is emphasized in Eastern Orthodoxy; e.g., Christopher Knight suggests that divine action is subtle and, instead of breaking into the world, it is a manifestation of the true reality that is already present but hidden in creation. *The God of Nature: Incarnation and Contemporary Science,* Theology and the Sciences (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), esp. 86–95, 134–38.

60 Terrance Thiessen describes ten existing models and adds one of his own. Thiessen, *Providence and Prayer: How Does God Work in the World?* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000). Oord counts seven models in *Uncontrolling Love*; and Gundry and Jowers include four. Stanley N. Gundry and Dennis W. Jowers, eds., *Four Views on Divine Providence* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011).

61 E.g., Paul Helm, *The Providence of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994); Ron Highfield. *The Faithful Creator: Affirming Creation and Providence in an Age of Anxiety* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2015).

62 Thiessen makes this point. *Prayer and Providence*, 14–20; see also note 42 above.

63 Bartholomew suggests we should be concerned with "what is true not what is comforting." Bartholomew, *God of Chance*, 121.

64 Austin Farrer famously refers to "double agency." *Faith and Speculation* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1967): 104–105. Joshua Reichard critiques this view, noting that "a logical quandary exists between relying on God as a primary cause or precondition to human action and holding human beings personally accountable for their actions." "Beyond Causation: A Contemporary Theology of Concursus," *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 34, no. 2 (2013): 117–34. The type of concursus associated with the traditional view is sometimes called prior or permissive.

The other major view emphasizes freedom (primarily human, but the spirit world, and nature itself also have some degree of freedom, though not moral responsibility) and divine restraint.[65] Variations are that God intentionally exercises self-restraint or is by nature essentially kenotic. Although some versions of this view can emphasize God's inaction rather than his action, it allows for a non-deterministic world, including randomness and probability, and an intimately involved Creator. Events can be overdetermined, with multiple causal factors that can produce the same outcome, in order to allow for all possible contingencies.[66] As mentioned above, God acts from within creation to effect change. Furthermore, in this view, humans have genuine freedom: God does not impose his will on them, although he may orient people toward positive action.[67] Fringer and Lane point out that it is a loving, servant God that refuses to dominate or control everything. He "creates with purpose but also with possibilities."[68] Boyd summarizes: "God's providence does not need to be meticulously controlling on the level of free agents to ensure that his sovereign plan for the world will be accomplished."[69] These perspectives imply a more fluid relationship between general and special providence, and do not discount the possibility of divine intervention.

Some theologians briefly refer to statistical probability in their arguments that biblical texts refer more to groups than individuals and that divine predictions refer primarily to groups, not individuals. Boyd notes that God often exhibits foreknowledge in the same way that insurance and advertising agencies operate, by predicting group but not individual behavior.[70] Uncertainty, randomness, and probability require risk; many argue that it takes a "bigger" God to allow risk, rather than one who controls absolutely everything.[71] Oord suggests that an "adventure model of providence," with calculated risks, free decisions, and some

65 E.g., John Sanders, *The God Who Risks* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1998); Gregory A. Boyd, "God Limits His Control," in *Four Views of Divine Providence,* 183–208; Oord, *Uncontrolling Love*, 81–105.

66 One example is the Exodus story, in which divine action is intermingled with human agency and natural causes; Langford, *Providence*, 42–45.

67 This is sometimes known as conferred concursus. Vincent Brümmer states: "double agency is a matter of co-operation between two agents and not of one agent using the other as a tool." Brümmer, "Farrer, Wiles and the Causal Joint." *Modern Theology* 8 (1992): 1–14 (5).

68 Fringer and Lane, *Theology of Luck;* Jürgen Moltmann similarly points out that a god whose primary action is to control things is not worth following and does not describe the God who suffered and died on the cross. *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 1974), 223.

69 Boyd, *Satan and the Problem of Evil*, 153.

70 God can foreknow behavior based on his knowledge of a person's character or typical behavior (e.g., Judas's betrayal, Peter's denial). Boyd, *God of the Possible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000): 33–48.

71 E.g., Bartholomew concludes that "the possibility of a world capable of supporting each individual, tested and tempered by the uncertainties of life and destined for union in Christ seems to demand risk on the grand scale." Bartholomew, *God, Chance and Purpose,* 240.

randomness, fits our world of "genuine good and evil, randomness and regularity, freedom, agency, disappointments, and even miracles."[72]

In sum, a view of providence in which God relinquishes some responsibility to humans, and allows random, probabilistic occurrences in nature—a view in which intimate divine presence is emphasized and the immanence/transcendence categories are blurred—is both theologically robust and clearly compatible with the world described by scientific observations. God can and will achieve his aims for those who choose to follow him, although he may likely use multiple manners to do so.

Pastoral Implications and Applications

A friend expressed discouragement when his pastor praised the work of two small groups in his church, which is large and emphasizes small groups. Although he was not interested in that type of ministry, he felt his group was failing. I reassured him, noting that the sample size was two out of 52. Statistics can comfort. On another occasion, I met someone in a parking lot who became a friend. She claimed that this was "God's plan." With a sheepish grin, recognizing that theologians can be irritating, I acknowledged that there was a high probability that God was involved in orchestrating our meeting.

There are multiple ways that an understanding of providence and probability can benefit the Christian community. First, it provides a more accurate view of the world and God's interactions with it. Statistics and probability theory can be a helpful tool to describe and understand the world God has created. It is an indeterministic world in which multiple causative factors intertwine, coincidences occur more often than we think, and randomness can be purposeful. We do not need to be experts but can adopt some statistical tools, perhaps using numbers to convey uncertainty. For example, we can consider base rates before making pronouncements of divine intervention. The success of crops growing and babies being birthed have high base rates because the world is designed to be self-perpetuating. Similarly, sunshine and rain follow random patterns, affecting righteous and unrighteous alike, irrespective of prayer. This is reason for praise and thanksgiving!

Many cognitive scientists have made suggestions to help mitigate errors in judgment. Kahneman notes the importance of practice in developing cognitive skills, especially with respect to knowing when intuition can be relied upon. We need to slow down, avoid generalizing, review similar situations, and consider

72 Oord, *Uncontrolling Love*, 220; see also 151–60. This view of a God who does not unilaterally control his creation is also being expressed in some popular writing; e.g., Kate Bowler, *Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I've Loved* (New York: Random House, 2018).

worst- and best-case scenarios.[73] Journalist Jonah Lehrer, in reviewing cognitive processing research, suggests that if a problem is novel, we should always employ rational processes; a decision that is not that important requires less "thinking." We can remind ourselves of what we do not know, and always consider competing hypotheses. Yet we should also pay attention to our emotions, which often reflect unconscious desires and knowledge.[74] Psychologists Gilovich and Ross suggest that adoption of appropriate cognitive strategies is a hallmark of wisdom: taking a broad view of situations, considering the views of others, especially experts, considering alternate ways of framing an issue, understanding the primacy of behavior, choosing words wisely, and shaking off the limits of naïve realism.[75]

If we have such difficulty understanding how the world that God made works, perhaps we need to be less certain when considering how God works! Theologians, without referencing cognitive psychology, have often noted the inconsistency present in Christian piety. Austin Farrer tells a story of how a man's illness is first judged to be a result of his drinking, then when it is discovered he does not drink, it is redefined as a trial. When his illness prevents him from going on a trip that ends in disaster, it is then considered a blessing of providence.[76] Recognizing the complexity of creation and God's involvement with it can improve our consistency; we can praise God for all aspects of nature, not just those that are pleasing or convenient to us. We can delight in the complexity of creation, and speak confidently in probabilistic language, knowing that divine providence incorporates both ontological and epistemological randomness. We can also be reminded of our responsibility in aligning ourselves with the general will of God and working with God in building his kingdom. Perhaps we should focus less on circumstances in our individual lives and more on our relationship with our Creator, as in the two verses that *follow* Jer 29:11: "Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

Second, knowledge of our cognitive shortcomings, especially our self-serving biases, can foster humility and encourage spiritual growth. Our fear of uncertainty represents mistrust in God. This may lead us to adopt cognitive biases (e.g., narrative fallacies) that provide (false) security and increase our sense of confidence and control. Paradoxically, strong proclamations about divine control over everything in life may reflect less a strong faith than an anxiety about lack of control.

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73 Kahneman, *Thinking*, *Fast and Slow,* 240, 417.

74 Lehrer, *How We Decide*, 243–50.

75 Thomas Gilovich and Lee Ross, *The Wisest One in the Room: How You can Benefit from Social Psychology's Most Powerful Insights* (New York: Free, 2015): 267–69. They quote Matt 7:3 (the speck in your neighbor's eye . . . .) to point out that it is easier to see bias in others than ourselves (28).

76 Farrer, *Faith and Speculation* (London: A&C Black, 1967): 68.

Being aware of our need for certainty and control, of our preference for meaning and anecdote, and of our self-serving biases may improve our relationships with God and others. We can cultivate the language of doubt with respect to particular events but certainty with respect to God's loving concern for his creation and creatures. We can focus on character rather than circumstance, availing ourselves of the multiple possibilities for spiritual growth and kingdom service offered through general providence.

Finally, knowledge of probability and providence can inform our pastoral care and aid our discernment skills, although always secondarily to reliance on the Holy Spirit. We can remind sufferers of the multiplicity of causal factors. We can avoid mentioning only positive outcomes and be aware of silent sufferers, harboring guilt because their prayer was not answered. With respect to discerning divine action, while affirming that God does act in creation and in our lives, we should exercise caution, remembering the multiplicity of factors involved in any occurrence as well as God's respect for freedom and his preference for care over control. Some theologians, writing on discernment, note that decision making has both cognitive and emotional components. They recommend that we avoid narrow intellectual paradigms, be aware of our fallibility, and actively, prayerfully participate in Christian communities.[77] I further suggest that statistical theory may offer guidance with respect to discerning divine action. With respect to the evaluation of miracles, Christopher Knight helpfully points out the differences in perspective: a physicist would assess a miracle based on the event probability and the witness reliability; a theist would assess it according to its function as a sign of God's activity and its compatibility with what is known about divine purposes.[78] I suggest that both can be helpful. For example, a low probability event with spiritual significance, perhaps associated with extraordinary amounts of prayer, may be viewed as divine intervention.

The triune Lord is the ultimate creator, redeemer, and sustainer. We can be certain of God's love for us, our salvation through Christ, and the ubiquitous presence of the Holy Spirit. We can also be certain of his desire for us to be transformed into his likeness, to care for his creation, and to share the Good News. However, we should also delight in mystery and avoid attributing every event in our lives to the direct action of God. Divine providence renders creation a probabilistic space with multiple potentialities. Consequently, probability theory can provide a helpful perspective on divine providence.

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77 E.g., Evan B. Howard, *Affirming the Touch of God: A Psychological and Philosophical Exploration of Christian Discernment* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2000); Gordon T. Smith, *The Voice of Jesus* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003); Dallas Willard, *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God.* 4th Ed. (Downers Grove: IVP, 2012).

78 Knight, *God of Nature:* 36–40.

What Does Cain Have to Do with Eve?: Philo's *Quod deterius potiori insidiari* 1.78 and 1 Timothy 2:12—Exploring an Overlooked Parallel

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Abstract

Paul's use of the *hapax legomena* αὐθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2:12 has occasioned no small amount of debate. However, Philo's use of the αὐθεντέω word group, while noted, has gone unexplored. A careful examination of the literary and theological dimensions of Philo's use of αὐθέντης (Det. 1:78) supports the notion that 1 Timothy 2:12 is concerned with correcting abusive behavior, not permanently banning women from leadership in the Christian church.

> *"I don't allow a wife to teach or to control her husband. Instead, she should be a quiet listener"* (1 Tim 2:12 CEB).

In the American evangelical gender debate,[1] no single verse has played a more important role in limiting the ministerial leadership of women than 1 Tim 2:12. While other verses are often cited by those who would prohibit the full inclusion of women within the evangelical realm (e.g., 1 Cor 11:2–16; 14:34–35), no other verse is claimed with such staunch authority as "clear." Those within evangelicalism who affirm the ordination of women—the present author included—readily concede the complexity of 1 Tim 2:12. In reality, however, the truth is that 1 Tim 2:12 is anything but "clear."[2] Debates rage over the nature of the "teaching," the question of the man–women/husband–wife relationship,[3] and especially Paul's

1 Where I mention "evangelicalism" here, I have in mind the particular American variety.

2 For an important contribution concerning the supposed "clarity" of 1 Tim 2:12, see Jamin Hübner, "Revisiting the Clarity of Scripture in 1 Timothy 2:12," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 59.1 (2016): 99–117. Hübner rightly cites five aspects of the passage—although more could be mentioned—that render such an assertion (re: "clarity") as problematic. For a larger treatment of this issue, see J.M. Holmes, *Text in a Whirlwind: A Critique of Four Exegetical Devices at 1 Timothy 2:9*–15, Library of New Testament Studies 196 (New York; T&T Clark, 2000).

3 See Cynthia Long Westfall, *Paul and Gender: Reclaiming the Apostle's Vision for Men and Women in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 286ff., for a compelling discussion on the plausible household structure of 1 Tim 2:9–15.

use[4] of the *hapax legomena* αὐθεντεῖν, "to control." If one opens any modern English translation of 1 Tim 2, one can immediately see the complexity of translating this infinitive. Numerous English translations of αὐθεντεῖν render it as, "to exercise authority,"[5] "usurp authority,"[6] "to have authority,"[7] or "to assume authority over."[8] The Common English Bible translation cited above glosses the verb as "to control."

How one understands the nuances of the αὐθεντεῖν in 1 Tim 2:12 generally determines the outcome of the exegetical debate over women's ordination.[9] To give an example, The Baptist Faith and Message (BF&M) 2000, which is the theological statement for the Southern Baptist Convention, concludes in Article VI that "[w]hile both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture." First Timothy 2:9–14 (they curiously do not include v. 15) is one of the primary texts the BF&M utilizes for this conclusion.

And since the debate over women's ordination—as least within evangelicalism—has been largely focused on the meaning of αὐθεντεῖν, the general approach in arriving at a position on the matter has been through appeals to lexicons.[10] But especially given that the most influential New Testament lexicon, BDAG, is rather deficient in its bibliography on this lexeme,[11] it should be clear that merely appealing to lexicons is inadequate and will not settle this debate.

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4 While the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles is disputed, I suspect Paul is the authorial overseer of all three epistles and thus will refer to the author as "Paul" throughout this epistle. All translations of the texts in question are mine unless otherwise noted.

5 ESV

6 KJV

7 NRSV

8 NIV

9 This is not meant to imply that one text governs the totality of the evidence. Rather, I am simply noting that the weight placed on 1 Tim 2:12 by the complementarian (or patriarchal) interpretation should not be used as a heuristic device to interpret all the Pauline data—including Paul's references to women in Rom 16:1–16 and elsewhere. On the contours of the debate over women's ordination within evangelicalism, see Mark Chavez, *Ordaining Women: Culture & Conflict in Religious Organizations* (New Haven: Harvard University Press, 1997) and Julie Ingersoll, *Evangelical Christian Women: War Stories in the Gender Battles* (New York: New York University, 2003).

10 Appeals to various English lexicons have long been a staple of evangelical argumentation especially as it relates to the debate over women's ordination in 1 Tim 2:12 (1 Cor 11:3 is also often included in this debate via the "head" [κεφαλὴ] lexeme).

11 BDAG (1034) glosses the verb: "αὐθεντέω [αὐθέντης gener. = 'one who takes matters into one's own hands'] 'function in a directive manner', w. gen. exercise authority over, w. διδάσκω in effect = *tell a man what to do* 1 Ti 2:12." See Stanley E. Porter's forceful criticisms of BDAG in *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament: Studies in Tools, Methods, and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 69. Louw-Nida, one of the more linguistically informed lexicons, similarly suggests that the verb denotes control in a domineering manner: "'to control, to domineer.' γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω . . . αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρός 'I do not allow women . . . to dominate men' 1 Tm 2.12. 'To control in a domineering manner' is often expressed idiomatically, for example, 'to shout orders at,' 'to act like a chief toward,' or 'to bark at'" (37.21).

The scholarly debate over αὐθεντεῖν has resulted in dozens of word studies across a quarter decade.[12] Among the most in-depth recent studies across the literature concerning this verb include the work of Philip B. Payne,[13] Cynthia Long Westfall,[14] Al Wolters,[15] and Jamin Hübner.[16] A consensus seems to be emerging where interpreters see the verb (within Paul's context) as denoting a sort of dysfunctional or even aggressive relationship between men and women in 1 Tim 2:12.[17]

Yet, these word studies have centered largely on Greco-Roman sources and their utilization of the verb αὐθεντέω, with varying degrees of linguistic precision and nuance. However, there is a seemingly overlooked parallel that has gone overlooked within the scholarly discussion. This parallel is found in Philo of Alexandria's *Quod deterius potiori insidiari* (*The Worse Attacks the Better*) 1.78. The term similarly appears as a *hapax legomena* and Philo uses the noun αὐθέντης rather than the verb, which might explain why some have opted to exclude it from study.[18] However, as Westfall has pointed out, "Modern lexicographers do not support a methodology that excludes the cognates [verbs, nouns, and other word forms] in determining the meaning of a word."[19] That is to say, Philo's use of the noun αὐθέντης and Paul's use of the verb αὐθεντέω should be viewed alongside each other, not separately.

This study will attempt to explore Philo of Alexandria's use of the noun and how Philo's usage might inform how one understands Paul's language in 1 Tim 2:12.[20] I will translate and explain the relevant portion of Philo's text, and then attempt to locate the literary and linguistic correspondence between Philo and Paul. The goal is to see how we might consider (or reconsider) Paul's language as it relates to his theological view of Eve, deception, and ethics.

12 See the references in Jamin Hübner, "Revisiting αὐθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2:12: What Do the Extant Data Really Show?," *Journal of the Study of Paul and His Letters* 5.1 (2015): 41 n. 1.

13 Philip B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 361–90.

14 Westfall, *Paul and Gender*, 290–94; Cynthia Long Westfall, "The Meaning of αὐθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2:12," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 10 (2014): 138–73.

15 Al Wolters, "The Meaning of αὐθεντέω," in Andreas J. Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner, eds, *Women in the Church: An Interpretation & Application of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016), 65–115.

16 Hübner, "Revisiting αὐθεντέω."

17 That Paul is prohibiting a specific type of activity in 1 Tim 2:12 suggests that he does not view what is taking place positively.

18 The studies by Westfall, Payne, and Hübner do not discuss the parallel.

19 Westfall, "The Meaning of αὐθεντέω," 146.

20 Given the rarity of the word group under dispute, it is interesting to see a lack of engagement with Philo's sole use of the word in the relevant scholarship. My goal here is to thus explore this gap.

Introducing Philo's *The Worse Attacks the Better* 1.78

Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20–15 BCE to 40–50 CE)[21] is perhaps the most significant Jewish philosopher of the first century. His surviving corpus extends far beyond the length of the New Testament and is filled with perplexing philosophical insights and allegorical exegesis of the Hebrew Bible. He lived during the time of Jesus and Paul, dying around 49 CE,[22] at the approximate time of the composition of 1 Thessalonians.[23] Philo's prodigious thought and work were even mentioned in early Christian literature by authors like Clement of Alexandria.[24] Philo, a first-century Jewish philosopher, is in many ways a linguistic and historical necessity for the study of Paul due to him being Paul's contemporary as well as his use of similar lexemes and even literary traditions.

Philo begins his commentary on the story of Cain and Abel in *The Worse Attacks the Better* (abbreviated "Det.") with a reference to Gen 4:8 LXX: "And Cain said to his brother Abel, 'let us travel into the countryside.' And while they were in the countryside, Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him" (Det. 1:1). In a display of "power" or "force" (κράτος), Cain murders Abel (Det. 1:1). Reflecting on Cain's brutality, Philo spends the totality of this work exploring the significance of this event. With this contextual key in mind, let us look at Philo's use of our *hapax legomena* that occurs in *The Worse Attacks the Better* 1:78. The text reads as follows:

> Therefore, anyone who loves one's self (φίλαυτος),[25] via[26] the surname Cain, must learn (διδαχθήτω)[27] that he has slaughtered the namesake of Abel, his image,[28] his individuality, the iconic image according to the type (τύπον),[29] not the archetype, not the family, not the outer form, which he expects to destroy (συνεφθαρκέναι) although they are living

21 Torrey Seland, ed., *Reading Philo: A Handbook to Philo of Alexandria* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 4. For an exploration of the chronology of Philo's life as well as a superb exploration of his writings, see Maren R. Neihoff, *Philo of Alexandria: An Intellectual Biography*, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), ch. 1.

22 Cf. Neihoff, *Philo.*

23 While settling on any construction of a Pauline chronology is difficult, I find the case made by Douglas Campbell in *Framing Paul: An Epistolary Biography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014) to be reasonable and compelling. As such, 1 Thessalonians is perhaps Paul's first letter.

24 Jennifer Otto, *Philo of Alexandria and the Construction of Jewishness in Early Christian Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1–2.

25 2 Tim 3:2. So also Josephus, *Antiquities* 3:190; 5:215.

26 The lack of a preposition here suggests that the person who is a "lover of self" participates in the surname of Cain, perhaps in a similar way as a person participates "in Christ" in Pauline thought (cf. Gal 3:27–29). The accusative most probably refers to the "manner" or "respect," insofar as the result of the actions of the "lover of self" result in a person being identified within the "surname of Cain."

27 Cf. 1 Tim 2:12; 1 Cor 11:14, 12:28–29; 1 Tim 2:7; 4:1.

28 Cf. Col 1:15.

29 Cf. Rom 5:14; Rom 6:17, which additionally includes the term διδαχῆς ("teaching").

> immortal creatures. Let anyone say to him, railing violently at him (κατακερτομῶν):[30] "Oh, what have you done, oh evil genius! Do you not think to slay the one who loves God's glory, that you do not also dwell before God? You have become a murderer[31] of yourself (σαυτοῦ δὲ γέγονας αὐθέντης), having slain (ἀνελών) by ambush the only abilb ity you have to live a blameless life."

Contextualizing Philo's *The Worse Attacks the Better* 1:78

The first aspect of Philo's discourse here is an interpretation of the Cain and Abel narrative in Gen 4 LXX. Beneath his use of these twin historical figures lies a philosophical (φιλοσοφίαν) or even typological foundation (cf. Philo, Sacr. 1:1). Elsewhere, Cain is previously called a "lover of self" (φιλαύτῳ Κάιν), "filled with undiluted evil" (ἀκράτου κακίας ἐνεφορήθη[32]) toward his brother (Det. 1:68). Cain as the titular "lover of self" (φίλαυτον) is also contrasted with his brother Abel, who is a "lover of God" (φιλόθεον) (Philo, Sacr. 1:3).[33] Indeed, from Philo's philosophical mindset, Cain is perhaps the quintessential representative of the φίλαυτον—a *type* of individual who is more interested in aggrandizement and the pursuit of passion. Cain functions as a category of person who is brazenly unethical and has exercised a severe and fatal dominion over a cherished family member. At the beginning of Philo's discourse (Det. 1:69), one sees the immediate connection to the rest of the section: Cain's murder of Abel serves as a pedagogical stepping-stone to speculate about various virtues and vices.

Philo rivals Paul's own philosophical complexity and shares with him many similar concerns.[34] Both authors are concerned with ethical conduct: Paul with women and men or perhaps husband and wife relationships, and Philo with those sophists who purport to be wise and are instead operating like Cain (Det. 1:72). In Philo's rather devastating critique, he sees in such persons a deep and abiding sense of emotional and personal instability:

> But when they [the sophists] sing praises of their intelligence

30 Philo's use of **κατακερτομέω** reflects the attitude of a man "railing against" passion, yet ultimately succumbing to it (*De specialibus legibus* 4:81) and also to a man's children "jeering" him on (*De virtutibus* 1:202).

31 Or "destroyer," "abuser." Note, though, the context suggests physical violence.

32 Philo's use of the aorist verb ἐνεφορήθη suggests that the long process of Cain's contempt toward Abel has reached a boiling point of no return.

33 Abel often represents, in much the same manner, the "lover of God" (Det. 1:32, 48, 103).

34 Cf. the more popular introduction by Joseph R. Dodson and David E. Briones, eds., *Paul and the Giants of Philosophy: Reading the Apostle in Greco-Roman Context* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019) and the more in-depth work by Max J. Lee, *Moral Transformation in Greco-Roman Philosophy of Mind: Mapping the Moral Milieu of the Apostle Paul and his Diaspora Jewish Contemporaries*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020).

> (φρόνησιν), self-control (σωφροσύνην), righteousness (δικαιοσύνην), and godliness (εὐσέβειαν), they are then demonstrating that they are most of all senseless (ἀφραίνοντες), licentious (ἀκολασταίνοντες), unjust (ἀδικοῦντες), and godless (ἀσεβοῦντες) in every way. (Det. 1:73)

Despite their alleged wisdom and philosophical prowess, Philo is not content to simply leave the sophists to their own understanding of his language—he goes deeper: these sophists practice things that are "shameful" or "degrading" (δ' αἴσχιστα) (1:74). Such parallels mirror Paul's own language toward the women mentioned in 1 Tim 2:9–10.[35] In essence, the uneducated sophists in Philo's critique are falling into the typological narrative reality of Cain. That is, they are "in Cain" in the same way as others are "in Adam" in Paul's typological thought world (Rom 5:12–19; 1 Cor 15:22). As such, Cain's slaying of Abel is his intense renunciation of the ethical life, leaving Cain (and those who are acting like him) in ethical contempt and forsakenness. Because the sophists lack "instruction" (παιδείας), they are deeply confused (Det. 1:77), deprived of discernment and propriety.[36] The sophist is, therefore, a "lover of self" (1:78)—like Cain.

New Testament writers other than Paul similarly utilized the Cain narrative and tradition to describe evil deeds. While lacking exact parallelism to Philo, the author of 1 John does utilize Cain as a negative example of ethical conduct. Specifically, the author notes that Cain came "from the evil one" (ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν), whose "works were evil" (ὅτι τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ πονηρὰ ἦν) (1 John 3:12). Jude 1:11 makes a similar point about false teachers "going in the way of Cain" (τῇ ὁδῷ τοῦ Κάϊν), indicating their inevitable destruction. In the New Testament, then, Cain remains a negative historical-typological example of someone who has acted with unethical aplomb.

To summarize this point, within Jewish literature, including the New Testament, and in our example in Philo, Cain serves as a pedagogical tool to instruct readers about the negative impact of sin and self-centeredness that lies at the heart of selfishness. Adam and Eve and other biblical figures are utilized in this way as well. As we shall see, this observation has some serious implications for how we might reconsider Paul's seemingly caustic (and contradictory, if we consider his other words concerning the equality of women) prohibition of women's conduct in 1 Tim 2:12.

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35 For instance, Paul desires that the women act with "mental soundness" (σωφροσύνης) (1 Tim 2:10), and Philo castigates his interlocutors who believe they are "mentally sound" (σωφροσύνην) (Det. 1:73). They are clearly operating with the same concept.

36 Cf. 1 Tim 1:18–20 and the curious case of the expulsion of Hymenaeus and Alexander, along with the hopeful note that they will "*learn* not to blaspheme" (παιδευθῶσι μὴ βλασφημεῖ).

Bridging the Linguistic and Theological Parallels Between Cain and Eve

For Philo's purpose, the story of Cain and Abel serves as a moral or ethical case study. It is perhaps possible Paul feels the same about Adam and Eve. Let us now examine closely four linguistic, literary, and theological parallels between *The Worse Attacks the Better* and 1 Tim 2:12.

In the first instance, Paul and Philo both use the verb **διδάσκω** (διδαχθήτω in Det. 1:78; διδάσκειν in 1 Tim 2:12) within a pedagogical context. Philo desires that the reader be taught (διδαχθήτω) so as not to be "senseless, licentious, unjust, and godless" (Det 1:73). For Paul, the women are also told to "learn" (μανθανέτω) in order that they might avoid the trapping of authoritarianism (taking αὐθεντεῖν as a negative activity that is worth prohibiting) (1 Tim 2:11),[37] which mirrors the imperative found in Det. 1:78 (διδαχθήτω in the passive).[38] Without discernment and education,[39] both the women in Ephesus and Philo's own readers will collapse into unethical behavior—that is, if they haven't already fallen into such things (1 Tim 5:13–16).[40]

As with Philo and Paul, Sirach likewise affirmed the necessity of learning, among other Jewish thinkers. For instance, in Sir 18:19 we read, "Before you speak (λαλῆσαι), you must learn (μάνθανε) and before you become ill, take care of yourself."[41] The necessity of personal learning is repeated by Philo as well in the same book where he talks about the instability of the unlearned person as the recipient of knowledge: "for the opinions of those who have only lately begun to learn (τῶν ἄρτι μανθάνειν) are unstable and without any firm foundation" (Det. 1:12). The readers of Philo and Paul are to learn so that they will not fall into the patterns of Cain or of Eve, where the self takes control and wields authority over the other.

The second linguistic and theological parallel is the dual use of "self-control" lexemes (σωφροσύνην in Det. 1:73; σωφροσύνης in 1 Tim 2:9, 15) where both authors are adamant that persons exercise self-control over their impulses, unlike (1) Cain who did not exercise self-restraint in his murder of Abel, and (2) the women in Ephesus who wielded control over the men, resulting in the usurpation

37 In terms of logical coherence, there is no reason for an author to prohibit a positive or ethical activity.

38 While the Greek words are not *semantically* related, their rhetorical *function* is the same.

39 C.f. Craig S. Keener, "Women's Education and Public Speech in Antiquity," *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 50.4 (2007): 747–59.

40 See I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, International Critical Commentary (London: T&T Clark, 1999), 601ff.

41 Another use of "speaking" language as applied to women in the Pauline corpus is found in 1 Cor 14:34–35, but this passage is textually dubious and is unlikely to have been penned by Paul. See Philip B. Payne, "A Summary of Vaticanus Distigme-obelos Symbols Marking Added Text, Including 1 Corinthians 14.34–5." *New Testament Studies* 63 (2017) 604–25.

of their individuality and autonomy, and even jeopardizing their life and standing before God.[42] The exercise of self-restraint and learning represents a palpable link between Philo and Paul.

The third parallel is the utilization and context of the verb γίνομαι (γέγονας in Det. 1:78; γέγονεν in 1 Tim 2:14) to suggest a change of behavior or status, moving from a positive or meaningful relationship to a corrosive or negative one. To be more precise, the utilization of the verb *itself* does not denote this point (although it certainly is coordinate with it).[43] However, it is employed for each author in contexts where the concept of ethical transformation (or degradation) is overtly present *within* the respective narratives that they engage.

For Paul, Eve functions as someone who "fell into transgression" (1 Tim 2:14), indicating a change in ethical conduct and posture. That is, she "became" a transgressor and collapsed into sin. For Philo, Cain "became" a murderer. Both Eve and Cain are thus transformed via their deeds from one state of ethical placement (righteousness in Eve's case and innocence in that of Cain) into another (transgression and murder, respectively). In both instances, the author is showcasing a negative occurrence where a person falls and becomes something they were previously not, shifting their status into the realm of sin. The individual, functioning typologically, is set as a negative example of what the ancient reader should avoid.[44] Hence, the use of the common verb between Paul and Philo is illustrative of this same point within their shared contextual focus.

The fourth and final parallel between the two passages is also the most important and obvious: the use of the αὐθεντέω/αὐθέντης word group itself. In both instances, this word group is used in context to refer to the exercising of control of one person or group over another. This understanding is confirmed by Cynthia Westfall's thorough analysis of the verb and its cognates as carrying the basic sense of "unrestrictive force."[45] The women in Ephesus were centered on themselves, seeking to wield control over the men in the congregation in the same way that Cain wielded complete sovereignty over Abel through the act of *killing* him.

The parallel cannot, of course, be pressed further for complete linguistic symmetry, as there is no hard evidence that the women in Ephesus were involved in

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42 Cf. Westfall, "The Meaning of αὐθεντέω." She explains: "My analysis suggests the basic semantic concept of the word αὐθεντέω can be described as the autonomous use or possession of unrestricted force" (166–67).

43 Such a lexeme is quite common in the New Testament.

44 Similarly, Paul and Philo do not place any specificity upon the gender of the person in their statements. For Paul, he has already dealt with the heretical false teachers (1 Tim 1:20) and the pedagogical function of Eve serves to incorporate the women (or wives) back into the realm of sound teaching.

45 Westfall, "The Meaning of αὐθεντέω."

violence toward the men.[46] However, in his survey of the verb, Al Wolters has offered the following glosses of the noun form: "doer," "murderer," "master."[47]

Wolters continues that

> [t]he verb αὐθεντέω should not be interpreted in the light of αὐθέντης 'murderer', or the muddled definitions of it given in the Atticistic lexica. Instead, it should be understood, like all the other Hellenistic derivatives of αὐθέντης in the light of the meaning which that word had in the living Greek of the day, namely 'master.'[48]

Accordingly, one could be critical of the three glosses and their immediate relevance to the usages we find in the first century.[49] Nevertheless, I suggest that all three glosses are relevant here due to the following contextual factors: (1) the use of the active tense form of γέγοναϛ to denote Cain's agency and activity toward Abel; (2) Cain's use of "power" (κράτος) over Abel (Det. 1:1); and especially (3) the fact that Cain "killed" (ἀνελών) Abel.

These contextual factors taken with Westfall's analysis of the word group noted above, suggest that the relevance of all three of Wolters glosses is certainly plausible and indeed entirely coordinate with both passages. By inflicted "unrestricted force" over another agent, Philo concludes that Cain (and the person "in Cain") has forsaken his ability to participate in the ethical life. Cain exerted dominion, becoming the ultimate authoritarian over Abel by murdering him. Cain supplanted God's own divine prerogatives granted in Gen 1:26ff. and wielded authority over his helpless younger brother—ultimately removing and destroying his image and individuality. The Ephesian women, according to Paul, were guilty of falling into a similar trap based on abusive activity towards men.

In short, αὐθέντης in Philo is polysemous, carrying the multiple layers of

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46 Paul's instructions for them to learn "to avoid violence" seems like a gratuitously underwhelming response to a potential egregious interpersonal situation.

47 Al Wolters, "A Semantic Study of αὐθέντης and Its Derivatives," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 1 (2000): 145–75, 153. He concludes that "by the first century AD, αὐθέντης in the living language meant 'master', and the meaning 'murderer' was largely forgotten," (153). Both sentences are at odds with each other. One cannot claim that a word means something and then suggest that another meaning was largely forgotten. Such a statement lacks coherence. Westfall is rightly critical of this bifurcation ("The Meaning of αὐθεντέω," 170 n. 87). Wolters also does not consider Philo's own utilization of αὐθέντης in relation to the violence wrought by Cain over Abel. Wolters writes, "αὐθέντης 'murderer' was at home *only* (emphasis mine) in the literary language of the classical period. Philo's use of αὐθέντης in this article is not within the classical period." Additionally, Wolters's response to Westfall's analysis in his postscript to his essay *in Women in the Church* says 12 uses of αὐθεντέω (out of 43) do not correspond to Westfall's linguistic point. Put another way, roughly *three-quarters* of the occurrences of αὐθεντέω *do* in fact correspond to Westfall's analysis, which is a substantial admission.

48 Albert Wolters, "A Semantic Study of αὐθέντης and Its Derivatives," *Journal of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 11.1 (2006): 47–65, 54.

49 For additional criticism of Wolter's methodology, see Hübner, "Revisiting αὐθεντέω," 62–65.

meaning pointed out above. In the use of this term, then, Philo indicates that Cain acted like a brutal authoritarian by killing Abel.

Cain, Eve, and 1 Timothy 2:12: Some Theological Considerations

So, what does Cain have to do with Eve? One can easily surmise that the women in the Ephesian churches were among those most impacted and deceived by the heretical teachings of Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim 1:18–20). For example, Timothy is enjoined to "command" a group of "certain persons" (τισὶν)[50] "to not teach contrary doctrine" (1 Tim 1:3). These false teachers are concerned with "myths and endless genealogies" (1:4) and have "deviated and wandered into meaningless disputations" (1:6).[51] This theme of self-centered and deceptive activity culminates in Paul's discussion of women in 1 Tim 2:8–15, who are clearly addressed here in light of particular circumstances relevant to the occasion of the letter.[52]

Rather than being concerned with wealth and opulence, Paul offers a better way. They are to be concerned with "self-control" (2:9) in the same way as Philo suggests for his readers (Det. 1:73). Paul's ethical discourse here is centered on virtue and godly character, which is far more important than the status that comes with wealth.[53] This includes their activity as women in the church and their "good deeds" (ἔργων ἀγαθῶν) in 2:10. The emphasis on "quietness" (ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ) is meant to counter the perpetuation of "false doctrine" (1:3), especially in relation to the women "learning" in 2:11.

In keeping with the notion of ethical transformation in Philo, the imperative to learn (μανθανέτω) (1) suggests a transforming of the heart and mind through a humbled posture (cf. esp. 1 Tim 5:4),[54] and (2) represents a significant defense against the dissemination of false doctrine. In Rom 16:17, Paul likewise calls the Roman churches to similar ethical commitment predicated upon "the teaching" (τὴν διδαχὴν) that they have "learned" (ἐμάθετε) in light of individuals or groups disseminating problematic ideas ("making divisions and scandals") contrary to such teaching.

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50 The plural use reflects the two individuals mentioned in 1:20, and perhaps the women as well mentioned later in 1 Timothy. See also τινες in 1 Tim 1:6, 19.

51 Some have rejected the faith provided by Christ and "have made shipwreck of their faith" (1:19). The grammar suggests that their names are the aforementioned Hymenaeus and Alexander, and they are guilty of "blasphemy" (1:20).

52 With the possible exception of 1 Cor 7:1–16; 11:2–16; and perhaps 14:34–35 if original, there does not appear any specific instances in the Pauline corpus where women are specifically singled out based on their being deceived by false teachers. However, there are no false teachers mentioned in 1 Corinthians.

53 The negative counterpart to his exhortation, μὴ ἐν πλέγμασιν καὶ χρυσίῳ ἢ μαργαρίταις ἢ ἱματισμῷ πολυτελεῖ, (2:9b), confirms this point.

54 On a negative note, Paul points out that some women have conversely "learned" to be careless (1 Tim 5:13).

Second Timothy 3:6–8 perhaps best sums up the disposition of the false teachers along with the problem pertaining to women in the Ephesian churches:

> Some will slither into households and control immature women who are burdened with sins and driven by all kinds of desires. These women are always learning (μανθάνοντα), but they can never arrive at an understanding of the truth. These people[55] oppose the truth in the same way that Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses. Their minds are corrupt and their faith is counterfeit. (CEB)

The problems of false teaching affecting women in the Ephesian churches was a living reality for Paul, a reality that needed to be confronted and turned around.[56] Such correction could only happen through the ethical transformation of the women who were being deceived.

With all the above in mind, we may take a fresh look at 1 Tim 2:12 and its context in light of Philo's linguistic and philosophical understanding of Cain. Paul writes, διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω, οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρός, ἀλλ᾽ εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ. The women are the subject of Paul's address and he seemed to view the women's conduct as authoritarian and abusive. His use of the negated infinitive αὐθεντεῖν in context suggests that what is being perpetuated by the women in Ephesus is destructive. The solution given by Paul in 2:11 is that they learn "in full submission" and "in quietness."

Cain's activity in being an αὐθέντης toward Abel resulted in Abel's death. The women's conduct toward men is viewed as a form of mastery over the other, a controlling or domineering activity that must be restricted due to its ethical malpractice. As such, αὐθέντης and αὐθεντεῖν are coordinate in meaning and suggest that an abusive or authoritarian relationship is at the root of the conflict for both Philo and Paul. In each case, in view is the gratuitous display of force by an agent (or a group of agents) over and against another. The subsequent prepositional phrase in 1 Tim 2:12b, ἀλλ᾽ εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ, helps clarify the previous clause. The women were deceived and uneducated, and the *solution* is a quiet attitude as opposed to their domineering or authoritarian approach.

Finally, there is nothing in the text of 1 Tim 2:12 that suggests a permanent ban on women's ecclesiastical position within the church. Paul's subsequent utilization of the Adam and Eve narrative matches that of the Cain and Abel narrative for Philo. Cain's relationship with Abel was centered on an abuse of power, and Eve's relationship with Adam is marked by deception and the assumption of authority.

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55 The false teachers are explicitly called φίλαυτοι in 2 Tim 3:2, echoing Philo's own condemnation of the "sophists" in Det. 1:69–78.

56 For a survey of Paul's opponents in the pastoral letters, see Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 41ff.

Given that Paul rules out inequitable power dynamics within marriage relationships in 1 Cor 7:3–5 and Eph 5:21–33,[57] it makes good sense that Paul would prohibit the use of aggressive or destructive force within churches or households—regardless of the gender of the person or group perpetuating said force.

Both Eve and Cain function as typological *and* pedagogical examples of what happens when someone acts with authoritarian tendencies over another. It can lead to the dissemination of heresy, or worse, direct harm (physical or otherwise), as in Abel's case. God's response to Cain was to curse him (Det. 1:96, 103) and Cain is therefore viewed by Philo as a type of the evil ones, dwelling in pain and fear (Det. 1:140), even though God promises to preserve Cain's life (Det. 1:165ff.) and marks him accordingly (Det. 1:177). The promise made to Eve (Gen 3:15ff. LXX) is found in a return to "self-control" (σωφροσύνης) (2:15) and through the salvific work of Christ (1 Tim 2:4–6).[58] Eve functions as a narrative type for the whole church (2 Cor 11:3) as well as an example for the women in Ephesus who were deceived and led astray by Satan. By their learning in a manner that reflects humbleness and reverence, they would eventually be included among those "faithful people [πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις] who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2).[59]

In sum, Paul's response to the deceived women is not their expulsion from the fledgling Ephesian churches or their permanent silence or subordination. Rather, he requires that they adopt a virtuous posture of learning and cultivate godliness in place of authoritarianism and selfishness.

Conclusion

The goal of this article was to explore two parallel *hapax legomena* found in Paul and Philo and see where the two shall meet. We have seen that there are considerable interpretive possibilities (both exegetically and theologically) between both Paul and Philo, especially as they relate to the notions of power and ethical conduct. Philo's use of αὐθέντης to describe the relationship between Cain and Abel has shown that the αὐθέν-word group (when used to describe human relationships) seems to consistently denote disparity and power imbalances, including abuses of power leading to violent retribution. This is coordinate with Paul's use of the infinitive in 1 Tim 2:12 where he is addressing the dynamics of power and

57 See Payne, *Man and Woman*, ch. 5; Westfall, *Paul and Gender*, 92–102; Ronald W. Pierce, "1 Corinthians 7: Paul's Neglected Treatise on Gender," *Priscilla Papers* 23.3 (2009): 8–13.

58 See Allison M. Quient, "Eve Christology: Embodiment, Gender, and Salvation," *The Canadian-American Theological Review* 6.2 (2017): 65–84. We will leave aside the matter of "childbirth" in 1 Tim 2:15, as it will take us far beyond the scope of this article. See the competing interpretations offered in Payne, *Man and Woman*, ch. 22; Westfall, *Paul and Gender*, ch. 9.

59 Paul's gender-inclusive language here is often mistakenly given a masculine rendering in our English translations.

the activity of deceived women who are acting in an authoritarian manner over others. We have also seen that both Paul and Philo are keen to use historical figures for pedagogical purposes within a theological narrative and particularly that Paul has a constructive and positive response to the abuses at play: to learn in a godly manner that reflects a heart focused on Christ (1 Tim 2:11).

Such a conclusion does not place Paul at odds with himself, especially if one includes his clear affirmations of gifted and called women in ministerial authority (e.g., Phoebe in Rom 16:1–2; Junia in Rom 16:7;[60] Euodia and Syntyche in Phil 4:2-3; Apphia in Philm 1:2), his theology of sonship and baptism that disallows gender disparities (Gal 3:26–29), as well as his pneumatology whereby women are included in the charismatic gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 11:5; 12:12–28; Rom 12:6–8).[61]

In all, my conclusion regarding Paul's admonition toward women in 1 Tim 2:12 is in line with those drawn by Payne, Hübner, and Westfall, and may serve to provide additional support to their arguments. As such, those who would wish to utilize 1 Tim 2:12 to bar women from serving in the highest forms of ecclesiastical leadership must additionally contend with Philo's parallel usage of αὐθέντης in *Quod deterius potiori insidiari* 1.78.

Summary of Linguistic and Theological Parallels Between Cain and Eve

	Cain in Det. 1:78 (and *passim*)	Women & Eve in 1 Tim 2:9–15
1.	The reader is encouraged to learn/ pedagogical use of "learning" lexemes (διδαχθήτω).	The women need "to learn" (μανθανέτω) (2:11) in a submissive posture, echoing quietness instead of strife (ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ) (2:11–12).
2.	Cain acted with sovereign authority/ violent power over another agent (Abel) (αὐθέντης).	The women acted in a controlling or domineering manner toward another agent/ (their husbands/men) (αὐθεντέω).
3.	"Self-control" (σωφροσύνην) is a vital virtue for the reader so as to avoid being a "sophist" (Det. 1:73).	"Self-control" (σωφροσύνης) is a vital virtue and urgent need for the women in Ephesus (2:9) and is viewed as a corrective ethical measure.
4.	Cain "becomes" (γέγονας) a murderer, destroying his life, and becoming a sinner. The "being" verb denotes (negative) transformation.	The women (like Eve) have "become" (γέγονεν) transgressors, acting over others via the flaunting of their status (2:9–10). The being verb denotes (negative) transformation.

60 On Junia's apostleship, see Yii-Jan Lin, "Junia: An Apostle Before Paul," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 139.1 (2020): 191–209.

61 For a coherent and comprehensive work on this particular aspect of Pauline theology, see Westfall, *Paul and Gender*.

BOOK REVIEWS

Kristin Kobes Du Mez. *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation.* New York: Liveright, 2020. Pp. 356. Hardcover. ISBN 978-1-631495731. $28.95 (USD).

There has been a flurry of books recently released on conservative evangelicalism, especially in the political and social sciences. Kristin Kobes Du Mez, Professor of History at Calvin University, takes a more historical-cultural approach similar to her mentor George Marsden[1] in *Jesus and John Wayne.* The primary intersection of her analysis involves (a) masculinity, patriarchy, and militarism; (b) fundamentalist theology; and (c) American politics and nationalism in the twentieth century.

Having already been covered in media venues such as NPR and Vox, *Jesus and John Wayne* is largely known for one of its central theses: white conservative evangelicals in America do not support President Trump begrudgingly, but *enthusiastically because* of (not despite) his character. Furthermore, this love affair for tough-guys goes way back:

> Conventional wisdom tells us that fundamentalists and evangelicals retreated from public view and political engagement after the Scopes Monkey Trial in 1925, or with the end of Prohibition in 1933, or out of a desire to focus on individual soul-saving, or due to various combinations of the above, only to reappear on the national stage in the 1970s, seemingly out of nowhere. But as we will see, the roots of a militarized and politicized evangelical masculinity stretch back to earlier in American history.
>
> Antecedents can be found in the nineteenth-century southern evangelicalism and in early-twentieth-century "muscular Christianity," but it was in the 1940s and 1950s that a potent mix of patriarchal "gender traditionalism," militarism, and Christian nationalism coalesced to form the basis of a revitalized evangelical identity. With Billy Graham at the vanguard, evangelicals believed that they had a special role to play in keeping America Christian, American families strong, and the nation secure. The assertion of masculine power would accomplish these goals. (11)

1 George Marsden (Notre Dame) is known for his seminal work on American evangelicalism and fundamentalism.

The incentives for strong male protection were ultimately based on fear—and "evangelical fears were real."

> Yet these fears were not simply a natural response to changing times. For decades, evangelical leaders had worked to stoke them. Their own power depended on in. Men like James Dobson, Bill Gothard, Jerry Falwell, Tim LaHaye, Mark Driscoll, Franklin Graham, and countless lesser lights invoked a sense of peril in order to offer fearful followers their own brand of truth and protection. Generations of evangelicals learned to be afraid of communists, feminists, liberals, secular humanists, "the homosexuals," the United Nations, the government, Muslims, and immigrants—and they were primed to respond to those fears by looking to a strong man to rescue them from danger, a man who embodied a God-given, testosterone-driven masculinity. As Robert Jeffress so eloquently expressed in the months before the 2016 election, "I want the meanest, toughest, son-of-a-you-know-what I can find in that role, and I think that's where many evangelicals are." (13–14)[2]

Du Mez's (highly compressed) narrative first sketches the basic elements of American evangelical religion and examines the cultural, religious, and political dynamics of the first and second world war era. In addition to the seminal influence of Theodore Roosevelt, a crucial development was the shift from a relatively nonviolent and non-nationalist faith to a nationalist and militaristic one. "As late as 1952, the NAE [National Association of Evangelicals] had joined mainline groups in denouncing the nation's peacetime militarization, but by the end of the decade, the conflation of 'God and country,' and growing reliance on military might to protect both, meant that Christian nationalism—and evangelicalism itself—would take on a decidedly militaristic bent" (36). This was even more true for the Vietnam war— an event that was rigorously defended by Christian nationalists, and where American soldiers became enshrined in countless books on Christian manhood as exemplary for the next half century. The cowboy model of actor John Wayne consistently appears throughout the book as the answer to both the nation and the church's woes and enemies—not to mention an iconic image that facilitated the rise of cowboy Presidents from Reagan to the Bushes. "Those inspired by Wayne's bravado came to see all of life as a war, and toughness as a virtue" (56). Du Mez's narrative also incorporates the role of whiteness and racism as a compounding element to this particular socio-religious and political culture.

The book then examines the 1950s–1970s ideal for femininity and the

2 On the use of fear more generally in political and authoritarian contexts, note Chris Hedges, *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt* (New York: Nation, 2012), 263.

unprecedented elevation of the nuclear family in American life. Chapter 4, "Discipline and Command," looks at the influence and family models of Bill Gothard and James Dobson. Chapter 5 looks at the influence of Jerry Falwell and the LaHayes, Chapter 6 on Oliver North and Ronald Reagan's administration, and then a continuation of a well-paced analysis and scholarly rhythm into the era of Promise Keepers and the 1990s. By that time, the art and science of evangelical masculinity was refined into countless Bible studies and consumed on a scale like never before. Key here is the influence of John Eldredge, James Dobson, and lesser-known figures like Douglas Wilson. The subordination of women and "leadership" of men became a holy orthodoxy everyone should be fighting for.

Du Mez's story then arrives in the more recent world of the Quiverful movement and homeschool programs, Mark Driscoll's manly megachurch empire,[3] the Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood and its influences, Duck Dynasty, the renewed post-9/11 Christian nationalism and Islamophobia, and the new evangelical-industrial complex of Eric Metaxes, The Gospel Coalition, and Trumpism. "Evangelicals hadn't betrayed their values. Donald Trump was the culmination of their half-century-long pursuit of a militant Christian masculinity. He was the reincarnation of John Wayne . . . a man who wasn't afraid to resort to violence to bring order" (271).

The last chapter before the conclusion "Evangelical Mulligans: A History," is perhaps the most important, as it reveals the results of this entire enterprise: large-scale mass abuse and sexual assault of women and children.[4] Readers unfamiliar with the sources, documents, and events will likely be shocked at how many or most of the big names they read about in the previous fifteen chapters appear in this one. Du Mez demonstrates considerable restraint and generally lets the facts "speak for themselves": the program of toxic masculinity, evangelical nationalism, and religious fundamentalism have staggering costs attached.[5]

In reading *Jesus and John Wayne,* it feels like the author was tossed a slow ball. It became particularly clear after the first few chapters that the enterprise of patriarchy, masculinity, and its direct connections to conservative politics are so explicit, so culturally saturated, and so influential that it hardly required much

3 Note Jamin Andreas Hübner, review of Jessica Johnson, *Biblical Porn: Affect, Labor, and Pastor Mark Driscoll's Evangelical Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press*,* 2018) for *Priscilla Papers* 32:4 (Autumn 2018): 29–30.

4 Du Mez naturally focused more on men's abuse of women and church members than molestation and coverups of children. But it is certainly a part of this story about power in church and family, and in reading the narrative, I couldn't help but be reminded of the scandal(s) and coverups that split the Association of Reformed Baptist Churches in America (ARBCA), Jennifer Greenberg and the Orthodoxy Presbyterian Church, and the countless other similar examples from reformed and Baptist churches that simply do not make major headlines.

5 This is particularly true given the catastrophic effects of sexual and child abuse on society. See Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score* (New York: Penguin, 2014), Part III.

digging. This isn't to cheapen the obvious academic labors involved in the book's production; indeed, the finer details and little-known facts accentuate the narrative in powerful ways. Contemporary readers must also come to grips with what appear to be "strange" facts, such as: "Billy Graham was a lifelong registered democrat" (33) and, "As late as 1971, the Southern Baptist Convention passed a resolution urging states to expand access to abortion" (68).[6]

Official evangelical doctrine appears to have little bearing on political or social decisions (4–6). Quite the opposite: the research and history demonstrate that American evangelicals adapt themselves to whatever person or party promises to give them power, while those same candidates adapt to their image to voters and adopt their pet issues. Bush became a ranch-owner just before starting his election. Reagan invited Falwell, Robertson, and LaHaye to be briefed by Oliver North to gain evangelicals' support in overthrowing the Nicaraguan government. Trump abandoned his support of the democratic party, his pro-choice position, and later got photos with a Bible in front of a church to win the white evangelical vote. In short, there is no question that conservative evangelicals are a tool in the hands of the political establishment—and today, of the Republican party.

Some caveats, however: (1) Though there are similarities, much of *Jesus and John Wayne* obviously makes little sense for Canadian evangelicalism, where the ethos is much different; (2) It is somewhat curious that the subtitle is "How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith . . ." when the purpose of the book is to show how the evangelical faith has always been corrupt in central ways to begin with (was there ever an *un*corrupted evangelicalism?); (3) toxic masculinity is in no way limited to conservative evangelicalism; it would be interesting (and perhaps more fair) to also see the same kind of study conducted on Protestant liberals and liberal politics, even if it is likely to be less entertaining; (4) we might forgive Du Mez for excluding the episode of Chuck Swindoll—the original endorser of *Wild at Heart*, a Vietnam vet, and mega-church pastor from Texas—riding into church on a Harley. (Of course, such examples supporting her thesis are endless!)

If one wants to know what "toxic masculinity" or even "American evangelicalism" really means, *Jesus and John Wayne* is the best single volume for that exploration I am aware of. Lucidly-written, well-researched, fast-paced, and thoroughly untamed, it's a wild ride not to be missed. (Giddyup!)

Jamin Andreas Hübner
LCC International University

6 Du Mez continues: "But with the liberalization of abortion laws, and as abortion proponents began to frame the issue in terms of women controlling their reproduction, evangelicals started to reconsider their position. . . . Only in time, as abortion became more closely linked to feminism and the sexual revolution, did evangelicals begin to frame it not as a difficult moral choice, but rather as an assault on women's God-given role, on the family, and on Christian America itself" (68–69).

James K. A. Smith. *On the Road with Saint Augustine: A Real-World Spirituality for Restless Hearts*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2019. Pp. 256. Paperback. ISBN 978-1587433894. $15.79 (USD).

James K.A. Smith's *On the Road with Saint Augustine: A Real-World Spirituality for Restless Hearts* is a sprawling and ambitious work. Smith uses Augustine, filtered through the existential philosophy he has studied, as a starting point for what amounts to a kind of memoir. More autobiography than argument, the book invites readers to go on the road with the author and Saint Augustine, which is ultimately also a journey inward. It is not wholly about Smith's life, but Smith chooses key intersections of his own story with Augustine's (and Heidegger's and Sartre's) to tell a story about a variety of topics.

Smith does not so much argue that Augustine is the best guide for such a journey as he invites readers to decide by going on the journey. Like the philosophers he studies, he uses Augustine as a way to access and reflect on what he sees as truths about humanity in general. In one well-delivered passage of the book, Smith contrasts the rhetoric of Augustine's day, which sought to tell unique stories and stand out from everything else, with Augustine's *Confessions*, which, like modern day recovery literature, seeks to provide a story that people can find themselves in. Indeed, recovery literature is a thread that runs throughout the book, with Smith even comparing Augustine to an AA sponsor at the beginning. He contends that what Augustine offers Christians is essentially the same thing that recovery literature offers addicts: a story of desire, failure, and grace in which they can recognize their own stories. Augustine mastered the Roman oratory tradition but also broke with it in creating stories in which others can find their own story.

The roadmap to Smith's journey is the sprawling and ambitious part. He covers ambition, friendship, mothers, fathers, sex, death, and freedom amongst a host of other topics with only a loose organization and few markers about where the trip is going. Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* is mentioned frequently in the book and the organization of the book can at times seem as unpredictable as one of Dean and Sal's road trips, which can be frustrating even when one finds Smith's reflections interesting. Being more autobiography than argument, the book proceeds more through story than syllogism. Smith's approach arrives at grand narratives through particular stories, which is one of the appeals of the book. He is a master of balancing the general and existential with the particular and historical. One minute he is mining Augustine's life for eternal truths about humanity and the next he is describing the scene of one of his pilgrimages in service of such a reflection.

However, sometimes Smith's attention to particulars is more distracting than helpful. Occasionally his penchant for pop culture references seems showy and doesn't add much to the argument. For example, in a passage where he applies

Augustine's reflections on his former "freedom" (which left him hopeless and depressed and looked like the "freedom" of the addict), Smith ends the paragraph with "This is what the Fleet Foxes call 'helplessness blues.'" The reference doesn't add any explanatory power to the previous sentences and just feels like a superfluous cultural reference to tease the soundtrack to the book. At times, Smith goes a bit off the road with such indulgent references; a tighter and more defined structure might have helped keep the book more "on the road."

This also serves to demonstrate a broader weakness to the book's approach. It often filters Augustine through existentialism in order to make Augustine relevant to modern readers through the use of contemporary references. While there's nothing inherently wrong with this, it mostly ignores the "New Canon" (articulated by Michel Barnes and Lewis Ayres) approach to Augustine scholarship (which Smith never mentions), which looks at Augustine less as an existential philosopher bent on articulating a grand narrative of existence and more as a bishop and pastor whose writings are primarily rooted in his advice to his flock. While Smith's version of Augustine remains compelling, it also tends to neglect the ways in which Augustine directed his flock and often, like Smith himself, entertained the general and existential through the particular and historical. This doesn't negate Smith's vision of Augustine, but it would temper some of the existential excesses of his account to root Augustine in his pastoral setting.

On the Road with Saint Augustine is an enjoyable and somewhat whimsical read. As such, it is a fun vehicle for the author to offer his own thoughts about the myriad aspects of human existence. It is a good introduction to Augustine for the non-specialist and one that hopefully draws readers further into the work of Saint Augustine.

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David P. Gushee. *After Evangelicalism: The Path to a New Christianity*. Westminster John Knox, 2020. Pp 225. Paperback. ISBN: 978-0664266110. $19.00 (USD).

It is no great secret that conservative evangelicalism has left a bad taste in the mouths of many.[1] Whether it is widespread support of Donald Trump, hardline stances against LGBTQ inclusivity, or otherwise, many have felt alienated, confused, and outcast. One may begin to wonder, is there a better way to practice Christianity, and if so, what? It is to these people that Gushee is writing: *After Evangelicalism* is intended to show those who have left evangelicalism that there

1 Evangelicalism globally is more diverse than it is in America, and many of the criticisms will not apply to global evangelicalism (though many will). However, Gushee's primary target is American evangelicalism, though he does not always specify his American context.

is Christianity, well, *after evangelicalism*.[2] Gushee, using the analogy of a maze (which is also the cover design), puts it this way: "The goal of this book, then, is to offer clues for getting out of some of the most difficult spots in the evangelical maze, in order to come out on the other side—not just alive and intact, but still interested in a relationship with Jesus."[3]

Gushee divides his book into three main categories: authority, theology, and ethics, each containing three chapters. This order is intuitive, since theology generally flows from authority, and ethics from theology. He begins with a brief overview of evangelicalism, focusing on its origin in fundamentalism and subsequent growth, arguing that any semblance of normativity is imposed by its adherents, rather than inherent to the theology; additionally, Gushee portrays evangelicalism as a modern religious phenomenon rather than a timeless tradition of the church.

Chapters 2 and 3 serve to describe the various sources and methods for practicing theology; the trajectory of these chapters serve to relegate the bible from its often-overemphasized role (frequently manifest in biblicism, or worse, bibliolatry) and promotes other sources of knowledge (Gushee uses the Wesleyan Quadrilateral at this point, but adds the arts and sciences).

In part two, Gushee moves into the task of practicing theology, in three chapters: God, Jesus, and Church. Here Gushee introduces a litmus test that he applies to his theological claims: the burning children test. The test is born from the Holocaust, and stated this way: "*No statement, theological or otherwise, should be made that is not credible in the presence of the burning children*" (emphasis original). Gushee follows by telling the broad narrative of the Hebrew Bible, and the narrative of Jesus through the Gospel of Matthew. In his chapter on church, Gushee contrasts the evangelical church with various biblical and creedal statements (e.g., the church is a body, a covenant people, is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic), and encourages post-evangelicals to attend churches outside the evangelical circle.

Part three discusses topics of sex, politics, and race. In these chapters, Gushee offers his most incisive criticisms of the evangelical church in what he sees to be significant moral failures. This is the most valuable portion of the book for two reasons: first, Gushee shows the most sophistication (which is unsurprising, since he is an ethicist), and second, he covers topics that are extremely pertinent to our time, namely Trump and race.

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2 This is not pertinent to the content of Gushee's book, but it is worth noting that the cover design of *After Evangelicalism* looks nearly identical to Stephanie Williams O'Brien, *Stay Curious: How Questions and Doubts Can Save Your Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2019).

3 Gushee is hardly the first person to write in this space. For instance, Brian D. McLaren, Peter Enns, and Rachel Held Evans have all written various books relating to post-evangelical forms of Christianity; more recent books, such as Jamin Hübner, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism: A Letter to a Friend and a Professor's Guide to Escaping Fundamentalist Christianity* (Rapid City, SD: Hills, 2020), have attempted not only to offer an alternative Christian theology, but to analyze evangelicalism to show various weaknesses.

One significant issue with the book is that it feels rushed. The first two sections are not covered in great depth, nor does there appear to be any significant contributions in these sections. To anyone with a healthy understanding of theology and biblical studies, most of these chapters will be covering old ground. Some of this may be forgiven, since its subject matter is so broad, and the book is so (comparatively) short. It would be difficult to sufficiently discuss any of the three parts on their own in a book this this size, let alone all of them together.[4]

However, some parts might not be so easily forgiven. For instance, in his chapter on Jesus, Gushee is heavily reliant on James Dunn's recent *Jesus According to the New Testament*. While Dunn's work is obviously valuable, Gushee would have done well to include insights from a greater variety of works and scholars. Additionally, Gushee occasionally makes claims without adequate argument. In his chapter on scripture, Gushee offers two possible interpretations of πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος in 2 Tim 3:16, either "all God-breathed scripture" or "all scripture is God-breathed," choses the former (what he calls "limited inspiration") and defend it by saying that it makes the most sense to him. Again, some of this is forgivable, since the targeted toward a popular audience (and he does cite an exterior source), but further discussion of the Greek would have been helpful in the footnotes and avoided a half-baked feel.

On the whole, nevertheless, Gushee offers a broad, level-headed look at what Christianity can look like for those who leave evangelicalism. Further, the book's discussions on Trump and race are valuable for the current context, especially for those who find themselves alienated from evangelicalism from precisely those reasons.

To use the metaphor of a maze, Gushee's book is not a map that will get you through the entire thing; nor is it a picture of what things look like on the other side. However, it offers some hints for navigating the maze, and it gives hope that there is more to Christianity than evangelicalism.

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John H. Walton. *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*. *Second Edition*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. Pp. 384. Paperback. ISBN 978-1540960214. $29.24 (USD).

What was the conceptual worldview/cognitive environment of the people of Israel? How is Yahweh different from the gods of the ancient Near East? What

4 There is also the possibility that Gushee was forced to race to submit before a deadline, but this is speculative.

is comparative study? Why do students of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (HB/OT) need comparative study? These key questions (and more) are all effectively answered within John H. Walton's *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, now in its second edition. Walton states that through this work he seeks to "sift through the information provided by the specialists who have diligently made the literatures and cultures of the ancient Near East available to us" and to "perceive some of the important basics of that ancient cognitive environment" (313). Walton also notes that he specifically conducted this study "with the intention of demonstrating that Israel was indeed a partaker of this cognitive environment and shared many of the basics in some degree with its neighbors; Israel was immersed in the ancient cultural river" (313). That is not to say, however, that there were not a few major distinctives with respect to Deity that Israel expressed as compared to the rest of the ancient world (such as "God was one—and their worship of him was aniconic," or "God had spoken in ways and to an extent not evident in other cultures," etc.) for, clearly, these points were at the core of Israelite identity and had a significant influence on their cognitive environment (see 316). Nevertheless, Walton maintains:

> Many aspects of their cognitive environment remained in continuity with the rest of the ancient world. These points of continuity and discontinuity should have an important role in our interpretation of the Bible, and knowledge of them should guard against a facile or uninformed imposition of our own cognitive environment on the texts of ancient Israel, which is all too typical in confessional circles. This recognition should also create a more level playing ground as critical scholarship continues to evaluate the literature of the ancient world. (316)

The volume is divided into five main parts: (1) Comparative Studies, (2) Literature of the Ancient Near East, (3) Religion, (4) Cosmos, and (5) People. These main units are of unequal length and contain between one and six chapters a piece—not counting the many excurses and so-called "Comparative Explorations." Concluding the volume are an appendix that delineates almost thirty of the most significant "gods" of the ancient Near East (including Yahweh), five remarkably thorough and immensely helpful indices (including "Scripture," "Foreign Words," "Modern Author," "Ancient Literature," and "Subject"), and a bibliography that is almost double the length of the original edition (fifteen pages as compared to eight).

Part 1, Comparative Studies, is comprised of two chapters that introduce the concept of comparative study, its history and methods, and its necessity for the student. Walton asserts that comparative study "constitutes a branch of cultural studies in that it attempts to draw data from different segments of the broader

culture (in time and/or space) into juxtaposition with one another in order to assess what might be learned from one to enhance the understanding of another" (7). Within this section also, Walton speaks to the question of taking an apologetic approach to comparative study (30), expresses his belief that the writers of the HB/OT did not regularly engage in polemics against the surrounding cultures and ideologies (14), and cautions against both "parallelomania" and "parallelophobia," stating that we must instead "silhouette the biblical text against its wider literary and cultural environment" (5). Alongside this, Walton offers ten principles of comparative study and some clear goals of cognitive environment criticism (17–18).

Part 2, Literature of the Ancient Near East, consists of a single chapter in which many of the major pieces of ancient Near Eastern literature are sorted by: (1) major language type (Egyptian, Akkadian, Hittite, Sumerian, Ugaritic, etc.), and (2) category (such as "myth," "literary texts and epics," "ritual texts," "divination/incantation texts," etc.). Walton astutely notes, however, that though these categories are often identified as "genres," such labels are "hazardous because they generally impose a classification system that reflect our own ideas of literary types" (33). He thus also asserts that these categories are "heuristic" and are used "to offer some organization to the list" (33).

Students and scholarly readers alike will not be disappointed that the author's engagement of the ancient Near Eastern texts are taken from both the standard "critical editions" and the more accessible volumes, such as *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (James B. Pritchard, ed., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), *Old Testament Parallels* (V. H. Matthews and D. J. Benjamin, eds., New York, NY: Paulist, 1997), *Readings from the Ancient Near East* (B. T. Arnold and B. E. Beyer, eds., Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), and *The Context of Scripture* (William W. Hallo, ed., Leiden: Brill, 1997–2002), including, most notably, *The Context of Scripture*'s fourth volume, thereby tremendously increasing the user-friendliness and overall accessibility of this work while retaining the highest standard of academic rigor.

As compared to the first edition, this chapter is arranged in a much more pleasing format, with clear and visually appealing tables. The ability to see all the texts at-a-glance is a real boon to the student and is an immense time saver. One major drawback compared to the first edition is, however, that the texts themselves are not annotated. That is, unlike the first edition that provided roughly a paragraph for each of the texts under discussion, the second edition of Walton's volume merely retains the overarching introduction/orientation sections to each of the major units.

In parts 3, 4, and 5, Walton draws on the primary source materials that were noted in part 2 in order to explore a variety of specific elements of the ancient Near East, such as "The Gods," "Temples and Rituals," "State and Family

Religion" (part 3), "Cosmic Geography," "Cosmology and Cosmogony" (part 4), "Human Origins and Role," "Historiography," "Divination and Omens," "Cities and Kingship," "Law and Wisdom," and "Pondering the Future on Earth and after Death" (part 5).

Interspersed throughout the book are over 30 "Comparative Explorations." They vary in length from less than ½ page to over 5 ½ pages, and cover a number of topics including, "Genesis 1 and Temple Building," "Image of God," "Dreams and Dream Interpreters in Israel," and "Yahweh's Council." Many of these explorations have been brought up to date in terms of context and/or are revised for better clarity in this second edition. Notably, one specific comparative exploration that appeared in the first edition, "Israelite Principles," is not present in the current volume. Alongside these comparative explorations are also a number of excurses, such as "Polytheistic Iconism" and "Ziggurats," that are quite useful. But regrettably, they are not noted in the table of contents.

Additionally, the volume also contains close to ten tables that outline a variety of topics such as, "Similar Perspectives on Creation and History in the Ancient World," "Modern, Ancient, and Israelite Perspectives on History and Historiography," "Literary Context of Law in the Pentateuch and the ancient Near East," and "Ancient Near Eastern Prophetic Oracles." Two tables that are brand new to the second edition are "Aspects of Afterlife Belief" and "Royal Rhetoric in the Bible and the Ancient Near East." However, two tables found in the first edition, "Roles for Comparative Study" and "The Comparative/Contextual Spectrum," have been removed. Though not an immense setback, this reviewer does wish that these tables were retained, if only for the sake of better orientating those who may be uninitiated to the subject—even if they were, perhaps, in need of some supplementation as to their proper use(s). This matter is somewhat addressed by Walton in an extended comment:

> I would contend that while the committed reader of the Bible may find excuses not to care about comparative studies in the critical or defense roles, he or she cannot overlook its importance for interpretation. If we do not bring the information the ancient cognitive environment to bear on the text, we will automatically impose the parameters of our modern worldview, thus risking serious distortion of meaning. Consequently, the objective of this book is to improve the exegetical analysis of the Old Testament based on information derived from the ancient world. We will therefore not take an apologetic approach (30)

It is worth noting as well that though the first edition contained only around twenty illustrations, the second edition boasts over thirty images of high-quality resolution (except for one rather grainy image entitled "Ninurta Battling Chaos Beast").

Some notable new pictures include the "*Coffin Texts*," the "Tel Dan inscription," the "Atrahasis tablet," "Baal, the Canaanite storm god," the "*Book of the Dead*," and a drawing of "Nut, Geb, and Shu." Readers of the first edition may be disappointed that some images appearing there (e.g., the "Cyrus Cylinder," "Cuneiform Writer," Seven-headed Chaos Beast," and "Relief: Darius Seated: Xerxes Behind") do not make an appearance in this second edition.

With the above in mind, I am hesitant to agree with the assertion of JoAnn Scurlock who states in her endorsement that this "new book replaces an older edition over which it is infinitely superior" (back cover). Although the second edition of Walton's volume is superior in terms of its updated content, clearer reframing of certain discussions, and an impressive streamlining of many of its charts, graphs, and tables, etc., there is still value in consulting the first edition; this volume is not a wholesale replacement for it. For example, in chapter 3, the annotations of the ancient Near East texts of the first edition are superior to the mere summaries found in the second edition. Indeed, this second edition would have been better served by retaining what was deleted from the first edition, while perhaps providing more commentary or clarification, as necessary.

Pedagogically speaking, the writing style of *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament* is clear and accessible, appealing to both the specialists and the uninitiated alike. Additionally, Walton's volume also has a very pleasing format with ample, but not too much, white space, easily identifiable headings and subheadings, a thorough table of contents, and plenty of charts, graphs, tables, and the like, all of which are offered in a remarkably clear format. Each chapter is a reasonable length, as is the book itself. In my view, students would not be overwhelmed by reading this text in its entirety for a one-semester course, even if an additional text (or two) were also assigned.

To conclude, Walton's book is by far the most accurate, up-to-date, and accessible resource that is available on the subject, bar none. Its primary readership includes beginning to intermediate students of the HB/OT and, one hopes, all serious expositors and teachers of Scripture. Highly recommended!

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Mark D. Nanos. *Reading Paul within Judaism. Collected Essays of Mark D. Nanos. Vol. 1.* Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017. Pp. 188. Paperback. ISBN 978-1532617553. $23.00 (USD).

Each new Pauline study seems to add a new level of complexity to understanding the essence and identity of the Apostle to the Gentiles. Mark Nanos, Lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Kansas, hopes to shift the paradigm

for understanding Paul. Over the past twenty years Nanos has become a prolific author/essayist, both in print and on the internet. This is the first volume in a projected four volume series.[1]

The preface begins with a reminder of the presuppositions we all bring to a text. Writing as a Jew (an "outsider" [xiii]) Nanos champions an inter-Jewish reading of Paul. The chapters, for the most part, proceed chronologically, written between 2004 and 2015. These essays originated in seminars and journals (*Journal of the Jesus Movement in its Jewish Setting,* and *Studies in Christian Jewish Relations*). The diversity of venues for these essays portrays a broad range of ecclesiastical and scholastic interaction with Nanos's thesis. For a collection of essays based on a specific thesis, it is not surprising to find a repetitive rhythm. This review will first summarize Nanos's "Paul within Judaism" thesis. Then there will be a brief analysis of the three parts of the book, including the ways each chapter contributes to that thesis.

In *Paul within Judaism (PWJ***)** Nanos frames Paul's letters to non-Jewish Christ followers in an inter-Jewish, not inter-Christian, context. Paul should be read through the lens of his first audience, whose identity is conceptualized under the umbrella of Judaism. Nanos strives for terminological clarity, temporal accuracy, and the avoidance of anachronistic interpretation.

The awaited age, when the nations would worship the One God with Israel, had dawned through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was their faith in Christ that made these Torah-observant followers of Jesus distinct from a host of other Jewish subgroups. Paul was not setting out to establish a new religion (111). The question Paul sought to answer was, "What was necessary for the non-Jewish Christ followers to be identified as equal partners with Jewish Christ-followers?" Paul's answer was that equal status was not gained by the works of the law (*ergou nomou*, aka "circumcision," 45, n. 111). The non-Jewish Christ followers were equal in status, while retaining their ethnicity and social identity (Gal 3:28). They were to remain in the pre-existent social condition in which they were called by Christ (1 Cor 7:17–24). Their practice and lifestyle of observing Jewish purity norms was to reflect their new identity within Judaism through the obedience due the One God of the *Shema* (the ultimate Jewish ideal), the creator of every nation.

Thus, at the time Paul wrote his letters, Christ followers were situated within Judaism. His letters must be read in that context. Understanding the "chronometric" (a term coined by Nanos) aspect of his thesis is a key piece of Nanos's interpretive approach. It means that the dawn of this new age and the promise of

1 Now in print: Mark D. Nanos, *Reading Romans within Judaism. Collected Essays of Mark D. Nanos, Vol. 2* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2018); Mark D. Nanos, *Reading Corinthians and Philippians within Judaism. Collected Essays of Mark D. Nanos, Vol. 4* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2017).

the restoration of Israel and the gathering of the nations has begun in the present time (22, n. 55).

Part I is entitled "A New Approach to the Apostle. Paul as a Torah-observant Jew." The lone chapter in this section is the longest in the book (56 pages). It is an updated version of "Paul *and* Judaism. Why Not *Paul's* Judaism?" (emphasis original) that appeared in *Paul Unbound: Other Perspectives on the Apostle* (Mark Given, ed., Hendrickson, 2009). The essay originated at an SBL meeting in 2004. His aim in this essay is "to prod the Pauline interpretive community to paradigmatic change" (17). This is the foundation for his PWJ thesis.

A brief historical survey shows how the New Perspective on Paul (NPP), falls short of its claims to minimize an anti-Jewish image of Paul. Two primary texts are considered. In 1 Cor 9:19–23, the way the traditional approach and the NPP portray Paul he becomes a disingenuous individual ("chameleon-like" [6]). Rather Nanos sees here a demonstration of Paul's rhetorical adaptability, later described as "arguing like" or "reasoning like" (98). Galatians 1:3–14 reveals how Paul views his role as a calling (rather than a conversion), in the context of the Hebrew Scriptures. Nanos redefines "the leaders" from whom Paul was distancing himself as Paul's former group of Pharisees, not the apostles (33).

Part II is entitled "Exploring the Implications for Exegesis and Christian-Jewish Relations" and includes five essays. His goal in chapter 2 is to demonstrate how the interpretive attempts to soften Paul's criticism of Judaism, particularly by the NPP, do not work. Just the opposite happens. If Christian Judaism is bankrupt, then logically how much more bankrupt is non-Christian Judaism (69). A cautionary note regarding the presuppositions residing within traditional and NPP scholarship comes into play here. He believes Pauline studies have been based, unconsciously, on scholarship (i.e., Baur, 66) that has an inherent anti-Jewish bias. Paul is not anti-Jewish. Paul's target audience is non-Jewish Christ followers of Jesus who were being told to get circumcised so they can be full participants in Israel.

Chapter 3 was originally an essay dedicated to Krister Stendahl in a 2008 publication. The myth of a "Law-free gospel" needs to be dismantled. "Paul did not teach the end of the Torah" (79). For Paul, the Torah will be interpreted differently for Jews and for non-Jews now that the new age of the Messiah has come upon us. Nanos is adamant against the use of the anachronistic term "Christian." That descriptor was not available to the assemblies of Paul's time (86).

Among the specific texts that Nanos engages to demonstrate Paul's view of Torah within the Christ assemblies is the Antioch incident described in Gal 2:11–15. For Nanos's Paul, the matter was about food being shared, not the food that was being served. The text is not an indictment of Jewish food laws. Neither does the passage demonstrate a divide between Paul and the Jerusalem apostles. The

"certain ones from James" who came to Paul were Jewish outsiders who had been allowed access by James to meetings in Jerusalem (92). Likewise, in his reading of 1 Cor 8–10 and Rom 14–15 Nanos finds no condescension directed by Paul towards Torah faithful Jews. In all, Nanos seeks to reveal the limitations of the circular logic of traditional interpretations of these passages. His thesis is motivated by his desire for a new level of respect in relationships between Jews and Christians.

Chapter 4 begins by affirming the theological, social, and historical significance of the *Shema*. Rom 3:29–31 is Paul's "direct appeal to the *Shema*" as the basis for his understanding "the equal standing of non-Jews within the community of the people of God" (111). He sees the *Shema* Israel as the center of Paul's theology (111). In the *Shema* particularism meets universalism: the LORD is our God thus Israel is privileged. At the same time, as the LORD alone, God is the creator of all humanity, the God of all the other nations. For non-Jewish Christ followers to be forced to become ethnic Jews by undergoing circumcision would render the declaration that God is "the God of all the nations" meaningless. Paul's calling was to the nations, but he did so under the Jewish ideal of *Shema* Israel (121).

Chapter 5 concerns Rom 2:25–29 and Josephus. Nanos demonstrates the subtle nuances that differentiate "becoming a Jew," "becoming Jewish," and "practicing Judaism." Our interpretive mistakes come from a monolithic perception of Judaism, that ends up branding all Judaism as anathema to Paul. The NPP tries to have its proverbial cake and eat it too by saying that while Judaism as such has been superseded for Paul, all who follow Christ are for him "true" or "spiritual" Jews. Josephus narrates several incidents of non-Jews wanting to become Jewish (including the oft-cited narrative of King Izates of Adiabene). For Nanos, Rom 2:25–29 does *not* suggest that Jewish identity is replaced with a "Christian" one. Paul assumes here the role of Nathan to the David played by his non-Jewish Christ following readers. They are not to judge each other. Rather, they are to judge themselves and seek to internalize Jewish ideals.

In Chapter 6 Nanos looks at Rom 15:7–13, which portrays Christ-following gentiles worshiping God amid the Jewish people who remain the people of God. Nanos proposes from here a way to "think about living for the success of others" (167) rather than maintaining a "who is in, who is out" mindset.

PART III contains one essay entitled "A Jewish Contribution to Pope Benedict XVI's Celebration of the Year of St Paul (2009)." This chapter could be read either as a primer or a summary of Nanos's thesis.

A paradigm will not change with the reading of one book. It can open one's eyes to problems and inconsistencies within one's own perspective. It can alert us to our predispositions and assumptions. It can instruct us in alternative points of

view. I believe Mark Nanos accomplishes those things with this offering. The nuanced repetition leads to a better understanding as you work through each essay.

Nanos reveals the dangers of reading our Christian categories into Paul's embryonic faith. I appreciated his focus on the social and religious context at the time Paul was writing. I was surprised that there was not more interaction with Social Identity Theory. His case for Paul's opponents in Gal 1 being his former Pharisaic party members was not as convincing. It is a stretch to see Paul as a Torah-observant Jew, but something must be done with those Torah-affirming statements Paul makes in Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Galatians. Neither the traditional approach nor the NPP has demonstrated absolute conclusiveness regarding all aspects of Paul. Nanos exposes cracks in their foundations. I also found his translations to be helpful. His use of new terminology (i.e., "foreskinned," "news of good in Jesus Christ") has a way of getting the reader's attention. Still, it seems his pendulum swings too far. For Nanos, Paul's embrace of Judaism is total, almost to the point where being "in Judaism" supersedes being in Christ.

I applaud Mark Nanos for working extremely hard to overcome the anti-Jewish bias that he sees as resident in Pauline studies for centuries. He does make a case for this being a liability that has become so ingrained in the field of Pauline interpretation that those of us who are not Jewish are unable to see or hear it. It often takes an outsider to show us our blind spots.[2]

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The Christian Idea of God: Philosophical Foundation for Faith. Keith Ward. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. 229. Paperback. ISBN 978-1108410212. $29.99 (USD).

Keith Ward is Professor of the Philosophy of Religion (University of London) and Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, and his book *The Christian Idea of God* comes as the third installment of his trilogy in Christian philosophical theology—the first being *Morality, Autonomy, and God* (2013) and *Christ and the Cosmos* (2016). "But this book," he remarks on p. 2, "is meant to stand alone as a cumulative argument giving a philosophical foundation for Christian faith."

I was terribly skeptical about reading the book. First, I was worried it would be a work of analytical philosophy and read like Alvin Plantinga or Bill Craig—syllogisms, propositional logic, symbols, and equations, in short, a dreadfully mechanical and boring exposition of abstract ideas that a small part of the academic

2 Mark Nanos is accessible on his homepage (www.marknanos.com) and the Paul Within Judaism website (http://www.thepaulpage.com/paul-within-judaism/articles/). If you are unfamiliar with Mark Nanos, I would recommend starting with "Paul, Why Bother?" which is posted on his homepage.

population strangely enjoys. Second, I was concerned that the upfront argument for "personal idealism" would be esoteric, detached from human experience, and disconnected (or even at odds) from the main themes of Christian theology and lived work of the church. Third, monographs by Cambridge University Press with no endorsements by a divinity and philosophy Professor in the ivory towers of academia are often, too, the sure sign of incoming yawns.

I couldn't have been more mistaken. *The Christian Idea of God* may be the best work of Christian theology—with a philosophical bent—that I've ever read. The "idealist" flavor hardly stands in the way of a theologically sound and biblically-informed perspective (it was actually persuasive in many ways); it's extremely easy to read and rarely technical; it is highly concise and shows depth of central issues about the meaning of life and meaning of God and creation; and it is shockingly honest and humble about its conclusions. This is the type of work I wish I would have read years ago instead of Moreland and Craig's *Philosophical Foundations for the Christian Worldview,*[1] or similar works from a rather cloistered and technical perspective more or less enslaved to the demands of high school evangelical apologetics clubs. Indeed, Ward, author of *Confessions of a Recovering Fundamentalist* (2019),[2] has the tempered wisdom necessary for a sort of apologetic that is genuinely convincing and penetrating, if ever such works exist. Yet, the book really isn't really an apologetic, as much as a subtly persuasive description. "God is not an inference from what we know to be real," of course. "God is the implicit reality which we know in all our knowing. The philosophical task is to spell out what it means to say that mind is the basis of reality" (13).

Ward's "personal idealism" may not strike some readers as unusual as it may first sound. After all, "Almost all believers in God are idealists in some sense. Christian theists believe that God created the universe through Wisdom (the *Logos* of John chapter 1), that the universe is good (of value), that there is a purpose in creation (that intelligent beings should know God and enjoy God forever), and that human minds are made 'in the image' of the Creator (so God is not totally unlike human minds)" (50). The first chapters explain how Ward contents himself "with saying that I think the empiricists are correct in holding that all knowledge begins with experience. . . . Perceptions and thoughts have a distinctive kind of

1 William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations for the Christian Worldview,* 2nd ed. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2017).

2 Keith Ward, *Confessions of a Recovering Fundamentalist* (Eugene: Cascade, 2019). I authored the similar book, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism: A Letter to a Friend and a Professor's Guide to Escaping Religion Fundamentalism* (Rapid City: Hills, 2020), and was sure to include the best endorsements possible, such as those by two delivery truck drivers, including one from "Emily" who called it "a damnably dangerous book." Ward appears to have beaten this high status in his *Confessions*, which is endorsed by "He Who Shall Not Be Named" (endorsement: "Fake News!") and even a member of the prestigious "Society of Fundamentalist Theology (Soft)."

reality which is not reducible to the sort of purely physical properties with which the natural sciences deal" (25). He also plumbs the depths regarding the simple—but profound—fact that there is "no reason for thinking that a mind without a material body is impossible . . . dreams are experiences of things that have no material existence" (78).

> As I shall go on to show, idealism does not see God as a person "outside" the universe, only occasionally interfering in it, and it does not see God as a changeless "Pure Form" which the universe cannot affect in any way—both of them fairly common versions of theism. It sees the universe as the progressive and developing self-expression of God (the supreme mind or Self), and God as being changed by the inclusion of created things in the divine being, either now or in the future. God and the material universe thus form a unity, though one in which the mental or spiritual aspect has ontological and causal priority. That is the sort of view I hold. Such an idealism is "personal" insofar as it holds that the supreme Self has the personal characteristics of knowing feeling, and willing, even though this being may be much greater than anything we would ordinarily call a "person." (11)

Very similar to John Haught's recent (and excellent) book *The New Cosmic Story,*[3] Ward argues that consciousness or "mind" is in a sense "primary." The modern materialist account sees matter as all that exists, the beginning and end of the universe, while mind or consciousness (and religion) is a sort of accidental phenomenon (though apparently necessary for survival). Ward's personal idealism (and Haught's "new story") turns this upside down: mind/consciousness is, yes, the emergent product of millions of years of material evolution (74), but *that was the intent, design, and "end game" all along,* and, indeed, it is from nonmaterial origin to begin with. Ward naturally cites Hegel favorably (e.g., 136), because the whole chronological history and future and story of the cosmos is a grand *return*, not a directionless journey towards oblivion and darkness.

> Consciousness is not some odd and inexplicable aberration in a basically material world. It is the origin and basis of all human knowledge. In a sense, it is matter that needs explaining, not conscious experience. . . . Consciousness [for materialism] would just be a functionless add-on to a world of completely explanatory physical laws. For idealists, however, the existence of consciousness makes a difference and has contributed to the evolutionary efficiency of the human species. . . .

3 John Haught, *The New Cosmic Story: Inside Our Awakening Universe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).

> The whole material world can be seen as an instrument for bringing about particular sorts of consciousness and providing them with objects of knowledge and opportunities for purposive action. Far from consciousness being a by-product of matter, the physical universe is a precondition of a means to the emergence of particular forms of embodied consciousness. (25)[4]

Ward's idealism did raise some questions, however. In discussing 1 Cor 15, he says that "whatever the resurrection body is, it will not be flesh and blood. That means it will not be physical. . . . Perishability is a basic law of our universe. So if spirit bodies are to be imperishable, they cannot exist in the physical universe at all" (160–61), and, "The New Testament does not want us to have our old bodies back again; it wants us to have different bodies, spirit bodies, in a spirit-filled universe" (163). But, was there no significance in the fact that Jesus' resurrected body (the "firstfruits" of all resurrected bodies) retained the nail scars? How did Thomas touch a hand that was "not physical"?

Ward is very careful, nevertheless, about misunderstanding this perspective, which gives primacy to mind and the spiritual:

> But I do not think that human persons are or should be disembodied. Human sentience and intelligence emerge from complex integrated physical structures. They are not optional extras added to a physical reality which is completely explicable in purely physical terms. (75)
>
> [T]he material world must have exactly the sort of properties that are needed so that minds can emerge from matter, in a new but natural way. . . . This means that there is good reason why the universe exists and why we exist. It means that the Creator values the world and values us. . . . Christians have a special reason to value the material universe, because they believe that the Creator took human form and united human nature to the divine nature in Jesus. (103)
>
> There is no basic contrast between persons and nature, since humans are parts of nature which have become persons. They are nature personalized. (110)

The Christian Idea of God is organized well and flows naturally in its arguments. Yet, it is difficult to really summarize the flow of twenty-two short chapters, which

4 And in a mind-bending extension of this orientation—based on the bizarre new physics of quantum mechanics and subjective observation (i.e., it doesn't "exist" until it is observed by a subject), readers encounter the idea that "it is the final conscious state of the universe itself that is a causal factor in its own physical origin. The universe generates a cosmic intelligence that then becomes cause of its own originating processes. But what this paradoxical suggestion really points to is the existence of a transtemporal consciousness that can originate the universe as a condition of the existence of the sorts of consciousness the universe generates through and in time" (91).

come at readers somewhat like a sketchbook. Readers will find great insight to "the unitary self" and our "inner lives" (30–31), freedom and illusion (38), the idea of "laws" in nature (and how they are not even "necessary or even consistent with actual scientific practice," (41), personal causality (43), objects in space-time (44), bodies and souls (46), soul and spirit (47), intelligibility and "God" (56–57), music and beauty (58–59), objective morality (60), God as an external sovereign being "the wrong place to start" (61), the place of Abrahamic religion (66–68), information theory (ch. 9), complexity and probability (94–97), "the mind of God" (100, 206), evolution and sin (104), creation and stewardship (113), nature and perfection (115), creation as organic in relation to Hinduism and Buddhism (118–19), providence, openness, and design (124), love and God's attributes (135), God's freedom and causality (137–38), God changing (149), resurrection (160–62), sacrifice (184), God's empathy (194), suffering (p. 208–209), etc.

I found it fascinating that some of Ward's conclusions are remarkably similar to the Vanderbilt theologians Peter C. Hodgson and Sallie McFague. Like Hodgson's "lure of the spirit,"[5] Ward says that "divine causality is the patient attraction of love" (206), and similar to McFague,[6] he says, "It may not be the case that the cosmos is already the body of God. It is perhaps too autonomous and its conscious agencies too self-willed for that. Yet its destiny is to be the body of God" (202).

The Christian Idea of God is a wonderful and accessible gateway into theology and philosophical theology. It also serves as a dose of sound and hopeful thinking for a generation of nihilistic and/or materialistic post-conservatives who doubt that the idea of God makes any real sense at all. I hope it will have the wide readership it deserves.

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David Fitch. *The Church of Us vs. Them: Freedom from a Faith That Feeds on Making Enemies.* Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2019. Pp. 224. Hardcover. ISBN 978-1587434143. $21.99 (USD).

Why are Christians so angry? In *The Church of Us vs. Them*, David Fitch observes that while Christians usually fight with "a smile and some prideful condescension," there is real anger simmering below the surface (15). Fitch argues that the antagonisms in contemporary North American Christianity arise from the transformation of core theological insights into identity markers. He identifies this process as an "enemy-making machine," where a truth birthed in a particular context—e.g.,

5 Peter C. Hodgson, *Winds of the Spirit: A Constructive Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 95–98.

6 Sallie McFague, *The Body of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993).

Methodists' commitment to teetotalism – becomes a timeless distinction between good and bad Christians. To be clear, Fitch does not object to Christian groups defining their theological beliefs or practical convictions. Rather, Fitch's concern is how such insights become antagonisms, such as "I belong to Cephas" vs "I belong to Paul."

After defining this dynamic, Fitch identifies three clues that the enemy-making machine is active. First, he suggests looking for banners, distinctives that work by rallying one group against another. Second, Fitch warns us to watch for feelings of perverse glee when we are proven right about our opponents' degeneracy or failures. Third, Fitch observes that banners tend to lose their content, becoming empty symbols that identify who is in and out but do not help us follow Jesus in our daily lives.

Fitch then looks for evidence of enemy-making in three areas, beginning with attitudes towards scripture. He observes the popularity of doctrines of Biblical inerrancy or infallibility among organizations as diverse as the Billy Graham Association, Compassion International, and Joel Osteen's Lakewood Church. Fitch argues that the vast divergences in teachings between these groups, combined with the qualifier that only the lost original autographs of the Bible are inerrant, makes this kind of commitment to scripture an empty symbol. Indeed, Fitch suggests that claims of being "biblical" are often a way for Christians to gain authority for themselves and judge those with different beliefs.

As an alternative, Fitch argues for understanding the Bible as "nothing less than the Grand Drama of God" (65). He contends that rather being a weapon we possess, scripture is a narrative that invites our attention to and participation in the Story God is enacting. He concludes with practical suggestions, including that the Bible should be read primarily in community with the purpose of seeing how God is working, rather than individually with the aim of scoring points against outsiders.

Fitch next examines how the traditional expectation of conversion has been transformed into a modern emphasis on decisions for Christ. He suggests the phenomena of Christians repeatedly going forward for altar calls arises because their decisions are empty, disconnected from meaningful life changes or even church attendance. This emptiness then allows "the decision" to become another banner, a means of dividing those who are in or saved from those who are out and damned. Fitch argues that this is why so much anger (and hidden enjoyment) arises in debates over who will go to hell: because conversion is understood as a group identity marker, rather than the beginning of a life of discipleship.

In contrast, Fitch argues that "the gospel requires a response more akin to a marriage vow than a vote in an election" (105). He contends that just as the story of Jesus continues past crucifixion to resurrection and ascension, so too the

Christian life starts with forgiveness but ends in new life under Christ's lordship. Fitch explores what this means by recounting stories, such as of a missionary who discovers the transforming work God is doing before his arrival, or his own experiences of evangelism and discipleship happening in spaces where people can be present and listen to each other. He argues that a belief in God's active presence should free us of the need to pressure others into making decisions, and instead allow a dialogical understanding of conversion.

The final area Fitch looks for enemy making is Christian nationalism. He notes how Christians who worked for abolition saw their efforts as making America a Christian nation, before 20th century debates led many churches to divide personal salvation from social transformation, turning the idea of a Christian nation into a political banner instead. Now, Fitch laments, "the daily tasks of simply being present to the sick, of unwinding the sexual confusion of the ones around us . . . and of sharing with the poor all go ignored" (133). He claims this failure is because Christians are too busy fighting to win elections and defeat their enemies to remember their local context.

Against this, Fitch argues for re-centring the local church as political—not in the sense of supporting a particular party, but a place where the people of God live out the rule of Lord Jesus, as modelled by examples such as Clarence Jordan's racially integrated Koinonia Farm community. He suggests "the church is not against the world; it is just ahead of it," meaning that it is called to display the reality of God's work in the world rather than try to control the world (153).

Finally, Fitch contends that the ecclesial practices of gathering around the Lord's table, giving thanks, sharing the word and the peace of Christ, and receiving communion help create a space beyond enemies, which can spread outside the doors of the church. He concludes the book with a reflection on John 8, suggesting that Jesus here models a refusal to indulge the anger and perverse enjoyment of the mob that is using the law as a banner to sanction stoning the woman caught in adultery. He highlights Jesus' tactics of patient listening, silence, distraction, asking questions, and exposing contradictions as ways that we also can defuse the antagonisms created by the enemy-making machine and invite people—both "us" and "them"—into the peace of Christ's presence.

Fitch's brisk style masks a deep analysis of the psychological and spiritual dynamics in evangelicalism. Plundering his more difficult work *The End of Evangelicalism*, Fitch uses analogies and stories to make academic concepts like ideology, master signifier, and perverse enjoyment understandable by lay readers. He also draws on a breadth of sources, with citations ranging from Kathie Lee Gifford and Jerry Falwell to Ruth Padilla DeBorst and Willie James Jennings. Yet despite a wide potential scope, Fitch is focused almost entirely on North American white evangelical Christianity.

To be sure, the banners of biblicism, decisionism, and nationalism are clearly present here, but the lack of examples from other faith traditions give the reader few hints how his argument might apply to, say, Latin American Catholics. I also wonder about Fitch's claim that national political engagement tends to distract from local issues of justice—what if Christians were to vote out of a settled commitment to their neighbourhood? Still, given the increasing political polarization in North America, Fitch's focus on that context allows for a coherent, compelling argument, with insights into phenomena such as white evangelical support for Donald Trump during his presidency. I would recommend it for all audiences, but especially for church groups and introductory undergraduate courses.

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Basics of Hebrew Accents. Mark D. Futato, Sr. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020. Pp. 128. Paperback. ISBN 978-0310098423. $16.89 (USD).

Given the dearth of accessible introductory material on the subject, as a whole, most students of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (hereafter HB/OT) have had little to no exposure to the intricate and oft-mysterious accentuation system(s) of the Masoretic Text (MT). Regrettably, this situation often results in many individuals being unable to grasp the full import of these not-insignificant diacritical marks; usually deeming them to be of minimal value to exegesis and a clearer understanding of the text. Enter *Basics of Hebrew Accents*, authored by Mark D. Futato Sr. Futato's goal for this volume is modest: "In this book I will not only introduce you to the accents, but you will [also] learn how to use them to be a better reader of the Hebrew Bible" (13). The author undoubtedly succeeds in this goal.

Prior to offering a full-scale review, though, it is prudent to give a general overview to the work. Aside from a brief introduction, *Basics of Hebrew Accents* is divided into five chapters of uneven length. Chapter 1, "The Three Jobs of the Accents," covers the basic fact that the Hebrew accents are indicators of three things: (1) the stressed syllables in words, i.e., word stress; (2) the syntactic relationship between words, i.e., sense; and (3) the intonation of words for singing, i.e., chanting. Chapter 2, "The Accents and Sense, Part One: The Disjunctive Accents," and Chapter 3, "The Accents and Sense, Part Two: The Conjunctive Accents," work together to help the reader know the names, symbols, and functions of the disjunctive and conjunctive accents (respectively) and the role that they play in the interpretation of the text. In Chapter 4 "The Accents and Exegesis," the student learns to read particular verses "through the lens of the masoretic accents" (67). Finally, Chapter 5, "The Accents in the Three," covers the poetical sections of Job, Proverbs, and Psalms, with special emphasis given to Ps

29. The volume is complete with a Scripture index, a two-page bibliography of works cited, and two appendices. The first appendix provides a "five-point" guide to "determining the accents in a verse" while the second appendix is basically an annotated bibliography on that material which is useful "for further study." This section divides itself into "next steps" and "reference material(s)."

There is very little to argue with in this work. The author is exceptionally pedagogically sensitive throughout the volume. Futato avoids clumsy nomenclature (more on this later) and clearly recognizes that the work is an "introduction to the subject, not an exhaustive treatment" (62). This is perhaps most telling in dealing with the "rules" of particular accents, such as the *merekha* and the *munakh*, with respect to their specific placing and order. In addition to this, the format of the book itself is also quite user-friendly. There is good use of white space and an ample supply of illustrations throughout the text. The use of gray shading to highlight the key features of the passage or verse "at hand" is also most welcome.

Though the SBL Hebrew Font that is used throughout the volume differs somewhat from that of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS), no student should be inordinately challenged or in any way encumbered by these matters. In fact, some users might even consider the use of the SBL font in *Basics of Hebrew Accents* a boon since it is an exact match with the font(s) that are used in most Bible study software programs, such as Logos and Accordance (see 17). In much the same way, while some readers may take umbrage with Futato's decision to not overtly employ the language of "emperors," "kings," "princes," and the like (see 31–33; cf. 105) concerning the four main groups of the disjunctives accents, it may be argued that there is a less steep learning curve involved for the uninitiated by avoiding such terminology. This is not to mention, of course, the direct benefit that is provided to the reader by preventing any false impressions about what the accents are actually doing if identified through these names.

Unlike, however, another recent volume on Hebrew accents, namely *The Fundamentals of Hebrew Accents: Divisions and Exegetical Roles Beyond Syntax* by Sung Jin Park (Cambridge University Press, 2020), Futato's work does not include any "exercises" wherein one applies the principles of each chapter or section for themselves through "workbook like" tasks. This absence may be considered to be a not-insignificant draw back for those educators who wish to take advantage of this particular style of assignment.

Perhaps the most unique "take-away" tool in the entire work is a clear system of "diagramming" or "graphically representing" verse(s) according to the accent divisions. Futato effectively demonstrates to the reader how they can make "tree diagrams" of the "Hebrew Cantillations" by hand, through their word processing document, or with the aid of Logos Bible Software (see 52–55). In my estimation, this section alone is worth the price of the volume.

That being said, however, the most stimulating aspect of the book for most readers will likely be "The Accents and Exegesis." Concerning this section, Futato states:

> In this chapter we're going to do some focused exegetical work through the lens of the masoretic accents. First, we will look at some texts where the accents make a subtle different in our interpretation. Second, we will look at some texts where the accents make a more significant difference. Third, we will look at a couple of text where it appears that there are errors in the masoretic placement of the accents. (67)

Since space forbids an exhaustive survey of this chapter, a few illustrative examples will have to suffice, one from each section.

(1) "Subtle Differences." After a brief but carefully argued exposé, Futato maintains that the placement of the *atnakh* in Gen 1:1 emphasizes the fact that "'God' and no other created. So when contemporary Bible scholars tell us that Gen 1:1 is a polemic against the religions of the surrounding cultures, they are simply reiterating what the accents told us long ago through the placement of *atnakh*" (68).

(2) "Significant Differences." In the first example of this particular section, Futato concludes that though the "great sea monsters" of Gen 1:21 may "ultimately" be good "under the umbrella of verse 31a . . . the interpretation [that is] encoded in the accents by the Masoretes" seems to be that the pronouncement "'and God saw that it was good' only extends backward to nodes under the second *zaqeph*, thus avoiding the implications that the sea monsters were good" (78–79).

(3) "Errors." After a thorough survey of the textual evidence of the Old Greek/Septuagint, Latin Vulgate, 1QS 8.12–14, the New Testament (Matt 3:3 and Mark 1:3), and the MT, Futato opines that "the masoretic reading of Isaiah 40:3a is clearly out of sync with other streams in ancient tradition, and it seems to be so erroneously" (86).

Futato recognizes that "the boundary between subtle and significant is fuzzy and subjective, but it has a heuristic value" (76). Irrespective of whether or not the reader will agree with the conclusions of the author on each and every point, they will likely be richly rewarded by engaging in the process as a whole.

To conclude, *Basics of Hebrew Accents* provides an accessible and inviting entry point to those who want to understand Hebrew accents and are looking for clear, concise, and practical instruction in the subject matter. The effective use of biblical illustrations, combined with ample white space, a clear, easy-to-use format, detailed exegesis, and impeccably precise use of reference grammars, makes *Basics of*

Hebrew Accents by far the most accessible introduction currently in print. Its primary readers will likely be intermediate to advanced students of the HB/OT and, one hopes, all serious expositors and teachers of Scripture. Highly recommended!

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Romans Disarmed: Resisting Empire, Demanding Justice. Sylvia C. Keesmaat and Brian J. Walsh. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2019. Pp. 416. Paperback. ISBN: 978-1587432842. $27.00 (USD).

The Reformer Philip Melanchthon called Romans "an outline and compendium of all Christian doctrine," a sentiment that has persisted for nearly 500 years.[1] In many ways, Keesmaat and Walsh's *Romans Disarmed* serves as an anti-thesis to Melanchthon's words. Coming fifteen years after their creative, anti-imperial reading of Colossians,[2] Keesmaat and Walsh's latest book offers a similar treatment of Paul's most influential letter.

The authors claim that Romans is a letter that needs to be disarmed, after a history of being turned into a weapon utilised for "theological violence" (106). Thus, Keesmaat and Walsh seek to rescue the text from theological abstraction and read it contextually, finding meaning through a process of "double immersion" (36) in both the ancient world of the text and contemporary world of the reader.

Arguing that Romans was written from a place of grief (see Rom 9:2), Keesmaat and Walsh claim that "you can't really understand what Paul is up to [in Romans] if you don't have some access to [a place of grief]" (5). Similarly, since Paul wrote Romans to a group of socially powerless people at the heart of the Roman Empire, the authors emphasise the need to read Romans "from the perspective of the margins" (7), both in the ancient and present contexts.

Keesmaat and Walsh primarily understand Romans to be an "anti-assimilation letter" of anti-imperialism (90). Furthermore, they argue that Romans should be understood contextually to be "fundamentally about home" (106). That is, it was a home-creating letter for both Jews and marginalised Gentiles in Rome, who had been rendered homeless by the empire and found a home in Messiah Jesus.

Seeking to immerse the reader in the ancient world, Keesmaat and Walsh write an entire chapter of fictional narrative that especially shows how a gentile, slave woman named Iris and a poor, Jewish craftsman named Nereus may have heard,

1 Quoted in David A. deSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods and Ministry Formation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), 598.
2 Sylvia C. Keesmaat and Brian J. Walsh, *Colossians Remixed: Subverting the Empire* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004).

struggled with ,and appreciated Paul's letter. Using intertextual exegesis, [3] the authors claim that the sin/injustice language of Rom 1–3 refers to economic injustice. Thus, they translate δικαιοσύνη as "justice" instead of the usual "righteousness" and ἀδικίαν as "injustice" instead of the usual "wickedness" (12, 18–19). Keesmaat and Walsh go on to interpret "the weak" and "the strong" mentioned in Rom 12–14 as those of low and high socio-economic status, showing how the inclusive, Christian meals would have subverted the status-centred meals of Roman culture (245–51).

In their view, Paul's understanding of idolatry is inextricably bound to economics, and one's relationship to the land. Keesmaat and Walsh also argue that Paul was an "eco-theologian" (209), cognisant of and lamenting environmental destruction brought about by the Roman Empire. They likewise explain how idolatry leads to corrupted sexual violence and thus understand Paul's condemnation of same-sex sexual activity in Romans 1 to be directed at the violence of the imperial family and a society of pederasty and sexually abusive slave-masters (331–40).

Although there are other works that highlight an anti-imperial interpretation of Paul,[4] and an anti-imperial reading of Romans, [5] Keesmaat and Walsh's book is unique in exploring in depth implications for the contemporary world and the Church today.

Since Keesmaat and Walsh identify global capitalism as the major imperial force (i.e., Roman Empire) of the twenty-first century, the practical initiatives in the book are rooted in critiques of capitalistic, consumeristic lifestyles that inevitably lead to environmental crisis**.** In this they are deeply influenced by the writings of Wendell Berry and Naomi Klein.

Keesmaat and Walsh believe that the Church needs to be faithful to groan with a suffering creation (see Rom 8) and respond by being good stewards. Since they maintain that a capitalistic worldview will unavoidably lead to conflict with the land, they assert that what is needed is no less than an entire new worldview where the Church's trust and worship is not rooted in the economy.

Becoming practical to the point of discomfort, Keesmaat and Walsh challenge contemporary society's addictive and idolatrous relationship with convenience and technology, questioning the use of plastic, household appliances and cell phones (182–86). They helpfully craft questions for the reader to ask themselves before purchasing any product, such as: "Does the *making*, the *use*, or the *discarding* of this item harm community or creation?" (186). Keesmaat and Walsh

3 Keesmaat and Walsh are especially indebted to the methods of Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) as acknowledged on p. 35.

4 See especially the work of Richard Horsley and N. T Wright whom Keesmaat and Walsh frequently engage with.

5 See Neil Elliot, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008) whom Keesmaat and Walsh regularly cite.

understand these types of questions to be what Paul is getting at in Romans 6:12–13 when he writes that Christians "should no longer be tools of injustice but rather of justice" (186).

Keesmaat and Walsh then turn to issues of "food production and consumption" (187). They describe Adam and Eve's sin as "eating something out of season" and say that the "contemporary movements toward local food, farmers markets, sustainably raised meat, and urban agriculture [aren't] just a trendy food fad; [they are] a biblical imperative" (188).

This leads Keesmaat and Walsh to direct the reader to the practices of the Indigenous First Nations of Canada, whose worldview in their estimation is far more Biblical and Pauline as shown by their relationship to the land. Furthermore, throughout the book they insightfully connect the tragic history of the Indigenous people of Canada with their fictional characters from the first century, all of whom were rendered homeless by empires (77–90).

Keesmaat and Walsh also argue that the Church needs to be a community where the economically weak are built up by the strong (see Rom 12–14). They believe that the Church needs to secede from empire (read global capitalism), if "we are to renounce idolatry in our lives" (258). In contrast to a capitalistic worldview, the authors argue that we ought to embrace an "economy of care," that is thoroughly local (262–63). This leads to further practical suggestions such as a guaranteed basic income, tuition support, affordable housing, local currencies, community shared agriculture initiatives, buying local and fair-trade products, eating less chocolate, drinking less coffee, owning fewer clothes and rejecting investment portfolios in favour of local micro loans (264–67).

Throughout the book they repeat the assertion that to separate spirituality from economics or salvation from politics is to forfeit the power of Romans and Scripture itself. This culminates in a bold claim made in the last chapter: that Paul and the Christians in Rome he wrote to "wouldn't likely have any idea what modern Christians mean when they" speak of salvation (368).

Keesmaat and Walsh's work is rare among academic books in that it is practical, passionate, personal, political, and provocative. With their use of an interlocutor, fiction, poetry, contemporary reflection and Targum translations, *Romans Disarmed* is undoubtedly the most engaging Biblical studies book I have ever read.

Communicative excellence aside, students of Paul and Romans will recognise that Keesmaat and Walsh build their interpretation of Romans on several major assumptions. If Paul was not as anti-imperial as they insist,[6] and if Paul's purpose

6 As argued by John M.G. Barclay, "Why the Roman Empire was Insignificant to Paul," in *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews*, WUNT 275 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 363–87. See also Scot McKnight and J. B. Modica, eds., *Jesus is Lord, Caesar is Not: Evaluating Empire in New Testament Studies* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2013).

in Romans was not primarily motivated by the situation of the Christians in Rome,[1] then the foundation of their book begins to crack, leaving their contemporary reflections in question. Many readers will also be suspicious of their contemporary applications, given that the majority are heavily left-leaning on the political spectrum.

Despite these potential issues, Keesmaat and Walsh are to be applauded for maintaining that the Bible has something to offer 21st century North Americans as we confront colonialism, divisive politics, environmental crisis, and the increasing reality of a post-Christian society. Although few readers will be as persuaded by the author's arguments as their interlocutor,[2] Keesmaat and Walsh's ancient and contemporary arguments deserve a careful reading by academics and Church leaders alike.

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Preaching Women: Gender, Power and the Pulpit. Liz Shercliff. London: SCM Press, 2019. Pp. 224. Paperback. ISBN: 978-0334058380. $22.99 (USD).

If one does a search for books on "women preaching" on Amazon.com, readers will find a plethora of books related to the topic, though many will focus either on how to preach on the women of the Bible or on the history of women preachers. Thanks to the work of scholars such Marion A. Taylor, Catherine Brekus, Priscilla Pope-Levison and others, the history of women preachers and biblical interpreters has been resurrected for the Church to study.[3] Women have been preaching and teaching throughout the ages; it is not a new phenomenon.

Liz Shercliff's book stands out by addressing preaching and homiletics from a woman's point of view and experience in the present day.[4] While her intended audience is not simply women, the book shifts its gaze towards the woman preacher in the pulpit. As a teacher of homiletics, Shercliff states that "women and men, young and old, from our diverse heritages and circumstances, to 'find our own voice'. There is value in recognizing and valuing women's spirituality,

1 The scholarly discussion regarding the purpose of Romans remains intricate and lively. Any technical commentary will give an overview.

2 A reality the authors anticipate on p. 274.

3 See Marion A. Taylor and Agnes Choi, eds., *Handbook of Women Biblical Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), Catherine A. Brekus, *Strangers & Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740–1845* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), and Priscilla Pope-Levison, *Turn the Pulpit Loose: Two Centuries of American Women Evangelists* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

4 See Alice P. Matthews, *Preaching the Speaks to Women* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003). Matthews addresses preaching and homiletics from the listener's point of view, applying gender studies research to explain the gendered differences in listening to and applying sermons.

and discerning where it overlaps and complements, supplements and enhances, confronts and challenges that of our brothers—so we can all be drawn closer to the Living God who is at work in us" (ix).

Shercliff is a priest in the Diocese of Chester in the Church of England and is the founder and coordinator of *Women's Voices*, an annual conference for women preachers. She teaches homiletics through The College of Preachers, a multi-denominational organization that equips and trains preachers; Shercliff also writes for their flagship publication *The Preacher* magazine. Shercliff holds a M.A. in Adult Education from The Open University and an M.A. in Mission and Ministry from St. John's College, Nottingham. Her book is the product of almost three decades of preaching, parish ministry, and teaching.

The book is designed to be the resource she wished she had when she was learning to preach (xviii). As a result, throughout each chapter, she includes portions of her own sermons as illustrations of her attempts to find her unique "voice" as a preacher, learning to speak the truth of Scripture *as a woman*, especially when talking about women. And at the end of each chapter, the author offers a text and/or a series of questions for personal reflection, so that the reader can use them as a means of developing self-awareness and their own preaching voice.

In Chapter 1, Shercliff orients her audience by reviewing the nature of preaching and who the preacher is. She defines preaching as "the art of engaging the people of God in their shared narrative by creatively and hospitably inviting them into the exploration of biblical text, by means of which, corporately and individually, they might encounter the divine" (5). Shercliff asserts that the very fact that a preacher is a woman affects how the sermon will eventually be received; "whether intentionally or otherwise, women preachers preach differently, because we are heard differently" (6). She believes that women preachers are already present in their sermons merely by being in the pulpit; they cannot become "invisible."

In Chapter 2, Shercliff explores how she found her own "voice" when preaching, having realized that she had been taught to preach like a man, not as herself. She includes an article she wrote for *The Preacher* magazine, entitled "Do women preach with a different 'voice'?" Her conclusion was "yes!" She writes:

> Unless preachers, particularly women preachers, get to grips with preaching about the experiences of women, the faith will not be truly embodied for the whole community. While women, I believe, should preach as women they should avoid speaking only to women. The aim should be to image God better by preaching and hearing, human, gendered sermons rather than androgynous sermons aimed at homogenous congregations. This will benefit both women and men, by allowing

> them to enter into each other's experience and understanding of God. (24)

Chapter 3 focuses on how the inherent patriarchy imbedded within our culture, especially church culture, silences women. Patriarchy is the *narrative* of our present-day culture, affecting both genders; it is not a mere system that can easily be changed. For Shercliff, women preachers need to learn how to tell the truth about this narrative.

After briefly outlining how culture, writ large, the media, science and the arts have downplayed, and even erased the accomplishments of women, Shercliff subsequently gives a brief history of the biblical texts that ultimately canonized the marginalization of women's leadership in the Church, ultimately resting the power upon the patriarchal Roman Church early in history. Thus, in Shercliff's view, while "women are now preaching in many branches of the Church . . . its distinctive prophetic possibilities are being largely ignored, and women are being invited into the existing company of preachers, rather than being asked to help redefine preaching itself" (54). Shercliff believes that women preachers need to speak truthfully about the patriarchy and sexism that saturates our culture as well as that of the Church, and from her point of view, the Bible itself. And the place to do that is from the pulpit.

While briefly touching on the scholarship of progressive and feminist thinkers on hermeneutics and homiletics, Shercliff formulates her charge to women preachers: "We have to persist. We have to promote the cause of the voiceless. We are to speak truth. We are to subvert culture." (73). For Shercliff, men's and women's voices *together* can transform God's people and their understanding of God.

In Chapters 4 and 5, the reader is asked to consider how women's experiences of faith and life are distinctive and affect faith development, coupled with how preachers might read and thus tell the stories of Bible women. Here, Shercliff also incorporates the listener into the discussion and proposes three ways in which she believes women experience church-based Christian faith differently from men. First, the Church expects women to read themselves "into" patriarchal language. Women are to expect their experiences to be ignored and their voices silenced.

Second, relationship is central to women's faith. "Women come to faith through relationship and interpret sin as broken relationship" (92). She asserts that coming to faith is not merely cognitive but embedded in a strong "connectedness" to others. Shercliff notes that the Gospel narratives place Jesus in networks of relationship . . . especially with his disciples; "he did not instruct them with key points to remember, but gave them bread and wine to take into their bodies, or

washed their feet" (93).[5] In this light, women preachers must not only speak *about* women's experiences of faith, but also speak *from* those shared experiences of connectedness and relationship.

Lastly, as a result of the burdensome expectations assumed by women in the Church, and the disregard for their experience of faith, Shercliff believes that the historical doctrines of the Church become remote, distancing women from both the Bible and from God/Jesus. Doctrines become interpreted from a male, patriarchal point of view, and God is portrayed as "male" with masculine characteristics. As a result, the women portrayed in the Bible are "either ignored or rendered weak" (95). Thus, in order to properly look at the women in the Bible, Shercliff proposes her four-fold approach to reading biblical passages: culture and tradition (communal sources) plus experience and position (personal sources) (xvi).[6]

Coupled with the three reading approaches she feels are open to women preachers: rejection, repatriation and redemption, Shercliff believes that a woman preacher must be clear on what strategy she will use and why (106). She uses Mary, the mother of Jesus, as her exemplar for applying her methodology. In a sermon on Luke 1:39–56, Shercliff concludes that it is Mary, in the Magnificat, who first announced the "gospel" message that "favours the oppressed, allows them good things and gives them access to power" (116). She encourages her readers to look at the underlying story in the biblical text from the point of view of biblical women; many times, the story that has been handed down through tradition no longer holds up.

Chapter 6 offers some sermon ideas that would enable women to preach as women. Here, Shercliff uses Bible women as sermon subjects in order to bring them out of the shadows and to the forefront. Some examples include looking closely at Mary of Magdala's story in John 20:1–8. From the Old Testament, there's Deborah, Jael, both warriors, as well as Hannah, Hagar, and Rebekah, who cried out in prayer and God heard. Given the number of books in print, preaching about the Bible's women is a highly promoted fertile ground for every preacher.

Chapter 7 offers a model of preaching that would focus on bringing to light "silenced perspectives" that would ultimately enable women listeners to meet God in a new way that speaks to them. Once again, Shercliff returns to her model of sermon preparation and applies it to a sermon example she provides. After reflecting on culture, tradition, experience and position, themes should emerge that should raise theological questions that the preacher must answer for themselves and their congregation. Research, especially historical research, can aid in

5 Shercliff makes reference to the Church as the "'body of Christ' rather than a group of like-minded people," citing 1 Cor 12:27 and Eph 4:4.

6 Shercliff references her book co-authored by Gary O'Neill: *Straw for the Bricks: Theological Reflection in Practice,* (London: SCM, 2018).

developing realistic and reasonable interpretations. Finally, this is followed by a conscious reflection on how best to communicate what has been learned and reflected upon.

Shercliff offers her model for preaching as "her" model, not "the" model. In her reflection at the end of the chapter, she asks the reader if they have a "conscious" model of preaching. What she hopes the reader will do is invest the time to create a sermon that will enable the people they preach to explore their faith in a scriptural way and wrestle with their issues honestly and sincerely.

Finally, Chapter 8 is a short postlude, where Shercliff summarizes what she has set out to do in her book. She finishes with her call to women preachers to speak the truth and calling out patriarchy and sexism where it exists in our culture and in the church. "When God's revelation is warped by exclusion, or dismembered by suppression all people suffer. The fullness of God's presence in our lives needs God's activity in both women and men to be manifest, otherwise both excluded women and exalted men suffer" (168).

As a female preacher, the concepts Shercliff presents are appealing and make sense in theory. But in practice, it is not clear cut. Clearly, the gender of the preacher and their demeanor in the pulpit immediately affects how a sermon is received. And within more conservative evangelical circles, women's voices are silenced by prooftexts with a powerful history of interpretation.[7] Shercliff's advocation for preaching about the women in the Bible is a worthy imperative, since they can be role models that we as preachers can hold up to women (and men), allowing them to relate *as women* to the biblical text.

However, with respect to a person's experience of faith and the biblical text, I believe it is unique and individual to each and every person; gender is just one of the factors that come into play. It can take years of regular preaching for an individual preacher, regardless of their gender (or other demographic), to find their unique "voice," assuming that they are consciously attempting to do so. The samples provided from Shercliff's own sermons show her to be an engaging and empathetic preacher, who clearly calls upon her own life experiences to speak biblical truth. Had she focused more in this area rather than solely on gender differences, the book might be more impactful. An experience-based approach to the biblical text would make better preachers of us all, regardless of our gender and personal faith experience.

But one issue Shercliff does not address is the role of leadership that is often embodied in the preacher, especially if they are *the* spiritual leader of a given faith

7 To learn more about the internal struggles surrounding women in ministry, I recommend reading from both sides of the aisle. For those who promote women in ministry, peruse the literature and resources for Christians for Biblical Equality: https://www.cbeinternational.org. To study and understand the opposing views of those who do not support women in ministry, peruse the literature and resources for The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: https://cbmw.org.

community (i.e., pastor, minister, priest, etc.). And the question of leadership leads to the question of power and the exercising of it. For Shercliff, power still rests with the patriarchy that still guides our culture; therefore, as women preachers, our goal should be to subvert that power. But how do you accomplish that subversion and lead? What Shercliff lacks is a deep dive into social science gender research to inform her thesis and application.[8]

In this writer's experience, men and women are not monolithic and do not "hear" sermons uniformly as a gender. Everyone learns differently and responds to different styles of sermons. Some of us prefer logic and reason, peppered with lots of facts, while some of us respond better to experience and empathy. In today's world, not all sermon illustrations are going to be received as gender-specific. (For example, I have a friend who is an avid American Football fan; she would fully comprehend and appreciate the proverbial football reference.) Therefore, because differences such as gender and other demographics affect the giving and receiving of sermons, I believe a variety of sermon styles, used over time, will be more effective in speaking to a diverse congregation of individuals.

Nonetheless, I believe that Shercliff's book contributes to the growing body of work being done in the Church and the academy to teach preachers how to speak to every individual that makes up their audience. Age, education, income level, gender, race and/or ethnicity, culture of origin, life experience, current events . . . these are just some of the factors that need to be considered by the preacher, not only with respect to the make-up of their audience or congregation, but also with respect to themselves, because all these factors bring inherent biases that can affect the way one approaches the biblical text and preaches. The more heterogenous our congregations, more "languages" our sermons will need to speak.

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Love Anyway: An Invitation Beyond a World That's Scary as Hell. Jeremy Courtney. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019. Pp. 286. Paperback. ISBN: 978-0310352426. $17.99 (USD).

Many autobiographical stories of post-evangelicals terminate in a nebulous phase of agnosticism, angry atheism, or constructive progressivism. However, when

8 Again, I reference Alice P. Matthews, *Preaching the Speaks to Women* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003). Dr. Matthews, a missionary pastor's wife, earned an inter-disciplinary doctorate from the University of Denver. Her book draws more deeply on gender research and is able to articulate gender differences across multiple factors so that preachers of both genders can learn to speak to the whole of their audience. And part of her pedagogical method also includes questions to reflect upon in order to gain better self-awareness. Personally, I would recommend the use of these books together in a learning environment, mostly because Shercliff's sermon samples are highly useful.

Jeremy Courtney and his wife bailed on the Middle-Eastern mission field (like so many others who become disillusioned with fundamentalism and arrogant proselytism), there was a simple but profound undergirding energy that held his life and mission together across one phase of his life to another: *loving like Christ*. This life and action-based instead of belief-based orientation became the basis of his growing non-profit for war refugees, the Preemptive Love Coalition.

Courtney set out to Turkey to win Muslims to the Lord, but found himself confused, arguing with his traditionalist pastor, and losing friends and precious donors because, like David Gushee in *Still Christian: Following Jesus Out of Evangelicalism* and my own story,[1] he couldn't reconcile an exclusivist, Islamophobic, and dogmatic system of unquestionable absolute truths with the command to love one's neighbor as themselves. When people are being bombed, tortured, killed, and forced out of their homes to starve in the desert, it's obvious to any compassionate person what such people need: love, protection, food and water, shelter, and essential support. If being a "Christian" and being "like Christ" means anything, it would seem to be this. But that is not all. It is precisely in *this context,* in the real-life training grounds of loving people in life, that theology and faith is born and actually have meaning. Discovering this when lives are literally on the line—and in a transformative, personal biography, creates a very jarring experience for readers.

Love Anyway chronicles this tale of Courtney and his team, exploring many internal struggles of the typical North American evangelical Christian out of the fishbowl, as well as the external struggles of dealing with the realities of war, politics, human suffering, survival, and recovery. Thrusting themselves into the warzone of peak Islamic State horror, Courtney and his team prove unbelievably determined not only to feed the hungry against all odds, but to see if hell can actually be survived and mitigated by following the Greatest Commandment. This is all the more remarkable when this unconquerable, unearthly persistent drive is pitted against perhaps the most notorious mass cynicism of our species: *the idea that cyclical, generational violence cannot be changed*. This "The Way things Are" mantra (to use the author's words) mercilessly haunt the love coalition and their work at every corner and phase—but somehow, *somehow,* does not have the last word.

"Grace and grit" is perhaps the best description of *Love Anyway*. Readers will encounter disturbing accounts of genocide, war violence, and PTSD, but also a spirit of incredible power that stands unmoved by the corporate gods, the imperialists priests, and the central banksters that plan, incubate, fund, and nurture such

1 Jamin Andreas Hübner, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism: A Letter to a Friend and a Professor's Guide to Leaving Religious Fundamentalism* (Rapid City: Hills, 2020).

"extravagant brutalities of modern warfare."[2] The book stands alongside Shane Claiborne's *The Irresistible Revolution*[3] and Shawn Banzhaf's *The Five L's*[4] in terms of its spirit-inspired response to war and its effects. It finds camaraderie alongside such on-the-ground figures as Dorothy Day and Mother Theresa. And it exhibits the truth-telling boldness of Martin Luther King Jr. and fearless Christian thinkers like Chris Hedges and Cornel West.

In reading the book (cover to cover in one afternoon), I also found myself pondering the absurdities of the Ben Shapiros, Jordan Petersons, and Donald Trumps of our age who pride themselves on criticizing a world-and-life-view based centrally on empathy, and speak publicly to audiences of millions about how the problem with our world today is "too much compassion." *Love Anyway* dispels the idea that love and compassion is for the weak, that empathy hinders human progress, and delivers a sharp arrow into the chest of the anti-empathy zombie monster that continues to plague our contemporary world.[5]

Caring for the refugee has a rich history in Jewish-Christian practice and thought, and we live in an age of refugee crises in many countries across the map. Readers will do well to both buy and read *Love Anyway* and prioritize one's privileged North American budget around funding the Preemptive Love Coalition. Until then, the book will surely inspire many.

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Evangelical, Sacramental, & Pentecostal: Why the Church Should be All Three. Gordon T. Smith. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2017. Pp. 132. Paperback. ISBN: 978-0830851607. $18.00 (USD).

For many adherents of the Christian faith, the very title of Gordon Smith's work may sound like something of an oxymoron. Within Pentecostal circles, sacramentalism is frequently dismissed as a euphemism for empty ritual, the rejection of which was one of the very catalysts that gave rise to the movement in the first place. Conversely, Pentecostalism has dismissed by some within more liturgical churches as a capitulation to unrestrained emotionalism, negligent of the profound sense of the Spirit experienced through the ordinary means of grace such as baptism and

2 David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 107.

3 Shane Claiborne, *The Irresistible Revolution* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016).

4 Shawn Banzhaf, *The Five L's: A Practical Guide for Helping Loved Ones Heal After Trauma* (Rapid City: Hills, 2021).

5 See *Zurich*, "Decline in Human Empathy Creates Global Risks in the 'Age of Anger'," (April 9, 2019), available online at: https://www.zurich.com/en/knowledge/topics/global-risks/decline-human-empathy-creates-global-risks-age-of-anger. For more on this topic, along with toxic masculinity's role in it, see Banzhaf, *The Five L's,* ch. 1.

the Supper. Still others, in the evangelical tradition, assert that the primary way in which believers should expect to encounter the living God is neither via one's personal experience nor participation in the sacraments, but through the knowledge of his written Word.

In Smith's view, however, the church need not default to one of these three paths. On the contrary, he asserts that the church must be all three at once, "if we want to appropriate as fully as possible the grace of the ascended Christ" (3). Grounding his case in the triune nature of God himself, in his introduction Smith labels the "Word, sacrament, and immediate presence of the Spirit" as the three prongs of "an ecology of grace" crucial to the church's fullness in Christ (4). This "ecology"—inspired by the likes of Calvin and Wesley, to whom Smith appeals to demonstrate its consistency with an evangelical ethos (50–51)—is the means by which the church ought to understand its union with Christ (7). His first chapter, a discussion of John 15:4, surveys the various ways the church has traditionally understood the call to abide "in Christ," concluding that, "the three—Spirit, along with Word and sacrament—are the means . . . by which we abide in Christ as Christ abides in us" (21). Each of these means is the focus of a chapter; 4–6 are entitled the Evangelical principle, Sacramental principle, and Pentecostal principle, respectively.

Each tradition would likely find certain points of contention with Smith. While appreciative of his emphasis on the pneumatology of Luke-Acts in chapter 2, and on the Spirit's work in Jesus's earthly life (23), the Pentecostal would like him to explicitly affirm their doctrine of Spirit baptism in calling for the church to be authentically "Pentecostal." The evangelical would applaud his assertion that pneumatology must ultimately "be thoroughly Christological," that the Spirit "glorifies Christ" among God's people (26). However, low church evangelicals, in particular, may be skeptical of his position that the Supper should be celebrated weekly, as in liturgical settings (40). Moreover, in Reformed evangelicalism, his statement that "Luther and Calvin could not incorporate into their own teaching a legitimate expression of the inner illuminating grace of God" (104) would like meet with protest—particularly since the latter has frequently been praised as "the Theologian of the Holy Spirit" by devotees. The sacramentalist, certainly, would wholeheartedly concur with Smith's proposal "that conversion to the Christian faith necessarily includes baptism" (38) and his caution to those evangelicals and Pentecostals who mistakenly believe "that it is possible to have a full-orbed Christian life with minimal exposure to the sacraments" (45). On the other hand, some sacramental communities may balk at his assertion that the Scripture readings for a particular service necessarily ought to have some connection with the sermon preached (90) or find odd his insistence that the

Spirit's work should always be highlighted when the Lord's Supper is celebrated (93).

However, all things considered, Smith's volume is quite generous and refreshing, constructively offering a much-needed corrective to the imbalances that characterize many local congregations. It identifies the greatest strengths of these three ecclesial traditions and consistently highlights how they are, despite their differences, well-positioned to complement each other. His analysis of Acts 2, which depicts the preached Word and the Lord's Supper as the core of Spirit-empowered church's gathering (32), serves as a powerful reminder that, though intriguing to the contemporary reader, his vision of the local church is hardly a revolutionary concept—it is, rather, an ancient model.

Though Smith may appear rather charismatic in his assertion that "[w]e are only truly the church when we live, together, in the fellowship of the Spirit" (98), this fellowship is firmly grounded in the constant celebration of the sacraments and preaching of the Word. His discussion of Christian initiation (129) is also timely. While Smith notes that the church of Acts viewed reception of the Spirit and water baptism as "the basics of initiation" for new converts (28), this concept is largely lacking in the contemporary Western church—particularly in evangelical circles, which so strongly affirm the sole authority of Scripture, ironically. It seems a direct link may be drawn to this phenomenon and the question of community he frequently raises. While few orthodox churches would deny the absolute necessity of Scripture for Christian vitality, Smith reminds his readers that "to be truly the church is to be a community immersed in a sacred text"—not simply a weekly gathering of persons who interact with that sacred text privately (37). On these two points, then, Smith's work seems to push back on the rampant individualism of Western Christianity, for which it ought to be commended.

Moreover, his appeal to Wesley, Calvin, medieval mystics, and the Fathers to bolster his case reinforces the fact that authentic Christian community requires not just appreciating the voices of other believers within the church today, but those from ages past. Perhaps the prime example of this is his sixth chapter, "The Pentecost Principle", in which he draws the bulk of his discussion concerning Christian experience not from the contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic movement, but figures like Bernard of Clairvaux (101) and Ignatius Loyola (103). Indeed, both the critical Pentecostal and sacramental reader ought to consider the rich spiritual experience of such individuals as evidence their distinct branches of Christendom may hold much more in common than at first glance. One would imagine this is Smith's goal given his assertion that, "The Spirit is an ecumenical spirit; if we are in the Spirit, we are committed to working with and fostering the unity of the church universal" (120). Thus, a deep reverence for tradition and

community, coupled with a high premium on personal experience, serve to greatly enrich one another.

Perhaps the greatest strength of this title is its accessibility. Smith's writing is truly within reach of the wider Body of Christ that he wishes to address. The work is constructed in such a way that the informed layperson may understand the content, yet with enough depth to satisfy the ordained minister or ecclesial focused academic. On the one hand, Smith's work is theologically rich, grounding his case in the core Christian doctrines of the Trinity, union with Christ, and the incarnation, while also highlighting how they are vitally connected with one another (106). On the other, it is intensely practical, drawing on his own experiences in congregational settings, on the mission field, and his career in theological education. In short, this volume reads as one not merely written about the church, but ultimately for the church.

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The Christian World Around the New Testament. Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017. Pp. 757. Paperback. ISBN 978-0801098918. $0.95 (USD).

The Christian World Around the New Testament is a compilation of scholarly articles by New Testament professor Richard Bauckham. It is the sequel to a similar volume *the Jewish World Around the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), also a compilation by Bauckham. Instead of being organized chronologically and focusing on Jewish elements, *The Christian World* focuses on topics surrounding Christian origins and identity, therefore organized topically into the following categories: Gospel Audiences, Gospel Traditions, Gospels and Canon, Early Christian People, Early Church, Early Christian Apocryphal Literature, and Early Patristics.

Bauckham's scholarship in the volume substantially overlaps some of his other books because it represents the original articles from which they came. For example, most of the first two sections comprise the research behind his most well-known work, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017 [orig. 2007]). The same can be said for several of his other monograph publications. *The Christian World* nevertheless contains a large amount of material not published in book form, which helpfully facilitates a broader audience beyond the halls of academia.

Bauckham's work is similar to N. T. Wright and James Dunn in that it comes from a Christian perspective and focuses on Christian origins—especially the

Jewish context of early Christianity. He is more like Dunn than Wright because of his focus on form criticism and the origin of the gospels (something Wright has mostly left to his colleague Michael Bird to address[1]). For example, Dunn brings attention to local oral performance as an explanation for synoptic differences, while Bauckham pushes in the other direction, questioning whether there is even such thing as a "Matthean community" or "Lukan church" (for example), and closing the gap between the time of Christ to the time of stabilized, written Gospel traditions. This subject is particularly interesting to those curious about the "date" of the gospels (such as myself).[2] These first sections in *The Christian World* concisely question a number of academic consensuses to (a) correct the over-corrections of contemporary scholarship, and (b) because of the evidence and inference to best explanation, as opposed to outright apologetics.

The book has 31 chapters and over 700 pages of text, which is considerable. However, the small chapter size, wide-ranging topics, and contemporary introductions by the author to each section makes the book quite readable for (what most will probably use as) a reference work. Readers can also expect numerous selections surrounding Bauckham's specialty in apocryphal literature—which is the largest section in the book. Anyone seriously concerned about Christian origins and the shape of early Christianity should read *The Christian World Around the New Testament* (and probably the earlier *The Jewish World Around the New Testament*).

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1 See Michael Bird, *The Gospel of the Lord: How the Early Church Wrote the Story of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014). Wright is supposed to address this topic in the last volume(s) of his *Christian Origins and the Question of God* series.

2 I bring this to readers' attention in my review of Paula Fredriksen, *When Christians Were Jews: The First Generation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018) for *Reading Religion* (November 12, 2018); review of Philip Esler, ed., *The Early Christian World (Routledge Worlds)* (New York: Routledge, 2017) for *The Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 15 (2019): R37–40; and review of Markus Vinzent, *Writing the History of Early Christianity: From Reception to Retrospection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019) for *The Journal of Greco-Roman History and Judaism* (forthcoming).

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