Canadian-American Theological Review

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Foreword

This issue represents the first of the journal under the new title, *Canadian-American Theological Review.* Originally entitled the *Canadian Evangelical Review*, in 2012 the journal took its first major step forward, as it transitioned to a formally refereed academic journal, with an editorial board consisting of scholars of various theological disciplines from across Canada. It was renamed, *Canadian Theological Review*, which more clearly indicated its mission to engage in fruitful dialogue with a wide range of theological viewpoints and traditions.

Canadian-American Theological Review represents yet the next step forward for the journal. The new name reflects the expansion of our parent organization, formerly the Canadian Evangelical Theological Association (CETA), and now the Canadian-American Theological Association (CATA), as well as the addition of American scholars on the editorial board. This latest development in the journal's evolution further coincides with the decision to provide the full text of all *CTR*/*CATR* articles and book reviews on the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) electronic database.

The journal will continue to publish as before scholarly articles and book reviews from across the spectrum of theological disciplines, including Biblical Studies, and Historical, Systematic, Moral, and Pastoral Theology. It is our conviction that the change to *CATR* signifies, moreover, the growing impact and usefulness of the journal in both the academy and the church, which will continue in the coming years.

Christopher Zoccali, editor-in-chief.

Is Sauce for the Goose, Sauce for the Gander? Evaluating Models and Methods in Galatians 4:21–31

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Abstract

Nearly fifteen years ago David Horrell and Philip Esler exchanged a series of essays over the role of models in one's approach to a social-scientific interpretation of the New Testament. Horrell's concern was that the specific model-based approach of the Context Group in general, and Philip Esler in particular, generalized and flattened the text while dictating the results. This article will seek to explore Horrell's concern by evaluating Esler's reading of Gal 4:21–31 in order to determine if Esler's reading of this particular text is sensitive to cultural variation and the potential for specificity, or if his model-based approach truly dictates his results. Moreover, it will focus on evaluating specific aspects of Esler's understanding of Paul's use of the Sarah and Hagar narrative in Gal 4:21–31 in light of Esler's approach to intergroup dynamics and identity formation. Overall, this paper will argue that according to Esler's reading of Gal 4:21–31, Horrell's concerns are justified. That is, rather than being sensitive to cultural variation and the potential for specificity in Gal 4:21–31, Esler's specific model-based approach generalizes, flattens, and overtly dictates his conclusions.

Introduction[1]

Nearly fifteen years ago David Horrell and Philip Esler exchanged a series of essays over the role of models in one's approach to a social-scientific interpret-

1 This article is a slightly revised version of a paper presented at the 2015 annual meeting of the Institute for Biblical Research in the session entitled: "Cultural Anthropology and Identity in Paul's Letters." A special thanks to J. Brian Tucker for inviting me to present, and to Christopher Zoccali for encouraging me to submit the paper for potential publication.

ation of the New Testament.[2] In his essay entitled "Models and Methods in Social-Scientific Interpretation: A Response to Philip Esler," Horrell challenged the then-current representative view of the Context Group,[3] and thus Esler, over the legitimacy of their specific model-based approach to the New Testament. Horrell's concern was due to the way in which "a model-based approach can lead to historically and culturally variable evidence being interpreted through the lens of a generalized model of social behavior."[4] While Esler himself noted this danger, Horrell argued that Esler's Galatians commentary, one of his most recent works at the time, continued to exhibit this concern. For example, Horrell accused Esler of reading Paul's encounter with the Jerusalem leaders in Gal 2:1–10 through the lens of various anthropological models that only dictated, and thus predetermined Esler's conclusions.[5] According to Horrell, Esler made assertions about Paul's actions with the Jerusalem leaders not on the basis of what is explicitly in the text of Gal 2:1–10, "but purely on the grounds of what a 'Mediterranean man' typically does" when his honor is challenged.[6]

While the goal of this paper is not to enter into a discussion of Esler's reading of the Jerusalem meeting, it is important to note that Horrell and others have raised some legitimate concerns about some of the approaches that both Esler and the Context Group have taken in their reading of a document such as Galatians. So then, following Horrell, my concern in this paper will center on evaluating Esler's reading of Gal 4:21–31 in light of his overall approach to models, intergroup conflict, and identity. The main question I will seek to answer is: does Esler's reading of Gal 4:21–31 reinforce the concerns of Horrell, namely, that Esler's specific model-based approach generalizes and flattens the text while dictating the results? Or, is Esler, in fact, sensitive to cultural variation and the potential for specificity in this particular text? Therefore, in the following sections I

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2 David G. Horrell, "Models and Methods in Social-Scientific Interpretation: A Response to Philip Esler," *Journal of the Study of the New Testament* 78 (2000): 83–105; Philip F. Esler, "Models in New Testament Interpretation: A Reply to David Horrell," *Journal of the Study of the New Testament* 78 (2000): 107–13; for an overview of the discussion, see Bengt Holmberg, "The Methods of Historical Reconstruction in the Scholarly 'Recovery' of Corinthian Christianity," in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Churches,* ed. Edward Adams and David G. Horrell (Louisville; London: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 267–69.

3 The Context Group comprises a group of international scholars who are committed to the use of the social sciences for the purpose of biblical interpretation. For a representative example of their work, see the collection of essays in John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina, ed., *Handbook of Biblical Social Values* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009).

4 Horrell, "Models and Methods," 84.

5 Ibid., 91–93. More significant discussion has centered on Esler's reading of the Antioch incident. For various responses to Esler, see E. P. Sanders, "Jewish Association with Gentiles and Galatians 2:11–14," in *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn,* ed. Robert T. Fortna and Beverly Roberts Gaventa (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 170–88; Bengt Holmberg, "Jewish *Versus* Christian Identity in the Early Church?" *Revue Biblique* 105 (1998): 397–425.

6 Horrell, "Models and Methods," 92.

will begin by situating Esler within his general approach to the New Testament, and also Galatians specifically. Second, I will examine Esler's reading of Gal 4:21–31. Finally, I will offer an evaluation of Esler's reading of Gal 4:21–31 with a few brief comments of my own understanding of how pertinent features of the text *could* be read.

The Context Group, Social Identity, and Implications for Galatians

In 1998, Philip Esler, a member of the Context Group, offered the first full-scale reading of Galatians from the perspective of cultural anthropology and social psychology.[7] Esler's volume has been a welcome addition to Galatians scholarship primarily in its attempt at reading Galatians in view of its appropriate social-historical context[8] and in its concern for reading Galatians through the lens of identity.[9] Thus, before we turn our attention to Esler's reading of Gal 4:21–31, we must pause and recognize that the work of Esler is unique in several ways and, for that reason, our discussion must be situated within a proper understanding of his overall approach. Therefore, in the following sections I will offer a brief overview of (1) the basic presuppositions that inform the work of the Context Group, (2) the social psychology employed in much of Esler's work, and (3) the implications of both (1) and (2) for Esler's reading of Galatians.

The Context Group and Cultural Anthropology

One of the central characteristics of the Context Group is the contention that one must understand the social script in which the New Testament documents were situated in order to recognize and bridge the cultural gap that is inherent in all modern attempts at interpreting these ancient documents. Moreover, they contend that in order to comprehend the meaning of these social scripts in their first-century

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7 See Philip F. Esler, *Galatians,* New Testament Readings (New York: Routledge, 1998). It is important to note that Esler's Galatians commentary was written and published during the early stages of the development of social-scientific approaches to the New Testament. Since then, the discussion has moved forward in ways that may not entirely reflect the approach of early Context Group members such as Bruce Malina and Philip Esler. However, in a more recent piece on Galatians, Esler maintains a similar framework for understanding Galatians as he offered in his 1998 commentary; see Philip F. Esler, "Paul's Contestation of Israel's (Ethnic) Memory of Abraham in Galatians 3," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 36 (2006): 23–34.

8 The social context of Galatians is an area often taken for granted in many of the text-centered approaches to Galatians. For recent approaches to reading Galatians with the social-historical context in view, see Susan Elliott, *Cutting Too Close for Comfort: Paul's Letter to the Galatians in its Anatolian Cultic Context,* JSNTSup 248 (London: T&T Clark, 2003); and Justin Hardin, *Galatians and the Imperial Cult,* WUNT 237 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

9 The significance of identity formation for Galatians has opened significant areas of further research; see Atsuhiro Asano, *Community-Identity Construction in Galatians: Exegetical, Social-Anthropological, and Socio-Historical,* JSNTSup 285 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2005); Caroline Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); David Paul Shaules, "Galatians and Social Identity Theory," (PhD diss., Claremont Graduate University, 2011).

context, one must employ certain models developed from recent anthropological research on the Mediterranean area[10]—models that are foreign to Western individualism but the norm in both ancient and modern collectivist societies.[11] In this way, the interpreter will be in a better position to avoid both ethnocentrism and anachronism, two concerns which have dominated the landscape of modern New Testament studies, especially since the advent of historical-critical methods.[12]

While neither time nor space permits a full discussion of these models, or patterns of Mediterranean culture, it is important to articulate a number of their most prominent features. First, honor is understood to be the *pivotal* social value in Mediterranean society, and the challenge for honor is evident in every form of non-kin public social interaction.[13] The second feature is dyadic personality; that is, Mediterranean society, being collectivist in nature, means that individuals are not oriented toward themselves, but rather, toward the group or kin to which he or she belongs.[14] Third, the importance of patrilineal kinship reinforces this collectivist or group-oriented behavior.[15] The fourth feature is limited good; that is, every good in life, whether material or not, is of limited quantity with the limit of honor being of utmost concern.[16] And finally, the importance of patron-client relationships reinforces the above cultural patterns and structures.[17]

Altogether, Esler contends that these cultural patterns, or models (honor-shame, dyadic personality, kinship, limited good, and patronage), offer the interpreter a proper understanding of the basic social script in which the New Testament documents were penned, or "the basic game-rules of this culture."[18] Moreover, models are effective for two reasons: first, they explicitly state the presuppositions of the author; and second, they are heuristic tools providing new questions to be asked of the text(s) under investigation.[19]

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10 Philip F. Esler, *The First Christians in Their Social World: Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 11.

11 As Holmberg, "Methods of Historical Reconstruction," 267, notes, "The context group uses anthropological models for understanding human behavior in other societies, especially biblical ones."

12 See Esler's discussion in *Galatians,* 21–28; see also Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 2006), 1–9.

13 Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology,* 3rd ed., Revised and Updated (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 27–57. Additionally, these cultural patterns are presented in the work of David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).

14 Malina, *The New Testament World,* 58–80. Esler, *Galatians,* 29, contends that a result of dyadic personality is stereotyping.

15 Malina, *The New Testament World,* 134–60.

16 Ibid., 81–107.

17 Ibid., 93–97; deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity,* 121–56.

18 Esler, *The First Christians,* 35. It should be noted that both envy and purity are also considered to be patterns. For a discussion of envy, see Malina, *The New Testament World,* 108–42; on purity, see Malina, *The New Testament World,* 161–97.

19 Esler, *Galatians,* 11–13.

Based on the above, albeit brief, overview, one important feature must be noted. According to the Context Group, due to the collective nature of Mediterranean society, and the various group or intergroup dynamics arising from its group-oriented pattern, the natural corollary is intergroup comparison; meaning, ancient Mediterranean society was fiercely competitive. More importantly, the fostering of competition between various groups could lead to intergroup conflict as groups sought to accrue honor and establish a positively distinctive identity for themselves over against that of other groups.[20]

Philip Esler and Social Identity Theory

The dynamics of these intergroup relationships within Mediterranean culture lead us to a second feature central to Esler's work: the explicit use of social psychology in order to describe "how identity is produced through intergroup dynamics."[21] While the data presented in the social script of Mediterranean culture reveal the reality of intergroup comparison, Esler argues that one needs to be more precise in explaining the actuality of these dynamics.[22] Thus, Esler contends that we are best aided by the social sciences in order to understand the social context, and he has elected to employ Social Identity Theory (SIT) in order to explain the reality of groups, group identity, and intergroup conflict.[23] Esler closely follows the approach of Henry Tajfel, who defines SIT as "that *part* of an individual's self-concept which derives from his [sic] knowledge of his [sic] membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that group membership."[24] Therefore, with the framework of both cultural anthropology and social psychology in place, I will now highlight the most significant implications of the above information for Esler's reading of Galatians.

Implications for Galatians

According to Esler, one of the primary issues Paul had to deal with among the Galatian ἐκκλησίας ("assemblies"; commonly translated, "churches"[25]) was that a dominant group of Israelite Christ-followers (rivals) in Galatia, for reasons largely

20 Ibid., 42, 49.
21 Ibid., 29.
22 Ibid., 40; Malina, *The New Testament World,* 19–24.
23 Esler, *Galatians,* 39.
24 Henry Tajfel, "Social Categorization, Social Identity, and Social Comparison," in *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations,* European Monographs in Social Psychology 14, ed. Henry Tajfel (London Academic Press, 1978), 63; emphasis original.
25 For a discussion on the difficulty of translating the term ἐκκλησία as "church," see Anders Runesson, "The Question of Terminology: The Architecture of Contemporary Discussions on Paul," in *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context of the Apostle,* ed. Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 68–76.

left unstated in the letter, considered the identity of uncircumcised gentile converts inferior to that of their own.[26] Moreover, these rival Israelite Christ-followers were claiming that Paul's circumcision free gospel was defective and his apostleship inferior to that of the Jerusalem leaders.[27] As a result, Paul's gentile converts were being pressured by this rival group to leave their inferior outgroup with its inferior gospel, and undergo circumcision in order to belong to the superior ingroup. Therefore, Paul is, throughout Galatians, at pains to combat the position of this rival group for the purpose of maintaining a distinctive and positive identity for himself and his gentile converts.[28]

Furthermore, Esler contends that Paul has entered into the arena of social competition whereby he is involved in the process of intergroup comparison as he attempts to reverse the respective positions of the two groups (e.g., through social stereotyping).[29] Moreover, due to the highly competitive nature of ancient Mediterranean culture, the intergroup comparison quickly escalates to conflict as Paul seeks to argue for the superiority of his ministry and his group. On one level, Paul is involved in a contest of honor whereby he is attempting to get the better of his rivals in order to accrue honor for both himself and his group; and second, throughout Galatians, Paul argues that various goods (i.e., limited goods), such as righteousness, Abrahamic descent, the Spirit, inheritance, and freedom, belong to his group, and not, in fact, to the rival Israelite Christ-followers.[30] In this way, Paul is attempting to demonstrate that his group of gentile converts must not succumb to the pressure of the rivals because the Galatians' "in Christ" identity should be evaluated as superior, while the identity of the rival Israelite Christ-followers is inferior, and should be negatively evaluated as such. In other words, it is Paul's group who occupies the space of the ingroup, and the rival Israelite Christ-followers who occupy the space of the outgroup. With this background in place, we may now turn our attention to Esler's reading of Gal 4:21–31.

Esler on Galatians 4:21–31

Before proceeding, it is important to note that one of the foundational aspects of Esler's reading of Gal 4:21–31 is C. K. Barrett's influential essay entitled "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians," where Barrett argues that Paul's use of the Old Testament throughout Galatians "can be best explained if we may suppose that he is taking up passages that had been used by his opponents, correcting their exegesis, and showing that their Old Tes-

26 Ibid., 50.
27 Ibid., 36–37.
28 Ibid., 36–37.
29 Ibid., 43.
30 Ibid., 47–48.

tament proof texts were on his side rather than theirs."[31] Most relevant to Barrett's discussion is Gal 4:21–31, where he contends that the rivals were appealing to the Sarah and Hagar tradition in support of their claim that they, the circumcised, like Isaac, are the true descendants of Abraham through the free woman Sarah, and the uncircumcised gentiles are, like Ishmael, descendants of Hagar the slave girl. Taking this argument up, Esler contends that in a culture where all goods were limited, inheritance being one of those goods, "the respective destinies of Sarah and Hagar sharply highlighted the benefits of being circumcised and joining the descendants of Abraham through Sarah."[32] Furthermore, Esler maintains, it is easy to understand why the rivals cite such scriptural support; the straightforward meaning of the Sarah and Hagar narrative was clearly in their favor.[33]

After establishing the context, Esler turns his attention to a consideration of the passage from the standpoint of SIT in order to offer further insight into this rather cryptic text.[34] Esler contends that in light of intergroup comparison, the rivals' use of the Sarah and Hagar tradition was an unambiguous attempt at stereotyping.[35] That is, in differentiating the two groups, one descending from Sarah and the other from Hagar, the rivals had created an apparent contrast: positive stereotypes for

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31 C. K. Barrett, *Essays on Paul* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), 154–80, here 158; originally published in C. K. Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and in the Argument of Galatians," in *Rechtfertigung: Festschrift für Ernst Käsemann,* ed. J. Friedrich, et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1976), 1–16. Several other important features should be noted: after briefly testing and substantiating the plausibility of his thesis on the various usages of the Old Testament throughout Galatians, Barrett turned to the definitive section of his essay: the so-called allegory of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar. According to Barrett, the evidence in Galatians 4:21–31 suggests that Paul was offering, albeit reluctantly, a counter-reading to the opponents' reading of the Sarah-Hagar narrative. Barrett offered several points of evidence in support of his thesis, two of which will be noted here. First, Paul would have never introduced the narrative of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar on his own accord. Second, the plain and surface meaning of the Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar narrative does nothing to support Paul's argument; rather, it supports the argument of his opponents. As Barrett contended, the opponents were reading and interpreting this particular Genesis narrative according to its straightforward and literal meaning. The influence of Barrett's theory is such that it can be considered the general consensus within Galatians scholarship. Even limiting the support for Barrett's theory to commentaries, the support is immense. For example, see A. Andrew Das, *Galatians*, CC (St. Louis: Concordia, 2014), 484–85; Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 293, albeit tentatively, follows Barrett; Martinus C. de Boer, *Galatians: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 286; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, ECNT 9 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 299; Don Garlington, *An Exposition of Galatians: A Reading from the New Perspective*, 3rd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007), 264; Ben Witherington, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 329; J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians*, AB 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 433; James D.G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, BNTC 9 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1993), 243; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, SP 9 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 174; Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 200; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 218.

32 Esler, *Galatians,* 209–10.

33 Ibid., 210.

34 Ibid., 209–210.

35 Ibid., 210.

the ingroup (i.e., promise, freedom, the Spirit, and inheritance) over against negative stereotypes for the outgroup (i.e., flesh, slavery, and expulsion).[36] Thus, in order to reverse the message of the rivals and redefine the nature of the antithesis, Paul responded by engaging in the same process of stereotyping as his rivals.[37] As Esler whimsically concluded, "As far as Paul was concerned, sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander."[38]

Therefore, Esler contends that Paul's goal was to redefine the Sarah and Hagar narrative, and thus the nature of the comparison, in order to allow the narrative to function as a strength rather than a weakness for his fledgling ἐκκλησίας. More specifically, Esler states, "Paul reinterprets it [the Sarah and Hagar narrative] to produce the exact antithesis of the rival view, so that the gentiles are really the descendants of Sarah, while the Israelites are descended from Hagar, with the fate of each group replicating that of their biblical ancestors."[39] Hence, Paul has turned the literal meaning of the story on its head by setting up a sharp contrast between Hagar and Sarah in order to establish a "stereotyped antithesis" that would clearly differentiate the ingroup from the outgroup. According to Paul, Sarah the free woman rightly aligns with his gentile ingroup and Hagar the slave girl rightly aligns with the rival outgroup.[40] In this way, it appears that Paul has reversed the straightforward meaning of the Sarah and Hagar narrative, turned the tables on his rivals by marking them as the outgroup, and all of this accomplished by offering a pervasive and effective exercise in social stereotyping.[41]

Evaluating Esler on Galatians 4:21–31

Before offering a response to some key aspects of Esler's interpretation of Gal 4:21–31, a few appreciative comments are in order. First, it must be noted that Esler should be commended for explicitly focusing his exegesis and interpretation on what he understands to be the social context of the passage, and thus bringing new questions to bear on one of the most complex of all Pauline texts. Likewise, one can appreciate that Esler does not hide his interpretive framework but explicitly follows his stated approach by maintaining a reading structured around intergroup dynamics and identity formation.[42] Finally, for a passage that appears

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 212–13.
41 Ibid., 215. Esler, *Galatians,* 208, concludes, "In 4:21–5:1 Paul demonstrated that the members of his congregations are really the descendants of Sarah, that they are free, and associated with promise and Spirit, while those who favor the imposition of the Mosaic Law are descended from Hagar, are in slavery, and are tied to the flesh."
42 On the importance of the interpreter being explicit about one's interpretive framework, see the observations of Andrew D. Clarke, *A Pauline Theology of Church Leadership,* JSNTSup 362 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 18–41; Andrew D. Clarke and J. Brian Tucker, "Social

to deal with questions of identity, Esler should be commended for addressing a neglected feature of not only Galatians 4:21–31, but the letter as a whole.

Evaluating the Legitimacy of Models in Establishing the Social Context

However, while there are certainly positive features of Esler's overall approach to Galatians, I would like to call into question a few of the conclusions Esler has drawn in his reading of Gal 4:21–31. Most importantly, I question whether Esler's specific model-based approach leads him to the best reading of this particular text from both an exegetical and social-historical standpoint. Esler himself admits that the results of his approach must be judged on the historical plausibility of the models employed.[43] Or, as Horrell notes, "[t]he data will show whether the model is useful or not."[44] Therefore, in the following section I will focus on a few specific questions surrounding Paul's use of the Sarah and Hagar narrative in order to test the legitimacy of the model-based approach Esler employs in his reading of Gal 4:21–31.

Who Was Responsible for Introducing the Story of Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah?

The first question that needs to be addressed is the question of who was responsible for introducing the story of Sarah and Hagar.[45] As noted above, the vast majority of scholars, Esler included, have followed Barrett's proposal that it was Paul who was forced to respond to the rivals' so-called "straightforward" reading of the Sarah and Hagar narrative.[46] However, there is one simple, yet often overlooked, reason for concluding that it may have been Paul who was responsible for introducing the story; that is, both Isaac *and* Ishmael were circumcised.[47] If, as Esler and others

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History and Social Theory in the Study of Social Identity," in *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, ed. J. Brian Tucker and Coleman A. Baker (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2014), 41–58.

43 Philip F. Esler, "Review of D. G. Horrell: *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence,*" *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): 256; Horrell, "Models and Methods," 88.

44 Horrell, "Models and Methods," 88, n. 12.

45 I have intentionally left a number of my own suggestions underdeveloped here. A full development of my argument against Barrett's theory can be found in a forthcoming article: "'Do You Not Hear the Law?': Reconsidering the Inclusion of Hagar in the Argument of Galatians."

46 See n. 30 above. Recently, Matthew Thiessen, *Paul and the Gentile Problem* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 86, has noted a significant difficulty with the view that a straightforward reading of Genesis 17 would support the rivals' position: "A literal reading of Genesis 17 contains no reference to gentiles who want to convert to Judaism or become sons of Abraham."

47 A number of scholars have picked up on the problematic nature of Ishmael's circumcision for those who follow Barrett's theory; cf. George Lyons, *Galatians: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition*, NBBC (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2012), 278–79; David I. Starling, *Not My People: Gentiles as Exiles in Pauline Hermeneutics*, BZNW (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 29, n. 23; Steven di Mattei, "Paul's Allegory of the Two Covenants (Gal 4.21–31) in Light of First-Century Hellenistic Rhetoric and Jewish Hermeneutics," *New Testament Studies* 52 (2006): 102–22; Angela Standhartinger, "Zu Freiheit … befreit?" Hagar im Galaterbrief, *Evangelische Theologie* 62 (2002): 290; Susan Elliott, "Choose Your Mother, Choose Your Master: Galatians 4:21–5:1 in the Shadow of the Anatolian Mother of the Gods," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118 (1999):

contend, the rivals' message was that circumcision was the necessary step the Galatian gentiles must take in order to secure their place in the ingroup (e.g., through proselyte conversion),[48] an appeal to the story of Sarah and Hagar, coupled with a focus on the respective experiences of Isaac and Ishmael, should be viewed as an unlikely place the rivals would have turned to for scriptural corroboration. The simple fact is that according to the Genesis narrative, and reaffirmed in the Second Temple text of *Jubilees,* Ishmael, although circumcised, and even blessed, found himself in the outgroup.[49] As *Jubilees* 15.20–22 states,

> And concerning Ishmael I have heard you. And behold I shall bless him, and make him grow and increase him very much. And twelve princes he will beget. And I shall make him into a great people. But my covenant I shall establish with Isaac.[50]

Thus, I would contend that if anyone was responsible for introducing the story of Sarah and Hagar, it should be credited to the one building a case against the necessity for gentile circumcision. As Paul, I believe, would be quick to remind his gentile converts, Ishmael was himself circumcised, yet his circumcision was found to be of little to no covenantal benefit (cf. Gen 21:10; Gal 4:30; 5:2).[51] Therefore, if circumcision did nothing to secure Ishmael's place in the ingroup, how much less of a place for these Galatian gentiles?

Whether or not Esler considered this alternative, he does not say.[52] Rather, Esler appears to accept Barrett's proposal, not necessarily on the basis of the best use of the textual evidence—Esler makes little attempt to support Barrett's theory

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664–65; Andrew C. Perriman, "The Rhetorical Strategy of Galatians 4:21–5:1," *Evangelical Quarterly* 65 (1993): 33; Charles H. Cosgrove, "The Law Has Given Sarah No Children (Gal. 4:21–30)," *Novum Testamentum* 29 (1987): 121–23.

48 See, e.g., Terence L. Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 483–92. Although it is impossible to know the exact exigency behind the letter, it is possible that, as Michele Murray, *Playing a Jewish Game: Gentile Christian Judaizing in the First and Second Centuries CE,* Studies in Christianity and Judaism 13 (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2004), 39, argues, "Christian judaizers [gentile proselytes who had attached themselves to this new Jewish Christ-following movement] may have attempted to persuade the Galatians that simply to believe in Jesus was not enough for them to be a part of the believing community: they had to do more to secure their membership in the community by observing Jewish customs, including circumcision for men."

49 Cf. also Gen 17:23–26. As others have observed, although circumcised, Ishmael is never viewed as a full and equal member of the covenant community; see David A. Bernat, *Sign of the Covenant: Circumcision in the Priestly Tradition,* AIIL 3 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 33–34. Moreover, as Matthew Thiessen, *Contesting Conversion: Genealogy, Circumcision, and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 67–86, has shown, one of the reasons behind Ishmael's rejection may be due to the timing of his circumcision: it was not eighth-day circumcision, and thus not covenantal.

50 Translated by O.S. Wintermute, "Jubilees," in *OTP* 2:86.

51 Thiessen, *Gentile Problem,* 87–88.

52 Esler should not, however, be accused of being the only one to overlook this alternative possibility; rather, see the discussion in Thiessen, *Gentile Problem,* 73–75.

textually—but rather, because it appears to fit a specific model (e.g., honor-shame discourse) that reinforces the dynamics of intergroup competition in ancient Mediterranean society. In this way, Paul is forced to deal with a passage he would have otherwise left alone, and his response is dictated by what the social script has predetermined it should be, namely, a contest for honor against rivals.

Is Sauce for the Goose, Sauce for the Gander?

This leads to a second feature of Esler's reconstruction that raises further difficulties concerning what is generally assumed to be Paul's bewildering response to the rivals' use of the Sarah and Hagar narrative.[53] That is, is Paul best understood as an apostle who willingly enters the arena of intergroup conflict or one-upmanship? This question deserves serious consideration, not only from Esler, but also from all who readily assume Galatians to be read as a highly charged polemic against rivals.[54] In fact, some of the recent work in Galatians has paid particular attention to the likelihood that Galatians is best understood as a letter that has cruciform living as one of its central themes[55]—a theme that Paul appears to be at pains to get through to his fledgling ἐκκλησίας.[56] If Paul is playing the same game as his rivals, who he claims are avoiding a cruciform life (Gal 6:12–13), how can he exhort his converts to Γίνεσθε ὡς ἐγώ, "Become as I am?" (Gal 4:12). Unfortunately, because Esler's model-based approach focuses almost exclusively on presupposing intergroup conflict in every text, and thus assumes that Paul is responding according to how a Mediterranean man typically would have responded,[57] Esler overlooks

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53 Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, SP 9 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1992), 172, captures the longstanding and general sentiment well, "This is, without a doubt, one of the most puzzling and disturbing passages in the whole of Galatians. On the one hand, the very location of these verses within the argument of Galatians is puzzling . . . On the other hand, the passage is disturbing . . . a great company of exegetes protest[s] that this is one of the most confusing passages of the New Testament."

54 Cf. e.g., Martyn, *Galatians.* On the tendency within scholarship to mirror-read Paul's argument as one that addresses everyone *except* the audience, see the insightful comments offered by Susan Elliott, *Cutting Too Close for Comfort: Paul's Letter to the Galatians in its Anatolian Cultic Context.* JSNT 248 (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 2–3. She writes: "The 'context' in the case of Galatians tends to be equated with 'the controversy'. Instead of focusing on the context of the audience, scholars have seen the opponents, in so many words, as 'the ultimate conversation partners'. One result of this approach has been a tendency to interpret many aspects of Galatians, whether problematic or not, as Paul's response to arguments of the opponents, speculatively reconstructed."

55 Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); Todd A. Wilson, *The Curse of the Law and the Crisis in Galatia: Reassessing the Purpose of Galatians,* WUNT 225 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 112–14; Jeff Hubing, *Crucifixion and New Creation: The Strategic Purpose of Galatians 6.11–17,* LNTS 508 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2015).

56 Wilson, *Curse of the Law,* 112–13, notes, "Paul's call to bear one another's burdens implies nothing less than a call to a *cruciform, suffering love* which patterns itself after the example of the crucified Christ (3:13; cf. 1:4; 3:1; 4.4–5) and his crucified Apostle (2.19–20; 4.12; 5.11; 6.14–17)."

57 See Horrell's similar concern in "Models and Methods," 92.

the possibility of other textual elements that might offer a more plausible and less conflict-oriented result.

For instance, is the purpose of Gal 4:21–31 best read as Paul's ostensibly weak attempt at getting back at this rival group of Israelite Christ-followers by means of engaging in his own version of social stereotyping?[58] Or, as noted above, is it possible to conceive that Paul not only introduced the story of Sarah and Hagar of his own accord, but also did so not as a polemic against Judaism,[59] or even a group of rival Israelite Christ-followers?[60]

Here, and contrary to the majority of interpreters, I would like to suggest a tentative, yet possible alternative.[61] That is, I would like to suggest that Paul introduced and developed the allegorical account of Sarah and Hagar, *not* as a polemic against Judaism or a so-called "Jewish-Christian mission." Rather, in Gal 4:21–31 Paul introduced Hagar and her descendants as paradigmatic characters that embody the experience of non-Jewish identity apart from Christ.[62] In this way, Paul appeals to the Sarah and Hagar tradition in order to compare his converts' both pagan and also "in Christ" experience on several points, namely, flesh and promise, curse and blessing, the present and above Jerusalem, and, most importantly, slavery and freedom.[63] Therefore, Paul is not disparaging the identity of a rival antithetical outgroup. Rather, by introducing the Sarah and Hagar tradition Paul is appealing to the Galatian gentiles' own experience of a life of servitude in comparison with that of freedom.[64] His goal is to have his Galatian gentiles reevaluate their standing, but not as antithetical to any other group. He is instead calling them to compare their experience of being apart from Christ with now being "in Christ" (cf. Gal 4:8–11; 5:1).

Paul and the Problem of Hermeneutical Jujitsu

One final comment is in order: if it can be substantiated that it was Paul who was

58 As noted by William M. Ramsay, *A Historical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1979), 341, who considered Paul's argument in Gal 4 to be "weak" and "not likely to advance" his purposes.

59 *Contra* Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermenia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).

60 *Contra* J. Louis Martyn, "A Law-Observant Mission to Gentiles: The Background of Galatians," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 38 (1985): 307–24.

61 For a full development of my argument, I refer the reader to my forthcoming article entitled, "'Do You Not Hear the Law'? Reconsidering the Inclusion of Hagar and Her Descendants in the Argument of Galatians."

62 Cf. Lloyd Gaston, "Israel's Enemies in Pauline Theology," *New Testament Studies* 28 (1982): 402–407, who, on this issue, has been largely neglected in spite of the fact that he offers a helpful and alternative approach to the otherwise arbitrary and forced connection scholars try to make between Hagar and Judaism or a Jewish Christian mission.

63 Gaston, "Israel's Enemies," 404.

64 *Contra* e.g., Scott J. Hafemann, "Paul and the Exile of Israel in Galatians 3–4," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, ed. James M. Scott, JSJSup 56 (Leiden; New York; Köln: Brill, 1997), 356–59, who believes Paul is discussing the present state of Israel.

responsible for introducing the story of Sarah and Hagar, this might dispel some of the apparent interpretive maneuvering of which Paul is often accused of in this passage, or as Richard Hays has now famously deemed it, "hermeneutical jujitsu."[65] For instance, as noted above Esler believes that Paul reversed the straightforward meaning of the story of Sarah and Hagar in order to meet his own interpretive agenda. Yet, the question remains, could Paul maintain this novel hermeneutic and be considered a trustworthy or even honorable apostle? And would not such exegetical maneuvering reinforce the negative appraisal of Paul's apostolic status as supposedly raised by his rivals? Moreover, it appears that even Esler is somewhat uneasy about the hermeneutical inferences his reading forces Paul to draw. For example, Esler considers Paul's attempt at scriptural corroboration from Isaiah 54:1 in Gal 4:27 to be "audacious exegesis."[66] Later he questions whether or not the interpretive maneuvering Paul employs is even appropriate; rather, he contends, it "provides no help at all in establishing a connection between Sarah and Paul's congregations." Thus, for Esler, the appeal to Isa 54:1 is "inapt."[67] Finally, Esler concludes that Paul's attempt to turn the meaning of the Sarah and Hagar narrative on its head would be exegetically unconvincing.[68] Thus, by bungling the meaning of the Sarah and Hagar tradition, and by association the Abraham narrative as a whole, one has to wonder how Esler can conclude that, ultimately, Paul's attempt at stereotyping is both "pervasive" and "effective."[69]

Rather, as Francis Watson has claimed, if Paul had any intention of persuading his wayward converts, his reading of the story of Sarah and Hagar must be both responsible and reasonable. In Watson's own words:

> When he asks his readers, "Tell me, you who wish to be under law, do you not hear the law?" (Gal. 4.21), he is inviting them to participate with him in a responsible interpretation of this text. He does not regard the text as a pretext for a free interpretive fantasia. He does not draw from it cheap debating points, in the hope of persuading impressionable readers to return to a gospel that is in principle independent of the scriptural texts to which appeal is made.[70]

In contrast to Watson, Esler makes little attempt at justifying how Paul can appear

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65 Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1989), 111–12.
66 Esler, *Galatians,* 213.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., 214.
69 Ibid., 215.
70 Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 2nd ed. (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 190.

to be a disingenuous reader of Scripture, yet maintain for himself a positive standing among his converts—converts who already appear to question his reading of Scripture.

Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the above evaluation of Esler's reading of Gal 4:21–31, I would contend that Horrell's concerns are justified. That is, rather than being sensitive to the cultural variation and the potential for specificity in this particular text, Esler's specific model-based approach generalizes, flattens, and overtly dictates his conclusions. Therefore, while I do not deny the usefulness of these models in aiding the interpretive task, one must proceed with caution, and avoid seeing specific cultural patterns as patterns that underlie the entirety of the New Testament, or even a letter like Galatians, at every turn. As Bengt Holmberg argues, "models should not be seen as ideas that a scholar starts from and lets his research be guided by, but rather as the result of empirical research."[71] In this way, I would suggest that Esler might have been better served to follow some of his own advice. For instance, in the introduction to his Galatians commentary, Esler is clear to note that when employing models one must be aware that the New Testament documents may be subversions of culture or even "pervasively counter-cultural."[72] Moreover, he proceeds to mention that this is especially important when reading Paul as one who both reflects Mediterranean culture and manifests new or subversive cultures.[73] Here there is clear recognition that while these patterns may be the primary social scripts, the possibility of a person or group breaking from the norm is a real possibility, of which I would contend Paul may have been the ideal candidate.

71 Holmberg, "Models of Historical Reconstruction," 269. I am not here suggesting that Esler can be accused of this in every instance, but certainly from the observations noted above, it appears that in the case of Gal 4:21–31, Esler was not able to escape this concern.

72 Esler, *Galatians,* 5.

73 Ibid., 4–5.

Matthew's Missional Particularism and the Continuation of Gentile Social Identity

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Abstract

Scholars often claim that the Great Commission in Matt 28:16–20 revises and/or replaces the mission to the "house of Israel" in Matt 10:5–6. David C. Sim suggests that the Great Commission should be properly understood as a Torah-observant mission to the nations with the goal being full proselytization for gentiles following Israel's messiah. This article argues that the continuation of gentile social identity is a central component of Matthew's "particularistic" commission by paying attention to the narrative role of the gentiles and the presence of the eschatological pilgrimage texts in this Gospel.

Introduction

Scholars have long debated the presence of seemingly irreconcilable missional discourses present in Matt 10:5b–6, often described as a particularistic mission, and the universalistic mission evident in Matt 28:16–20. The contours of the debate are well known and one wonders if it is possible to move the discussion any further than has been achieved at this point. Well, as one new to Matthean scholarship (a Pauline interloper in the interpretive landscape of the Gospels), I would like to build on the approach offered by Axel von Dobbeler, as a way forward. It is one that sees the missional discourses in Matt 10 and 28 as complementary. These missions are both Jewish missions: one to Israel (or more precisely an ideal Israel, as argued by Joel Willitts), and one to the nations. However, the mission to the nations is not a Torah-observant one as suggested by David C. Sim. It is neither a "Law-free" mission (à la the traditional, and problematic reading of Paul). Rather, it is a mission in which gentiles, once part of the Matthean community, are socialized in a manner similar to the "righteous gentiles" category evident in Israel's scriptures, and are not required to submit to circumcision. As gentiles, they maintain their unique social identities since some of the eschatological pilgrimage texts may

be interpreted in a way that anticipates the nations as a unique and identifiable group coming to worship in Zion with Israel.

Also, the role of the gentiles in Matthew seems to suggest they can and do relate to the God of Israel as gentiles. Thus, the Matt 28 mission and the earlier nation-focused missional hints in Matthew are particularistic in the sense that they do not obliterate gentile identity (e.g., requiring proselyte conversion to Judaism). They are also particularistic in that they point to a separate and complementary mission to the continuing Jewish mission evident in Matt 10. Also, the mission in Matt 28 is properly focused on the gentiles/nations and does not focus on Israel (nor does it indicate a replacement of Israel by the ἐκκλησία, commonly translated, "church").

Obviously, just about everything I've claimed up to this point is contested, and a thorough testing of this hypothesis is not possible within the confines of this article. Thus, my hope here is to lay out what I see as a possible way forward in supporting this reading of the text—a reading that puts Matthew and a post-supersessionist[1] reading of Paul somewhat closer than often thought.

Scholarly Approaches to the Relationship between Matt 10 and Matt 28

A quick glance at Matthean scholarship reveals the contours of the way the debate concerning the relationship between the mission discourse in Matt 10 and the one in Matt 28 has progressed. Morna Hooker focuses on Matt 10:18; 24:14; and 28:18–20, the passages that describe the "gospel being preached to the Gentiles," and concludes that "[i]t is clear from the final passage alone that any particularist notions are foreign to Matthew. He himself, therefore, understood the limitation on the Twelve in 10:5f. as temporary."[2] Schuyler Brown, who provides a substantial study on these two mission discourses, concludes,

> The two-fold representation of the mission in Matt 10:5b–6 and 28:19 suggests neither two separate missions nor the abandonment of one mission in order to assume another. Rather, it affirms the extension of the mission of Matthew's community to include gentiles as the direct object of missionary instruction.[3]

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1 Simply stated, a "post-supersessionist" interpretive paradigm understands (a) God's covenant with the Jewish people, (b) the Jewish people's unique position in salvation history, (c) their distinction from the other nations, and thus (d) the function of full Torah observance in demarcating this distinction, as continuing into the "Christian era," and being, then, an indispensible part of Christian theology.

2 Morna D. Hooker, "Uncomfortable Words: X. The Prohibition of Foreign Missions (Mt 10.5–6)," *Expository Times* 82 (1971): 363.

3 Schuyler Brown, "The Two-Fold Representation of the Mission in Matthew's Gospel," *Studia theologica* 31 (1977): 30.

Robert Gundry doesn't see a conflict between the two mission discourses; rather the second "expands the earlier commission."[4] Scot McKnight concludes that Matt 28:18–20 overturns the restriction of Matt 10:5–6, but the saying was retained for salvation historical purposes.[5] Amy-Jill Levine contends that the two discourses are not contradictory but complementary in a salvation historical sense:

> The time of Israel, the time when the Jews retain their privileged position in salvation history, ends with the crucifixion and resurrection. The new era belongs not to Israel at all, but to the ἐκκλησία. And in the era of the church, the mission remains open to the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel' and to 'all the gentiles' (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) who must hear the word before the final judgment.[6]

Similar to Levine (and Luz) is Davies and Allison. Their answer to the dilemma of the restriction in 10:5–6 in the same Gospel with the command to preach in all the world is that Matthew "believed that the situation after Easter was rather different from the situation before Easter . . . with Easter . . . the mission goes beyond the borders of Israel."[7] They see the events associated with the passion as eschatological ones that result in a new salvation-historical era: "God's OT promises concerning the Gentiles are realized. The scheme requires that the Gentiles come into the church *after* these saving events."[8] E. C. Park concludes that there is a

> clear historical distinction between the period of the mission to Israel and that of the mission to the gentiles. The time of Mt belongs to the latter [the gentiles], and the exclusive mission of 10:5b–6 is no longer valid for the Matthean community. It is an old, outdated tradition which Mt preserves as an historical landmark of the mission to Israel, which used to be the only mission in the earliest phase of the history of the church.[9]

Axel von Dobbeler has surveyed the approaches to this question and concluded that scholars fall into two distinct categories: (1) "this historical juxtaposition"

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4 Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 595.

5 Scot McKnight, "New Shepherds for Israel: An Historical and Critical Study of Matthew 9:35-11:1," (PhD diss., University of Nottingham, 1986), 202.

6 Amy-Jill Levine, *The Social and Ethnic Dimensions of Matthean Salvation History* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen, 1988), 11.

7 W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew. Vol. 2, Commentary on Matthew 8–18* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 168.

8 Ibid.

9 Eung Chun Park, *The Mission Discourse in Matthew's Interpretation* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1995), 177.

approach and (2) the salvation history approach. In the first, the mission discourse in Matt 10 belongs to the past and has no continuing relevance. The salvation history approach can be subdivided into two categories: (a) "substitution" and (b) "delimitation." The failure of the "substitution" model is that the gentile church replaces Israel. The "delimitation" model fails because, in simply seeing 10:5–6 as being expanded to a universal mission in 28:19–20, it overlooks the respective "missionizing" contexts of each passage, which are not the same. This results in a loss of Israel's salvation-historical priority in relation to the gentiles/nations. In such a model, then, Israel's unique social identity is occluded—that is, Israel is reduced to an object of mission indistinct from the other nations.

Von Dobbeler and Joel Willitts offer a better way forward on this issue. Their interpretive option contends that the mission discourse in Matt 28:18–20 does nothing to Matt 10:5b–6, which, based on 10:23, suggests that a Jewish mission to Jews was expected to continue. They suggest Matt 10 is a mission concerning the restoration of Israel while Matt 28 is concerned with the turning of the nations to the living God.[10] Von Dobbeler notes that these missions have different "audiences" (Zielgruppen), "goals" (Ziele), and "orders" (Aufträge). However, he also concludes these are not simply "side by side" (nebeneinander) but are "complementary effects" (komplementäre Wirkungen) of "the messiah" (des Messias) and "his disciples acting as his messianic successors" (der in seiner Nachfolge messianisch wirkenden Jünger).[11] So in this reading, Matthew sees the disciples sent both to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" and to "the nations" but each mission has a different accent. For Israel, the focus is on restoration; for the nations the message is to turn to the living God. The missions converge in the following ways: (1) they are both messianic missions of Jesus and his disciples; (2) Torah plays a role in both missions; and (3) there are specific differences based on each group's social identity; thus, each mission is particularistic where, as von Dobbeler notes, "relevance is key" (zentraler Relevanz ist).[12] And most important for Willitts, the salvation historical approach that should be understood in these passages is a post-supersessionist one, somewhat similar to Kendall Soulen's "canonical narrative."[13]

I would suggest, then, that what we have in Matt 28 is not a universalistic mission that replaces the mission to Israel. Rather, Matt 28 describes a particularistic

10 Axel von Dobbeler, "Die Restitution Israels Und Die Bekehrung Der Heiden. Das Verhèaltnis Von Mt 10, 5b.6 Und Mt 28, 18–20 Unter Dem Aspekt Der Komplementaritèat. Erwèagungen Zum Standort Des Matthèausevangeliums," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 91 (2000): 31–32; Joel Willitts, "The Friendship of Matthew and Paul: A Response to a Recent Trend in the Interpretation of Matthew's Gospel," *Harvard Theological Studies* 65 (2009): 3–4, also cites von Dobbeler.

11 Von Dobbeler, "Restitution," 27–28.

12 Ibid., 41.

13 R. Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 14.

mission to gentiles, a mission in which gentiles are related to the God of Israel through "faith" in Israel's messiah. Accordingly, they also are expected to live as members of the house of Israel, though following the messianic Torah as gentiles. This approach is similar in some ways to Sim, but differs in that he sees the first-century mission (as compared to an eschatological gentile mission) being instead a fully Torah-observant one, including circumcision, and thus resulting in gentile proselytization to Judaism.

Torah-Observant Mission to Gentiles

I am suggesting, however, that gentiles relate to the God of Israel as gentiles, and an implication of this claim is that these individuals should not become proselytes to Judaism. Sim, however, suggests that the late first-century mission should be properly understood as a Torah-observant mission to the nations, with the goal being full proselytization to Judaism for gentiles following Israel's messiah. Sim rejects the idea that Matt 28:19 excludes Israel in the mission. Rather, the mission to Israel continues and is expanded to include the nations. While, as noted, this is one of the standard scholarly views with regard to Matt 28:19, Sim brings to the fore important points often overlooked. First, there is only one mission and not two. Second, there is only one gospel message, not two. Third, since most scholars acknowledge that the mission in Matt 10 was a Torah-observant one, and since this mission is expanded to include the nations in Matt 28, it follows that the revised mission is likewise a Torah-observant one. Thus, as gentiles are missionized, they are to become proselytes to Judaism, including circumcision for the males, and are therefore to become fully Torah-observant.[14]

I would like to address Sim's claims in an *intra-muros* context.[15] First, as von Dobbeler suggests, rather than simply seeing one undifferentiated mission, what we have are two complementary and distinct aspects or expressions of Jesus's unitary messianic mission.[16] Second, the one gospel as a "Law-observant" one, needing to be preached "prior to the arrival of the Son of Man" (Matt 24:14),

14 David C. Sim, "Matthew, Paul and the origin and nature of the Gentile mission: The Great Commission in Matthew 28:16–20 as an anti-Pauline tradition," *Harvard Theological Studies* 64 (2008): 385. Luz also recognizes that this mission to the gentiles included full Torah-observance for these gentiles. See Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 432.

15 One group of scholars would dismiss Sim's claim since they understand the Mattheans as *extra-muros*. Cousland and Foster would be two examples of this view; see J. R. C. Cousland, *The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 304; Paul Foster, *Community, Law, and Mission in Matthew's Gospel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 260. However, since I see the community or cluster of communities as still part of the broader synagogue community, following Anders Runesson. "Rethinking Early Jewish-Christian Relations: Matthean Community History as Pharisaic Intragroup Conflict," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127 (2008): 95–132, as a semi-private synagogue, modeled as a *collegia*, the *extra-muros* position is of little help here.

16 Von Dobbeler, "Restitution," 27–28; also cited in Willitts, "Friendship," 3.

doesn't seem to be an emphasis in the teaching of Jesus.[17] It is just as likely that the one message concerning Jesus's messiahship had differing social implications for Jews and gentiles. Third, it is not clear that Jesus's mission in Matt 10 should primarily be described as a Torah-observant one. While on one hand, it may be described as a Torah-observant mission (as it is addressed to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 10:6; 15:24), it doesn't follow that Law-observance was the primary message of this mission. As noted by Willitts, the message was not to enforce Torah-observance, rather it was "to proclaim the soon-coming Kingdom and to dispense the blessings of that Kingdom as they travelled from city to city."[18] This is not to argue that Jesus's mission sought to undermine Torah-observance, but only that it was not its primary purpose. For example, Jesus's practice of table-fellowship in Matt 9:10–13 is a good indicator that a "Torah-observant mission" is not the best way to describe his mission. Willitts, in addressing the significance of the continuing validity of Torah in Matt 5:17–48, strikes a good balance when he notes that Jesus's "Galilean and Judean followers saw no contradiction between following Jesus and keeping the *Messianic* Torah."[19] It seems that if one does not view Jesus's mission in Matt 10 as primarily a Torah-observant one, then it calls into question Sim's claim that the mission in Matt 28 was likewise a Torah-observant mission to the gentiles.

However, Sim also builds his argument on that claim that the charge to "make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to observe all that I command you" (Matt 28:19–20), provides a sufficient basis for a Torah-observant mission to the gentiles, especially in light of Jesus's words that he did not come to do away with Torah in Matt 5:17–19. He concludes, "To become followers of the Christ, both Jew and Gentile are expected to follow the law according to Jesus's definitive interpretation."[20] Note that Sim acknowledges that Jesus's interpretation of the law is likely in view. So, if the claim is that gentiles following Christ would need to follow the community's halakhic standards, as they pertained to righteous gentiles (those from the nations residing within Israel), then Sim and I are quite close in this regard. However, it appears Sim moves one step beyond this claim, by asserting that these gentile Christ-followers would have had to submit to circumcision.[21] Obviously, circumcision is not addressed in Matthew's Gospel, and while we should not preclude the possibility that Matt 5:17–19 provides a basis for the

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17 David C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 245; Sim, "Matthew, Paul," 387. Willitts, "Friendship," 3.

18 Willitts, Friendship, 3.

19 Ibid.

20 Sim, "Matthew, Paul," 246.

21 Sim, "Matthew, Paul," 386–88; "Rome in Matthew's Eschatology," in *The Gospel of Matthew in its Roman Imperial Context*, ed. John Riches and David C. Sim, JSNTSup 276 (London, Continuum, 2005), 209.

practice within the community, Luz points out that Matt 23:23 should also be brought into the discussion with regard to the expectations for gentiles.[22] I would also suggest that one plausible implication of taking Jesus's yoke, in Matt 11:29,[23] may indicate that gentiles were not required to be circumcised; but were expected to take on the messianic Torah. Foster concludes that "it remains beyond the available evidence to determine whether Matthew envisaged a law-free or law-observant mission to Gentiles."[24] If the gentiles were required to submit to circumcision, they would effectively cease to be gentiles and would become Jews. This would go against the unique purpose of the Matt 28 Jewish mission to the nations, and would call into question the presence of the nations in the eschatological banquet alluded to in Matt 8.

Matthew's Particularistic Mission to Gentiles

The claim being made here is that the way gentiles relate to Jesus in the gospel may be helpful in understanding the way gentile identity is transformed but not obliterated within Matthew's community. Before we look at Matt 8, Matt 15 provides a narrative example of the way a gentile related to Israel's messiah, as a gentile.

Matthew 15:21–28: Gentile Blessings by Rightly Relating to Israel's Messiah

The Canaanite woman's faith is one example of a gentile receiving covenant benefits without converting to Judaism. This pericope "concerns Israel's kingdom and non-Israelite subjects within it."[25] The story begins by the identification of the woman as a gentile—"a Canaanite" who meets Jesus in a gentile area of "Tyre and Sidon." She calls out to Jesus in a manner that closely resembles messianic or eschatological discourse, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David" (Matt 15:21–22). Though some have argued she has become a proselyte,[26] most conclude she receives these benefits as a gentile. She prostrates herself (Matt 15:25), recognizes him as Israel's king (Matt 15:22), and refers to him as Lord three times (Matt 15:22, 25, 27). However, she is turned away since Jesus's vocation is centered on Israel (Matt 15:24, 26). She then acknowledges this asymmetrical relationship

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22 Ulrich Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (Zürich: Benziger, 1989), 86. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others" (Matt 23:23 NRSV).

23 "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matt 11:29 NRSV).

24 Paul Foster, "Paul and Matthew: Two Strands of the Early Jesus Movement with Little Sign of Connection," in *Paul and the Gospels: Christologies, Conflicts, and Convergences*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Joel Willitts (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 110.

25 Joel, Willitts, *Matthew's Messianic Shepherd-King: In Search of 'the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel'* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 214.

26 John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 636, n. 217.

by agreeing with Jesus's description of her identity, but then noting that in an "Israel-centric" symbolic universe, non-Jews ("dogs") could be described as being part of the master's household ("table") (Matt 15:27). She recognizes that she is not one of the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," but she should have access to "the crumbs that fall from the master's table" (Matt 15:27). Willitts concludes that "applying the very parable Jesus used, the woman asserts that she can participate as a Gentile within the 'house of Israel.'"[27] She participates as a gentile rather than as a proselyte to Judaism, by "faith" (Matt 15:28). Notice that both missions are in view here: (1) the Jewish mission to Jews, and (2) a Jewish mission to gentiles, though one does not replace the other. Kick points out that the "faith" referred to here is not a replacement for Israel, rather, it "describes the coexistence of Jewish faith and the Gentile Christian faith on the foundation of Israel's faithfulness to YHWH and YHWH's promise of faithfulness to Israel."[28] This story reveals that Jesus is the long awaited restorer of Israel, as well as the one that gentiles must relate to properly as participants in the messianic age.[29]

The healing of the centurion's servant in Matt 8:5–13 offers another example of the way a gentile could associate as a gentile with Israel. Sim, however, sets aside the healing of the centurion's servant as "an aberration in the context of Jesus's mission, and its significance resides in the fact that Jesus could at times show mercy and compassion to Gentiles who expressed great faith in his power."[30] However, as noted by Foster, "in the story of the centurion it is the Gentile who shows more sensitivity to purity issues (8.8) than Jesus."[31] It would seem that this story is a good place to locate Matthew's perspective on the way a "righteous gentile" would live as a Christ-follower within the Matthean community.[32] For example, these individuals should be aware of Jewish purity issues and adjust their social interactions in light of those.[33] Notice the individual's Roman social identity is still salient. As a centurion who would have been unable to marry,[34] his

27 Willitts, *Shepherd-King*, 216.

28 Ibid.; cf. esp. n. 76, citing Martin Kick, "Ich bin gesandt nur zu den verloren Schafen des Hause Israel: Matthäus 15, 24," in *(Anti-) Rassistische Irritationen: Biblische Texte und interkulturelle Zusammenarbeit*, ed. Silvia Wagner, Gerdi Nützel, and Martin Kick (Berline: Alektor-Verlag, 1994), 114.

29 Likewise Willitts, *Shepherd-King*, 217.

30 Sim, *Gospel of Matthew*, 224. Also cited in Paul Foster, *Community, Law, and Mission in Matthew's Gospel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 60.

31 Foster, *Community, Law, and Mission*, 60.

32 Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 71–72.

33 Here the issue relates to entering a gentile's house. See Acts 10:28.

34 Sara Elise Phang, *The Marriage of Roman Soldiers (13 B.C.–A.D. 235): Law and Family in the Imperial Army* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 344–45. Caesar, *Bell. Civ.* 3.110; Horace, *Odes* 3.5.5–12 and *Epodes* 9.11–16; Herodian 3.8.5; and Libanius *Or.* 2.39–40.

"servant" (Matt 8:6) would have been an important and "useful" member of the Roman household.[35]

The centurion, in Matt 8:6, 8, also acknowledges Jesus's position as "Lord" (κύριε) and in Matt 8:8 he also expresses a level of humility that would not normally be expressed by a member of the occupying empire. Finally, the nature of the centurion's appeal to Jesus resonates with patronage discourse, and it seems that the centurion is requesting a relationship with Jesus, in which the centurion would function going forward as his client.[36] My main point here is that there are several cultural discourses active in this exchange, discourses that were central to the formation of social identity. These cultural scripts provide insight into the way in which existing gentile social identities interacted and were transformed, without being obliterated, in the encounter with Jesus. While the narrative role of the healing of the centurion's servant points to the presence of an approach to mission that sees gentile social identity continuing, this pericope is particularly important because of the presence of the eschatological pilgrimage tradition in vv. 11–12.

Eschatological Pilgrimage Tradition

The continuation of gentile identity may also be relevant because of the key role "the nations" play in some of the eschatological pilgrimage traditions. This tradition is evident in the centurion's pericope at Matt 8:11, "I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." Davies and Allison suggest that the "many from east and west" in this verse refers to Jews who are open to Jesus. However, it is more likely that the passage has in view members of the "nations other than Israel" that will be participants in the messianic banquet, as per the prophetic texts that speak of the gentiles coming into Jerusalem (Isa 2:2–3; 60:3–4; Mic 4:1–2; Zech 8:20–23).[37] This phenomenon is described in Isa 25:6: "On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples (τοῖς ἔθνεσιν) a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear."[38] Stuhlmacher

35 Stanley P. Saunders, *Preaching the Gospel of Matthew: Proclaiming God's Presence* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 63–64. See the significance of "useful" in Joseph A. Marchal, "The Usefulness of an Onesimus: The Sexual Use of Slaves and Paul's Letter to Philemon," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130 (2011): 749–70. One possibility is that the servant in view here was a sexual slave.

36 Ibid., 62.

37 Davies and Allison, *Matthew 27–28*; also cited in Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 292; verses mentioned at n. 22.

38 David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew: Based on the Revised Standard Version* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 159; cited also in Foster, *Community, Law, and Mission*, 60. Hill concludes "The 'many' from the east and the west are the Gentile believers who will enjoy the messianic banquet, which often symbolizes the joys of the future kingdom (cf. 22.1–14; 25.10; 26.19). The verse reveals an interest in the ultimate salvation of the Gentiles, but it cannot be used to establish Matthew's insistence on a Gentile mission before the end. It refers to the eschatological pilgrimage of Gentiles to God's holy mountain (Is 25.6)."

concludes that the disciples "are to set into play the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion which Jesus looked ahead to (cf. Matt 8:11–12 with Isa 25:6–9), and in doing so they are 'fishers of men' (cf. Matt 4:19), who actively put into practice Israel's service as messenger to the peoples (cf. Isa 49:6 and Ps 96:10)."[39] Luz, however, questions Stuhlmacher's use of inter-texts from Israel's scriptures, and is "uneasy" with regard to the imposition of "the texts referring to the nations' eschatological pilgrimage to Zion."[40] Bird, after providing an extensive defense of the position that the eschatological pilgrimage tradition is in view in Matt 8:11–12, thinks that the "eschatological regathering of Israel" and "the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles . . . go hand in hand."[41] In my view, it is significant that the pericope supports the continuation of gentile identity when following Christ, as indicated by the centurion's interaction with Jesus, while also exhibiting the eschatological pilgrimage tradition, in which gentiles will participate in the eschatological banquet *as gentiles*, and not as Israel.[42]

Conclusion

The foregoing suggested that there are is a complementary relationship between the mission discourse in Matt 10 and Matt 28; the first is a Jewish mission to Jews and the second is a Jewish mission to gentiles, and this is what I mean by missional particularism in Matthew. This second mission, however, was not a Torah-observant one in which gentiles became proselytes to Judaism. Rather, it is a mission in which gentiles draw near to the God of Israel as gentiles. Matthew provides narrative examples of the gentiles relating to Israel's messiah as gentiles, including the Canaanite woman and the centurion. The latter pericope also includes a reference to the eschatological pilgrimage tradition, which may further indicate that Matthew interpreted this tradition such that gentiles—as remaining gentiles—would participate as an eschatological partner with Israel.

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39 Peter Stuhlmacher, "Matt 28:16–20 and the Course of Mission in the Apostolic Age and Postapostolic Age," in *The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles*, ed. Jostein Ådna and Hans Kvalbein (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 30–31. See also Saldarini, *Christian-Jewish Community,* 42.

40 Luz, *Matthew 8–20,* 67.

41 Michael F. Bird, *Jesus and the Origins of the Gentile Mission* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 92; cf. 83–94 for the more extensive discussion.

42 Because of the presence of eschatological pilgrimage texts and the expectation that gentiles will worship in Zion as gentiles, full proselytization would be inappropriate. Rather, gentile identity continues in a transformed way as they are drawn near to God's people Israel.

Angels Run Amok: A Literary-Theological Reassessment of the Violence against Creation in the Book of Revelation

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Abstract

Violence against non-human creation in Revelation is problematic for Christian environmental ethics. This article uses literary criticism, postcolonial theory, and theological interpretation to reassess the violence in the cycles of seals, trumpets, and chalices. The theological lens is Walter Wink's theology of the powers. A close reading of the texts with Wink's insights cancels out a theology in which God wills the destruction of creation, revealing instead that our own systemic forces (angels), under the impact of imperial domination, exploitation, and consumption, run amok, destroying the very environment we need to exist. John of Patmos's colonized theology may want a God who is violent in supra-imperial ways, but the textual indeterminancy in Revelation deconstructs this theological goal. This reading opens several suggestive venues for appropriating John's visions for a positive environmental ethic.

"There is nothing better than imagining other worlds," he said, "to forget the painful one we live in. At least I thought so then. I hadn't yet realized that, imagining other worlds, you end up changing this one."

Umberto Eco, *Baudolino: A Novel*

Introduction

Two difficult problems confront Christian ethics. One, contextualized by a global upsurge in violence, is how to interpret violence in scripture. More specifically, this is the problem of how to interpret violence in scripture that appears to be com-

manded, or enacted by God.[1] The second is the pressing global ecological crisis. Norman Wirzba has suggested that we focus on articulating a relevant doctrine of creation as part of a solution.[2] Both problems merge in Revelation. Massively violent vengeance and wrath find acute theological focus in John's visions. Much of the violence is not just directed at human rebellion,[3] but at creation. Rather than enhancing our doctrine of creation, God seems intent on geocide. The purpose of this article is to offer a literary critical reassessment in a theological key of the passages in Revelation that most intensely focus violence against creation: the three cycles of Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets, and Seven Bowls of Wrath.

A "reading" requires a specified apparatus. The method will be to apply some old-fashioned Derridean deconstruction to underscore the text's inability to confirm what most think John was thinking while, in the style of John D. Caputo,[4] "cross wiring" the Seer's talk of angels with the writings of Walter Wink on "principalities and powers." The final theoretical piece will be to take from postcolonial readings of the Apocalypse a reconstruction of John's colonized mindset as a backdrop against which to develop a more eco-friendly reading of these destructive Sevens.

The goal is a reception of Revelation for contemporary readers.[5] While the context of first-century readers does come into view, the focus is the "afterlife" of John's visions, and their appropriation for the crises of imperialism we face. The motivating question is the valorization of the created order for Christian environmental ethics. If, as many readers of Revelation assume, God wills the destruction of the earth's ecosystems as acceptable collateral damage in meeting out vengeance on unbelievers, then the value of the natural environment is diminished.[6] If, on the other hand, we can, using a close reading and Wink's theological leverage, establish that this destruction takes place not at God's intent, but because the

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1 For recent treatments highlighting the centrality of this question see: Jerome F. D. Creach, *Violence in Scripture, Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2013); Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Sharon L. Baker, *Razing Hell: Rethinking Everything You've Been Taught about God's Wrath and Judgment* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010).

2 Norman Wirzba, *The Paradise of God: Renewing Religion in an Ecological Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), viii–xi.

3 This is still problematic, but not without some reasonableness. See Brian K. Blount, *Can I Get a Witness?: Reading Revelation through African American Culture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 31–32.

4 Perhaps most adroitly done in his *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event* (Bloomington, IL: Indiana University Press, 2006).

5 Cf. "First order rhetorical reading": Stephen D. O'Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); "actualized reading": Judith Kovacs and Christopher Rowland, *Revelation*, BBC (Malden, MA: Blackwells, 2004).

6 E.g., Brian K. Blount, *Revelation: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 122, 161, 294; Wilfred J. Harrington, O.P., *Revelation*, SP (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1993), 90–91, 113, 162.

systemic forces of human institutions have gone astray, the ethical value of ecosystems seems to be enhanced.

John interpreted his visions against the eschatological crisis of the Roman Imperium, and most specifically the imperial cult. *We* are confronted with a different, yet related, eschatological crisis against which we read. Recent studies of Revelation argue that a point of relevance for John's visions is found in the ways in which they expose the continued insidiousness of imperialism, and its negative effects.[7] A growing number of studies help us to see that imperialism in the first century had (and imperialism continues to have) environmental consequences.[8] Even if these consequences were only on the periphery of John's thinking, they have come front and center in ours. We are confronted by an environmental crisis of potentially apocalyptic proportions. And "[f]resh confrontations with the ultimate exigence . . . prompt re-examination . . . of the fundamental agreements of the apocalyptic tradition."[9] It is to be expected that this new *ultimate* environmental *exigence* would prompt new efforts to understand Revelation. When taken together with the innate human fascination with the future, and the overpowering urge in the Western tradition to read those crises that transcend our sense of manageable proportion via the symbolism of apocalyptic endings,[10] this means that we are justified in coming to Revelation with questions about its potential relationship to the very real possibility of the collapse of entire ecosystems in our time. Perhaps this book's rhetoric, ostensibly about the future, perhaps even our future, provides some resource we can bring to understanding, or responding to, this particular End that has come upon us.

Postcolonialism offers insights of immense value for ecological reading of John's visions. John makes a predictable psychological step in his resistance against imperialism.[11] He mimics imperial violence and excess as a part of his

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7 Esp. Catherine Keller, *God and Power: Counter-Apocalyptic Journeys* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005); Harry O. Maier, *Apocalypse Recalled: The Book of Revelation after Christendom* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002); Pablo Richard, *Apocalypse: A People's Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995).

8 Esp. Barbara R. Rossing, *The Choice Between Two Cities: Whore, Bride, and Empire in the Apocalypse,* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 1999); "River of Life," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 25 (1998): 487–99; "Alas for Earth! Lament and Resistance in Revelation 12," in Norman C. Habel and Vicky Balabanski, ed., *The Earth Story in the New Testament* (New York: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 180–92; "Trajan's Column and the Cargo List of Revelation 18:12–13: John's Critique of Rome's Economy in Ecological and Eschatological Perspective," paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX, Nov 2016.

9 O'Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse*, 197.

10 O'Leary and Malcolm Bull, ed., *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995); Eugene Weber, *Apocalypse: Prophesies, Cults, and Millennial Beliefs through the Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 235.

11 See Lynne St. Clair Darden, *Scripturalizing Revelation: An African American Postcolonial Reading of Empire* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 5; Sarah Emmanuel, "A Post-Traumatic Revelation: Reading John's Apocalypse as Communal Repair," paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX, Nov 2016. The theoretical understanding of subalterns begins

own mythic replacement. God "out Caesars" Caesar. The New Jerusalem "out Romes" Rome.[12] The Empire is violent, God is more violent. The Empire slays its enemies. God and the Lamb slay still more. In relation to the environment, if, as a growing body of work illustrates,[13] the Empire in conquest and vengeance against its enemies could lay waste to whole environments, God lays waste the entire planet in vengeance against God's enemies. Our literary/theological problem is to find a way to get John into therapy and ourselves out of this bottleneck.

The theological lens for this reading is from Walter Wink's work on "powers."[14] Parts of Wink's corpus are intended as an historical critical assessment of principalities and powers in the New Testament. Amid the general applause given the initial volume, early reviewers noted that his analysis was less than historically convincing.[15] Wink is not being used here as an historical critical avenue into John of Patmos's ideas about angelic powers. His theological corpus is being used as an interpretive frame in tandem with a literary critical appropriation of Revelation. We have just emerged from a century in which humanity became theoretically, historically, and oftentimes painfully aware of its own systemic forces. We have begun a century whose hope lies in our taking control of those forces rather than allowing invisible systems free reign. In this context Wink's work offers a fruitful hermeneutical frame from which to reexamine the angels of Revelation. Using Wink's work in this manner, the task is about *our* possible understandings of angels, not John's. This is to draw on the surplus of meaning available in the Apocalypse rather than to "fossilize" a meaning from the first century.[16]

Wink's study of "powers" offers new ways in which we can understand the role of angels in the Apocalypse, who, at a surface reading, as the apparent agents of God, rain down destruction upon the earth. In his theological analysis the biblical language of power reflects a view of reality in which all entities have inner

with Antonio Gramsci, *Selection from Prison Notebooks*, trans. Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971); Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

12 Darden, *Scripturalizing Revelation*, xi; Thomas W. Martin, "The City as Salvific Space: Heterotopic Place and Environmental Ethics in the New Jerusalem" *Society of Biblical Literature Forum* 7.2: http://www.sbl site.org/publications/article.aspx?ArticleId=801.

13 E.g., Deforestation: Rossing, "Trajan's Column"; species depletion: Micah D. Kiel, "Venationes (Animal Spectacles), Meat Distribution, and John's Apocalypse," paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX, Nov 2016.

14 Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1984); *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Forces that Determine Human Existence* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986); *Engaging the Powers: Discrimination and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992); *The Powers that Be: Theology for a New Millennium* (New York: Doubleday, 1999). Aspects of Wink's conclusions were anticipated by William Stringfellow, *An Ethic for Christians and Other Aliens Living in a Strange Land* (Waco, TX: Word, 1973).

15 For example: Lloyd Gaston, "Review of *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament*, by Walter Wink," *Theology Today* 42 (1985): 263–64.

16 Blount, *Can I Get a Witness?*, 5.

spiritual and outer material aspects. *Angel* refers primarily to a spiritual (inner) aspect of human social, political, or economic institutions. An angel can be thought of as the "living" corporate personality appropriate to various social institutions/systems. Thus, the seven churches of Revelation each has an *angel*. That is, these churches' angels are spiritual beings that are given life from the institutional and corporate life of a church. A church, as a human social system, is more than a collection of individuals. A church as a corporation gives rise to a "life" in which the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Such systemic entities are, in Wink's view, a part of God's good creation. Their God-given purpose is to promote the flourishing of human relationships (including our relationship with the natural world). However, under the influence of human sinfulness they can become fallen, and work instead to our harm. It is in this sense he offers a theology of the demonic. Such twisted social forces can manifest themselves in the phenomenon the New Testament speaks of as demon possession (e.g., the "Gerasene demoniac" in Mark 5:10). So the *angelic* forces of human social life can stand in need of redemption as much as any individual human. The core theological concept is that human social groups give life to "beings" reflecting the values and powers of those groups projected large that can guide (+) or corrupt/destroy (-) life, both human and non-human.

A second aspect of Wink's work relevant to Revelation is his analysis of the στοιχεῖα (powers). Wink identifies them with the most ancient gods and goddesses in their functions as natural forces or phenomena. In one of numerous passages in Wink's work that strike at environmental implications he indicates that to the extent that Christianity killed the ancient gods it depersonalized nature. This in turn made the natural environment a thing to be exploited, rather than a *thou* with which to enter into relationship.[17] Wink also emphasizes that the elemental forces of the universe are powers so basic to the ordering of existence that "we cooperate with them, or we are judged by them."[18] He quotes Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179): "[creation is given to humans to use, but] if this privilege is misused, God's justice permits creation to punish humanity."[19]

Recapitulation, Reading from the End, Between Urban Bookends

Narrative scenes in Revelation do not hang together neatly in logical temporal causal chains. Time is confused in the Apocalypse.[20] For example, the time of narration stands in tension with various narrated times.[21] A linear reading searching

17 Wink, *Unmasking the Powers*, 132–38.
18 Ibid., 131.
19 Ibid., 141.
20 Maier, *Apocalypse*, 123–63.
21 David L. Barr, *Tales of the End: A Narrative Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 1998), 15–35; Maier, *Apocalypse*, 123–63.

for a logical unfolding of meanings in an interconnected causal chain is not necessarily the best reading strategy for Revelation.[22] Interpreters have used cyclical recapitulation as an interpretive schema since the fourth-century.[23] This effectively dismantles beginning to end sequencing of meaning by telescoping some narratives into other narratives. Contemporary interpreters offer a host of interpretive frames that describe Revelation's temporal development in various recapitulative, or even a-temporal, schemes.[24] Recapitulation guides this reading without prejudicing any specific understanding of the details of recapitulation.

There is also a great deal of variation on identifying a textual center to the Apocalypse that can serve as an interpretive anchor. This reading takes the narrative conclusion of the book as its hermeneutical anchor. The "end" is defined as chapters 18 and 21–22, covering Babylon's final exit from the stage, and the New Jerusalem's climatic entrance.

The New Jerusalem could be mistaken as the negation of reading an environmental interest in Revelation. Given that cities encode various problematics for the environment, it is unfortunate that John's vision focuses on a city as salvific space (and a city with urban sprawl gone cosmic!). It would have been more helpful for environmental ethics if instead of seeing the restoration of Eden as a tamed park within the city (22:1–2) he had seen a restored city contextualized within a vast parkland. But the city image itself does not countermand reading an environmental concern. Duncan Reid has suggested that the silences in the texts describing the New Jerusalem presuppose the existence of an external "environment" outside its walls.[25] After all, the nations who bring their glory into the city (21:24) will need space to exist. Barbara Rossing has emphasized that the New Jerusalem has a relationship with its external environs that is based on healing.[26] What is essential for this reading is that the New Jerusalem functions as a center of healing not only for those inside, but also for all persons and *all things* that lie outside.

The never-arriving denouement of Revelation (see 22:20) is "A Tale of Two Cities"—Babylon and the New Jerusalem.[27] If these two cities are read first, and

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22 Keller, *God and Power*, 136–37.

23 Bernard McGinn, "Revelation," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 300.

24 E.g., Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 5–6; Maier, *Apocalypse*, 123–63 (borrowing heavily from Frank Kermode); O'Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse*, 219–20: "[The End] has already occurred; it is always about to occur; it is here and has now and always has been"; Jacques Ellul, *Apocalypse: The Book of Revelation*, trans. George W. Schreier, (New York: Seabury, 1977), 24, 50.

25 Duncan Reid, "Setting Aside the Ladder to Heaven: Revelation 21:1–22:5 from the Perspective of Earth," in *Readings from the Perspective of Earth,* The Earth Bible, vol. 1, ed. Norman C. Habel and Vicky Balabanski (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim, 2000), 232–45.

26 Rossing, "River of Life," 487–99.

27 Stringfellow, *Ethic for Christians*, 34, reads this tension as a canonical theme uniting the whole

as alternative futures—and only then does one read the seven cities of the seven churches in chapters 2–3—we see Revelation as bracketed by urban concerns. The textual opposition of Babylon and the New Jerusalem allows seeing them as oppositional moral systems and resultant futures. The seven cities/churches have their futures before them. They stand in "what is" (ἃ εἰσὶν 1:19a). "What is about to happen" (ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι) (v. 19b) is a hypothetical future, not given any specification until after 4:1c (ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα ["what must take place after this"]). The imperatives in chapters 2–3 place the churches in the situation of choosing a future. Which city of the future will their cities emulate? This urban inclusio guides the unpacking of the intervening visions. The visions prod the seven cities (and also us) to ask: "Will your future be that of Babylon, or that of the New Jerusalem?" "Will your cities, in the end, seek the mark of the Beast, or the mark of the Lamb?" "How will your city's systemic *angels* behave?" The urban bookends predispose a reading in which the intervening visions illumine behaviors related to either Babylon's values or the New Jerusalem's values.

Recent work on the rhetorical situation of Revelation has emphasized that the problem for John's churches might not have been too much persecution, but too little.[28] His churches find life in the Empire to be too good, not too evil. It is easy to accommodate their Christian faith to the blessings offered by the Imperial system. The Seer must convince them that a crisis exists; he must help them to see the system's evil with the clarity his visions have given him. The extravagance of John's language seeks to expose negative spiritual forces working incognito. The very familiarity and apparent good of these demonic entities masks them. The visions function to de-familiarize the normal. They show that "beneath the comfortable surfaces of life in the cities of this world, a spiritual warfare is in full tilt."[29] The historical identity of the Beast is not hard to discern; it is the *nature* of the beast that eludes us. The difficulty is to understand why the Beast/City is beastly/non-urbane. Unmasking Babylon's systemic principalities and powers is a first step.

A sharp moral contrast divides Babylon and the New Jerusalem.[30] The New Jerusalem produces healing for all. Babylon produces domination, exploitation, and destruction. Yet, in Babylon's exit scene (18:1–24), with the exception of

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biblical witness as dealing with the confrontation of these two cities.

28 Maier, *Apocalypse Recalled*, 30–39; Robert M. Royalty, Jr., *The Streets of Heaven: The Ideology of Wealth in the Apocalypse of John* (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1998), 11–20; Adela Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), 84. The historical case that the Domitian "persecution" was less than severe is made by David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, WBC 52a (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), lxiv–lxx; Ian Boxall, *The Revelation of St. John*, BNTC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 12–13.

29 Patrick Grant, *Reading the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 108.

30 Rossing, "River of Life," 487–99; *The Choice Between Two Cities*.

human trafficking (v. 13),[31] the evil of Babylon is left unspecified, or only vaguely implied (e.g. vv. 6–7). On the surface one finds what we normally perceive as good. Indeed, some of these "goods" are re-inscribed in the New Jerusalem![32] The city has beautiful, rare, and priceless things (v. 13). Its economy is vibrant. It creates wealth for itself and others (vv. 11, 17c). It is elegant, evoking pride (v. 18b). Nevertheless, in John's moral vision it is the "domicile of Systemic Evil and a hang-out for the Forces of Human Self-destruction" (v. 2; author's expanded translation).

If we ask after the central ethical failure leading to this evaluation, a postcolonial analysis highlights systems of imperial exploitation, and the conspicuous consumption that was a sign of elite power. John's colonized hatred of Rome leads him to re-inscribe the same elite acquisition in the New Jerusalem, as the nations bring their glory to the City of God (21:24). Avoiding this mimicry seems something that would be desirable for our spiritual health.

In terms of Wink's categories the *angels* of Babylon—that is, the *personalities* of its human institutional structures—have gone awry. Appearing to produce desirable goods, they, in fact, produce destruction. The fruits of urbane consumption are actually rotten. Armed with this insight, we can approach the troubling destructive visions at the heart of the Apocalypse. The central visions reveal the *nature of the beast*; they expose its angels for what they are.

The Seven-Sealed Scroll

The events revealed by the seven-sealed scroll (6:1–17) do not front environmental destruction. But if we read the seven trumpets (8:2–9:19, 11:15) and the seven bowls of wrath (16:1–21) as recapitulations (with variations and amplifications) of processes revealed in the seven seals, then the seals become important for establishing the context of the environmental destruction revealed with the trumpets and bowls. A helpful way to read the scene is suggested by David Barr. He calls the seven-sealed scroll (5:1) the "Worship Scroll," and argues that the previous scene (4:1–5:14) is designed to recall a Sunday service.[33] The scroll contains the lesson to be read. The crisis is that with no one capable of opening the scroll the lesson will remain opaque (5:3–4). The Lamb is found to be worthy of opening the scroll, but what, exactly, is the lesson? Jacques Ellul reads the lesson of the scroll

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31 Slavery is strongly negative for an "actualized reading," i.e., for us. Given the way in which ancient thinkers viewed slavery as either natural (Aristotelians), or as not truly injurious of the person (Stoics) one would have to doubt if an ancient reader found slavery morally evil. Christians shared in the ambiguity regarding the moral status of slavery. For example: Paul's failure in Philemon to censure the practice unambiguously, and the later Christian household rules (cf. Eph 6:5–8; Col 3:22–24).

32 Royalty, *Streets of Heaven,* 4.

33 Barr, *Tales of the End*, 61.

as a revelation of the hidden forces driving human history.[34] The scroll does not show fated destructive acts sent by God, but, in this reading, unmasks the angels of Babylon for the demons they are. And so the *angelic* forces driving Babylon's human institutional unfolding are actually shown to be demonic forces of conquest and war with concomitant famine and plague (6:2–8). And, like a distant warning of thunder, the Sixth Seal (6:12–17) with its descriptions of earthquakes, a blackened sun and bloodied moon, and the displacement of oceans and mountains, intimates the recoil of the environment against a human world driven by such forces.

Using Wink's categories clarifies God's relationship to the ensuing mayhem. For Wink God, as Creator, is primary in all things. In John's symbolic world God's throne is at the pinnacle of a hierarchical universe.[35] The scroll is in God's hand (5:1). The ensuing actions are connected to God through the four living creatures that surround the throne. These factors can be read as illustrations of Wink's understanding that the human institutional forces driving events cannot exist apart from their creation by God. Yet at the same time that the vision emphasizes the origin of all things in God, the text undercuts itself and distances God from what these all too human institutional entities do. The scene is all about the One on the Throne. But this One "appears not to have any agency whatsoever."[36] The One on the Throne does nothing, says nothing, moves nowhere. This One is a completely passive presence.

Seeing this will require freeing ourselves from the standard interpretation (and the most likely reading bouncing about in John's colonized mind) that says God commands the Four Horsemen, making God the causative agent behind their destruction. The standard interpretation is made problematic by the fact that Rev 6:1–8 embroils us in a number of visual, auditory, and semantic ambiguities. The text is highly underdetermined if John wishes us to get carried away with viewing God as an omnipotent micromanager.

Rev 6:1–8 describes four parallel scenes, each pairing one of the four living beings that surround the throne of God (4:6) with one of the four horsemen. The first scene (6:1–2) provides the model:

> Then I saw the Lamb open one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures call out, as with a voice of thunder, "Come!" (Ἔρχου). I looked (καὶ εἶδον), and there was a white horse.[37]

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34 Ellul, *Apocalypse*, 145.

35 Bruce Malina and John Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 63–65.

36 Darden, *Scripturalizing Revelation*, 145.

37 One interpretative tradition identifies the white horse as Christ (Ellul, *Apocalypse*, 146–49). This is strongly argued by Michael Bachmann, "Noch ein Blick auf den ersten apokalypstichen Reiter (von Apk. 6.1–2)," *New Testament Studies* 44 (1998): 257–78. Space does not allow a detailed

So who exactly is "coming" or "going" (ἔρχομαι)? The sequence ἔρχου καὶ εἶδον is exactly parallel for the scenes depicting the first, third and fourth horsemen. For the second horse καὶ εἶδον is absent and ἔρχου is followed by καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ("and it went") (vv. 3c–4a). With the first horse καὶ ἐξῆλθεν is also used near the end of v. 2: "and he went out conquering and to conquer." The second usages of ἔρχομαι for the first and second horses, where it clearly means "go" (that is, "went"), *might* determine the meaning of the imperative form preceding it. In each of these two instances, then, the interpretation would be that the command is addressed to a horseman: "Go! . . . and he went." *If* so, the parallelism of the scenes suggests that the first two instances set the meaning for all the imperatives in these verses. Indeed, a number of exegetes do understand the command ἔρχου as addressed to the horsemen and the seals as causally linked to the ensuing violence.[38] The trouble with John's imprecise, underdetermined writing is that it produces grammatical possibilities, not grammatical certainties. The verb ἔρχομαι can mean either "come," or "go."[39] The construction remains inherently ambiguous for the meaning of the imperative. That its referent is equally ambiguous is attested by a number of early manuscripts that understood it as a command to John to "come" by adding "and see" (καί ἴδε) at the end of v.1 to make this clear.[40] After all the arguments have been made what remains is ambiguity.

John not only failed to specify the sense of ἔρχομαι, he is also a bit fuzzy on the meaning of δίδωμι (give). The first rider wears a crown. Where it came from and by whom it "was given" to the rider (ἐδόθη αὐτῷ) (6:2d) must be determined by the reader. Is the imperium the rider possesses actively given (its passive form notwithstanding) by someone, perhaps God? Or, does the crown signify power

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response to his argument, but see John C. Poirier, "The First Rider: A Response to Michael Bachmann," *New Testament Studies* 45 (1999): 257–62. In addition to Poirier's responses my reasons for rejecting the white rider as Christ are as follows. First, such an interpretation disrupts the cohesion of negative images found in the visions of sevens. Nothing good comes from the visions of sevens. The possible exceptions are the Fifth and Seventh Seals. But these are, at best, ambiguously positive. The Fifth Seal reveals the souls of the slaughtered martyrs under the altar of God. Positive? Only ambiguously so when one considers that they call for vengeance, and still more deaths are required to fill up their number. The Seventh Seal produces 30 minutes of highly ambiguous silence in heaven. This is usually taken to signify God laying aside all else to hear the prayers of the saints. Positive? Only ambiguously so when it is taken into consideration that the Seventh Seal leads (8:3–6) to the blowing of the seven trumpets. Second, white in the ancient world symbolized military victory. Roman generals rode white horses in triumphal processions. As such, it negatively connotes the Roman Imperium.

38 Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 379–80; Ben Witherington III, *Revelation: New Cambridge Bible Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 133; J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation,* AB 38 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 97; Stephen Smalley, *The Revelation of John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 144, 147.

39 Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 379–80.

40 Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London and New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), 737; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, NICNT (revised) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 141.

derived from some unknown, unspecified origin that the rider is being passively allowed to hold? We could take "was given" either way.[41] What might John have intended us to read?

It seems likely to many exegetes that John has a theological obsession with divine sovereignty.[42] His colonized theological mind needs to play this as accentuated far beyond the sovereignty of any human emperor. However, the certainty of his mind on this matter has not made it into the certainty of his grammar and scene determination. John's hand was (unconsciously?) rebelling against his theology as it put pen to parchment and left textual ambiguity in place of theological certainty.

A postcolonial perspective suggests we question John's theology, and instead put our trust in his unsteady hand. Perhaps a text seemingly about divine power deconstructs toward less oppressive interests. The ambiguities of the scene justify such questioning. So, even if two of the four horsemen "go out" subsequent to the imprecise imperative, we must still ask just who it is that hears the command: ἔρχου. The Horsemen, or is it the Seer? Does it mean "come" or "go?" Exactly how are we to envision the movements being conveyed here? Do the horsemen move out from God's throne, or does John move closer to read the mysteries of the scroll? Or, does John see the horsemen "going out" across the earth from nowhere in particular? This scene is a stage manager's nightmare. No answers to these questions are specified in the script. If I am an omnipotent stage manager and the voices of the creatures are directed to the horsemen, then God seems to be directly and causally linked to their destructive impact. And I tell the director to play the scene in that manner. They move from God to enact their violence. But if, instead, we resolve the scene's ambiguity away from pre-concerns with divine omnipotence and, with some ancient readers, understand the command as "come closer [to view the contents of the lesson]," very different stage directions emerge. If the voices crying "ἔρχου" are meant not for the horsemen but for other ears (and the horsemen, being, after all, metaphors, are, in fact, deaf), then another stage play is possible.

In this reading of the script the Lamb opens the seals, but does not cause the ensuing violence. Instead the slowly opening scroll enables a Freudian-like analysis of the unconscious forces driving the human condition. But, to emphasize, in this reading there is no action taken by God, or the Lamb, to cause the following destruction. Instead we find that with the breaking of the first four seals each of the four creatures in turn calls out for John to come. What follows is not causation of destruction, but causation of perception. Coming, John views the mysteries of

41 Sigve K. Tonstad, *Saving God's Reputation: The Theological Function of Pistou Iesou in the Cosmic Narratives of Revelation,* JSNTS 337 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 136.

42 This is Keller's frequent psychological assessment of John in *God and Power*.

the Scroll. The light bulbs of the Seer's cognition turn on. He sees the reality of Babylon's angels run amok: conquest and its aftermath.

The Four Living Creatures

While God remains imperially aloof, those around the throne take action. The one thing that is absolutely clear about the commands "Come!" is that they are uttered by the four living creatures surrounding God's throne. Thus their role, not only with the seven seals, but also with the bowls of wrath, is central to this reading of Revelation. They are first encountered in the heavenly throne scene in 4:6. It seems clear that John has Ezekiel's vision of God's throne and its attendant creatures in mind (Ezek 1:5–25). But what is the meaning of that connection? A rabbinic text suggests that the four creatures represent the created world. The text is *Midrash Shemoth* R. 23, "[Humanity] is exalted among creatures, the eagle among birds, the ox among domestic animals, the lion among wild beasts; all of them have received dominion."[43] The four function as archetypes. In them the whole of the created order fulfills its purpose, praising its Creator.[44] This Jungian-like reading seems built into the cardinal function of "four" to represent the earth. The earth has four corners and four winds—and four horsemen who go out to destroy the earth. The four living beings encompass the created (and animate?) cosmos.

However, the living beings themselves dwell in the cardinal points of ambiguity, playing a Derridean "trace." Catherine Keller starts with the four as symbols of the created order complicating the very idea of order with the hermeneutical indeterminacy of the text.[45] She plays with the ambiguous nature of the "almost human" creature (number three: "with a face *like* a human face" [4:7]), and its relationship with the other clearly animal creatures. Using the Derridean concept of the *trace*, she envisions humanity's egalitarian place among the four as a dissolution of the dualisms of nature/culture, animal/human. This leads her to hope for a reading in which the four "incarnate . . . the sacred sentience of all creatures. . . . signaling a future in which we humanoids sing along, just third of four."[46] Wiring in Wink's theology, sparks fly off, deconstructing the monotheistic omnipotent

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43 Found in Harrington, *Revelation,* 80.

44 Other interpreters reading the creatures in this manner are: Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 379–80; Witherington, *Revelation*, 118; Harrington, *Revelation*, 80; Ford, *Revelation*, 75; G. B. Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 64; Keller, *God and Power*, 77; Mounce, *Revelation*, 124; Barr, *Tales of the End*, 81; Ronald L. Farmer, *Revelation,* CC (St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2005), 60. The reading seems to have originated with H. B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (London: Macmillan, 1906). M. Eugene Boring, *Revelation,* IBC (Louisville: John Knox, 1989), 107, proposes that John's opponents, castigated in the opening letters, are, at least in part, guilty of a Gnostic denial of creation. The four creatures counter this by emphasizing that the created order is close to God and worships God.

45 Keller, *God and Power,* 68–94.

46 Ibid., 94.

interests of John, and casting flickering light on the ancient gods and goddesses acting on their own as natural forces of creation (στοιχεῖα).

The Seven Trumpets

As John circles the wagons we start with the seven trumpets as recapitulation of the seven seals. Thus, they are already grounded in the role of the four creatures in revealing how human institutions driven by the angels of Babylon misalign even the fundamental forces of nature. They reveal this even though the creatures do not reappear in this scene. The seven angels are first revealed in one of the heavenly scenes (8:2). So the living beings are at least a stage presence. The angels are active as are other members of the heavenly throne room, excepting God. And when they blow their trumpets the characteristic scene shift to earth takes place. If Walter Wink is reading over our shoulders as we interpret the action the stage directions make perfect sense. The seven angels stand before God (8:2), indicating God as their ultimate source, and showing their primal connection with the source of all good. However, when the action begins the text undercuts divine sovereignty, and obfuscates their relationship to God. The angels constitute the band's brass section, but it is unclear exactly where they got either their trumpets or their music lessons. Using Wink's insight that "angels" are entities given life from human institutions, it is to be suggested that humanity gives the angels their trumpets and teaches them how to play. That is, in reading angels as the (interior) personalities of human social structures, it is we who give them their attributes (trumpets). Their natures and actions reflect our choices and qualities writ large. The angels may be in the heavenly orchestra, but God does not appear to be the conductor. The angels blow on their own accord (8:6), further distancing their causality from divine sovereign command.

The earthly scenes of destruction precipitated by each trumpet contrast with the heavenly worship of chapter 7. In heaven angels, creatures, and elders join in the harmonious praise of God. This is the sort of future John hopes to evoke in his visions of the harmony given structural form in the New Jerusalem. In contrast, the trumpets of chapter 8 show us the result of the systemic ethics (interiority) of the earthly city, Babylon. Its angels, corrupted by its elite conspicuous consumption and imperial exploitation of the natural environment, wreak havoc on the flora, fauna, rivers, and oceans (8:7–12).

The Seven Bowls of Wrath

The living beings take center stage again in 15:7. Against the backdrop of an immobile God, they distribute the bowls of God's wrath to the angels. The wagons now doubly circled, we read the bowls as recapitulation with amplification of both the seals and trumpets. The bowls further illumine a future made inevitable

if humanity follows the systemic forces of imperial military, economic, and social oppression. Babylon's angels are now run triply amok. Walter Wink watches from the wings and sees the expected patterns. The angels exit the heavenly Temple. Though divine in origin, their behavior stands apart from divinity. The trumpets had been an anonymous gift. A gift intended to play notes of wrath. And the text suggests that God, who did not hand out the trumpets, does not distribute wrath either. The environment, represented in one of the living creatures (who had obviously read Hildegard) hands out wrath (v. 7). To confuse matters further, an unidentified voice from the Temple tells the angels to dispense the contents of their cups. The voice is not God's. It speaks of God in the third person.[47] "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God" (16:1b). If John were a competent omnipotence theologian intent on defending divine prerogative in handing out judgment, he would have had direct divine speech commanding the distribution of "my wrath."[48] When the bowls are emptied the recoil of the environment against the practices of Babylon intensifies. The trumpets brought the destruction of one third of the rivers and oceans (8:9, 11).[49] The bowls bring total devastation (16:3). John most likely wants us to accept that God is an imperial power greater than the Empire and capable of destroying an entire planet. The angels do come forth dressed in imperial sashes (15:6c). But John's text resists.

There is much God-talk (God does not talk but others talk about God—i.e., theological speech: 15:7b, 8a; 16.1c, 5.b, 7b, 9a, 11a, 14c, 21c), but very little God-action—the notable exception being 16:19, where God is the subject of two verbs, "remembering" Babylon, and "giving" Babylon God's anger. But the voice in 16:19 is that of the narrator. God actually doing something turns out, in the literary end, to be nothing more than the implied author acting as narrator, giving us a human viewpoint.[50] Indeed, a narrator/implied author who does not have the decency to hide himself behind direct action by God. When we might finally be able pin all this destruction on God, the text gives way beneath our feet.

What the plagues do give us is a deeper revealing of the kind of future we may expect if Babylon's systemic powers guide our actions. Like the seals, what is revealed is not God's causation of destruction, but a theological understanding of the destruction that is already taking place. "[The plagues are events] that the Empire itself causes."51 Recent commentary on this passage tends to emphasize

47 Against Farmer, *Revelation*, 106.

48 For the importance of this mistake by the implied author see Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 4.

49 The 1/3 itself may indicate demonic causation; cf. Tonstad, *Reputation*, 111–12.

50 The implied author writes himself into his narration as the narrator in chapter 1. To underscore the point here he is not an omnipotent narrator, but a fallible one we should question (e.g., see his blasphemous error in 22:8–9).

51 Richard, *Apocalypse*, 86.

the reflexive nature of the judgments of the bowls of wrath. David Barr calls the judgments "karmic."52 Certain types of environmental actions bring in their wake certain types of environmental responses. These responses can take the form of a "judgment" against destructive human activity. Our angels have run completely amok.

A Theological/Ethical Conclusion

It seems then that this book of visions is not predestined to be read as a story about a God who wills destruction of the natural world. With Walter Wink as our guide we find a God who has created nature replete with entities (the four creatures) that emerge from it, and are intended by God to promote wholeness and healing for all. If only John had looked more clearly at his visions of the New Jerusalem, where the nations—apparently not annihilated (21:24)—find healing (22:2), the problematically destructive sevens might have been written differently.

Human systemic functions such as economics and politics similarly were created for our good, and with systemic entities (angels) emerging from them as well. But when these systems are exploited and corrupted through human practices of conspicuous consumption, imperialistic acquisition, and global domination (Babylon), our *angels* are drawn off task and begin to become destructive. Drawn far enough from their God-given purposes, the angels of human systems begin to destroy the very environment they depend on for existence, and trigger the ecosystem itself to rebound against us, violently judging our practices as the whole system seeks to purge itself. When the angels of human social systems run amok, they bring judgment in their wake.

We can agree with John, that this future moves toward us with tragic inevitability. Is there anything from this reading to suggest that such a future might be averted? One suggestion would be that if, rather than the exploitive imperialism of Babylon, human systems are instead guided by the healing of the New Jerusalem, there is hope for a river of life that would flow from our cities and bring healing and wholeness to the planet.

What does such a reading of the Seer's visions suggest for Christian environmental ethics? First, it provides additional biblical warrant for abandonment of the traditional Christian environmental ethic: stewardship. This has rightly fallen into disfavor because of its utilitarianism, paternalism, and anthropocentrism. The utility of natural systems, especially for human provision, is not emphasized in the Apocalypse (except negatively in Babylon). Paternalism and anthropocentrism are out when it is remembered that the four creatures representing nature actually stand closer to God and worship God prior to the 24 elders, who directly

52 Barr, *Tales of the End*, 87; also Ellul, *Apocalypse*, 65–72; Royalty, *Streets of Heaven*, 204; Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 117.

represent humanity (4:9). Eco-justice seems better to serve as the frame in which to describe the place of the environment in this reading of John's visions. In the New Jerusalem John envisions a balance of all the parts to the whole;[53] and when in balance the whole produces healing and good for all. It is an ethic based in the dynamics and balance of whole ecosystems.

Secondly, this reading re-envisions the relationship of Christian "transcendence" to the environment as a dialectic rather than an opposition. Doing so addresses the problems with "otherworldliness" first articulated by Lynn White, Jr.[54] The disquiet with the "otherworldliness" of Christianity has been voiced more recently in theologies seeking a "worldly Christianity."[55] Catherine Keller's work on apocalyptic expounds this worldly faith with its concomitant retreat from the next world.[56] For both White and Keller the very notion of a *world beyond* makes the construction of a workable environmental ethic for this world problematic. But all proclamations of the end of The End seem premature. Keller herself (with a bow to Derrida) acknowledges that there is no escaping apocalypse as a form of thinking. Any effort to speak of its end must itself borrow from apocalyptic.[57] Human beings, like John of Patmos and generations of readers since, imagine futures for themselves, for their species, for their planet, and for their universe. What is essential is that we understand how it is that often this imagination becomes destructive for our present.

It is not otherworldliness per se that is ethically suspect, but rather specific types of otherworldly constructs. Recalling the superscript from Umberto Eco, all thinking of other worlds has some type of impact on *this* world. The type of impact an envisioned future has on this world enables us to judge the adequacy of that envisioned future. What this observation means is that Lynn White's critique of Christian transcendence, when more finely nuanced, is directed against a neo-platonic construct of Christian otherworldliness, not the vision of another heaven and earth per se. This paper affirms the possibility of a positive dialectic of the future with the present *for* the environment. It suggests a new rhetorical strategy and appropriation of Christian apocalyptic traditions and logic that confronts us with a clear diagnosis of the tragedy of current destruction balanced with hope for change.

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53 Martin, *Salvific City*.

54 "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," in *Western Man and Environmental Ethics,* ed. Ian Barbour (Reading, MA: Addison & Wesley, 1973), 24–28. The Earth Bible Project calls the view critiqued by White, "heavenism"; cf. Norman C. Habel and Vicky Balabanski, *The Earth Story in the New Testament, Volume 5* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 3.

55 Maier, *Apocalypse*, 203, borrowing from Bonhoeffer.

56 Especially, *God and Power*.

57 Keller, *God and Power*, 87. Jacques Derrida, in an effort to make an end of the end, famously put himself in the position of declaring the end, ended; a position he admitted was itself apocalyptic, O'Leary, *Apocalypse*, 219.

This reading also suggests an important means of addressing the need for imaginative insight into a new relationship with our environment. Revelation alters our imaginations, enabling us to "see" good(s) in a new light.[58] Things we have assumed to be goods are not (in the long run). Other goods essential to our well-being have been overlooked.[59] And the very fact that these insights are packaged in fantastic visions *requires* an opening of the imagination to engage them. Also, if Max Weber was correct in identifying a major feature of the modern bureaucratic world as disenchantment, Revelation's visions re-enchant nature as not just having existence, but also as having being. In the presence of God we can relate to creation as *thou*.

Finally, John provides a metaphor for ethical change. He challenges his city churches to pack up and move. Christians are to relocate from Babylon to the New Jerusalem. This change in urban settings is a metaphor for ethical transformation. This metaphorical relocation also implies that the church casts off the mark of the Beast and instead takes the mark of the Lamb. With such a move comes the need to practice the chief virtues of Revelation: endurance and witness. These will now come to mean, at least in part, a change in our relationship to the environment, and a resistance to the identification of abundant life with the reification of global consumerist excesses, the most insidious form of imperialism with which we cohabit. Revelation's God is not responsible for the destruction of the environment; the natural world is not thereby robbed of ethical value. Instead, Revelation enhances the value of our ecosystems, making them central to a Christian ethic.

This centrality can be seen in two ways: (1) Ecosystems are of primary and independent value to God (evidenced in the relationship between God and the four living creatures). (2) Our relationship with and impact upon the natural environment are barometers of our relationship with God. How we behave in relation to the natural world reveals whether we follow the Beast or the Lamb. The mark of the Beast is, at least in part, a destructive and broken relationship with the environment.

An End has come upon us. Whole ecosystems are advancing through various stages of destruction as you read. The horsemen ride, bowls empty, trumpets blare. With each passing season, with each new study, the evidence mounts. The time to adapt grows short. Read in our context, Revelation can help us see why, at an ethical level, this crisis has come upon us. Our institutional entities have run

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58 Aldo Leopold's classic argument grounds environmental ethics in an ability to "love" the environment; see "The Land Ethic," in *A Sand County Almanac: And Sketches Here and There* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 217–41. This requires imaginatively re-envisioning the natural world as "fellow" rather than "thing." See Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination,* 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), on the importance of imagination to processes of transformation; also Maier, *Apocalypse*, 202–203.

59 See Edward O. Wilson, *The Future of Life (*New York: Knopf, 2002), 103–28.

amok. Much of what causes this destruction appears to be good: an expanding economy, ever increasing standards of living, ever increasing ease, speed, and amounts of travel, and the growing consumer demand to manipulate our living spaces to achieve an Epcot Center-like managed environment (to list only a few examples). Revelation helps us to see these "goods" in a different light. Such institutional "goods" driven by desire for domination, exploitation, and imperialist expansion merely mask demonically destructive agents. John's visions also help us toward an ethical vision of a new relationship with the environment that might enable us to avert the disasters it foretells/reveals. Rather than running roughshod over creation, the Seer's visions call us to re-vision ourselves as simply one partner with all of the created order in an egalitarian dance of praise to our mutual Creator. John's visions entice us to let the River of Life flow freely from God, bringing healing, not only to the nations, but to whole species, ecosystems, and ourselves.

Brothers in Christ: Re-remembering the Maccabean Martyrs through Transformation in Translation

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Abstract

The Maccabean revolt in the second century BCE can be understood as a cultural memory shared by modern Jews and Christians alike, which depicts a call to faithfulness and piety in light of the forces of empire and cultural assimilation. *Passio Sanctorum Machabaeorum*, "the suffering of the Maccabean saints," (= *Passio*) is a Christianized reworking of the Greek Jewish work of 4 Maccabees, which is a homily on the power of pious reason over bodily passions, based on the Maccabean martyrdom narrative. Though it has received little attention in modern times, 4 Maccabees was a widely read and formative text in early and medieval churches. As a reworking of 4 Maccabees (rather than a free translation), *Passio* brings to light a unique perspective of early Christian cultural memory of the Maccabean martyrdom narrative, and in general, reveals a relatively early view of martyrdom in the early church and how Stoic philosophy was internalized in a Christian context. This article (1) summarizes the literary, textual, and reception history of Passio, (2) surveys the burgeoning field of cultural memory studies with reference to the Maccabean revolt, and (3) presents the specifically "Christianized" and the original (that is, not derivative from 4 Maccabees) elements of Passio for the purpose of inviting exploration as to its hermeneutical significance. Special attention is paid to the systematic lessening of the category of "Law," and distinctly ethnically Jewish elements from 4 Maccabees as the Maccabean brothers are "re-remembered" as brothers in Christ.

Introduction to *Passio*

Principium meum philosophico quidem sermone, sed christiano explicabitur sensu, "My beginning to an indeed philosophical discourse will be explained, but in

a Christian sense." So begins the Latin reworking of 4 Maccabees titled *Passio Sanctorum Machabaeorum*, "the suffering of the Maccabean saints." *Passio* (as it will henceforth be referred to) is a homily on the power of pious reason over bodily passions, which is based on a martyrdom narrative of the Maccabean brothers before Antiochus IV. It is a beautifully written piece of literature that retains the same elegant and rhetorical style of the Greek of 4 Maccabees.

Who produced *Passio* and in what context? Unfortunately, external evidence regarding the date or authorship of *Passio* is sorely lacking, as is also the case regarding the compositional development of 4 Maccabees. Internal evidence suggests a compositional date from the fourth century onward since the thoughts about martyrdom[1] reflect a climate of asceticism rather than one of persecution, like that of 4 Maccabees. External evidence for a fourth-century date onward is suggested by the fact that the Latin quotations of 4 Maccabees from Church Fathers before the fourth century show no genetic connection to *Passio* over 4 Maccabees.[2]

Until the 20th century the only critical, printed edition was the *Notlösung* ("stopgap") work published by Desiderius Erasmus.[3] Then in 1938 Heinrich Dörrie published a critical edition for the purposes of contributing toward the work of the Septuaginta-Unternehmen in Göttingen for the preparation of the critical edition of 4 Maccabees. His edition, whose lemma text and apparatus this present work has employed, is based on a collation of 40 manuscripts, of which ten contain the full text and date from roughly the 11th century onward.[4] And even though the subtitle of Dörrie's edition, *die antike lateinische Übersetzung des IV. Makkabäerbuches*, "the ancient Latin translation of 4 Maccabees," indicates that he regarded *Passio* as a translation of 4 Maccabees, the reality is that it is more of a paraphrase[5] or free adaption of Greek 4 Maccabees, seeing as it contains substantial additions, omissions, and transformations, although the general narrative admittedly follows that of 4 Maccabees.[6]

Passio is a work that, while not well-known today (and hence the virtual lack

1 Cf., e.g., *Passio* 1:3, 16; 2:1; 7:9; and 13:5.
2 H. Dörrie, *Passio SS. Machabaeorum* (Abhandlungen der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen; Philologisch-Historische Klasse, 3.22; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1938), 14.
3 D. Erasmus. *Flavii Iosepi viri iudaei* περὶ αὐτοκράτορος λογισμοῦ. *Hoc est de imperatrice ratione, deque inclyto septem fratrum Macabaeorum, ac fortissimae eorum matris diuae Solomonae martyrio liber* (Cologne: E. Cervicornus, 1517).
4 Dörrie, *Passio,* 2–3.
5 S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Ann Arbor: Eisenbrauns, 1978), 305.
6 See also Dörrie, *Passio*, 62; R. J. V. Hiebert, "Preparing a Critical Edition of IV Maccabees: The Syriac Translation and Passio Sanctorum Machabaeorum as Witnesses to the Original Greek," in *Interpreting Translation: Studies on the LXX and Ezekiel in Honour of Johan Lust*, ed. F. García Martínez and M. Vervenne; BETL 192 (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 211–15; R. J. V. Hiebert, "A New Critical Edition," in *Die Septuaginta — Orte und Intentionen*: 5. Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch [LXX.D], Wuppertal 24.–27. Juli 2014, ed. S. Kreuzer, M. Meiser, and M. Sigismund, WUNT 361(Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 395–97.

of modern studies on it),[7] was widely read in the early church and Middle Ages, and even included in some Vulgate manuscripts. However, it was never included in scriptural canons or liturgical texts, and thus always retained a secondary status to 2 Macc 6–7 (which contains a martyrdom narrative).[8]

Cultural Memory Studies and the Maccabean Revolt

As a unique Christian reworking of 4 Maccabees, *Passio* brings to light a unique perspective of early Christian cultural memory of the Maccabean martyr narrative, and in general reveals a relatively early view of martyrdom in the early church (and also how Stoic philosophy was internalized in a Christian context).[9]

Cultural Memory studies is a burgeoning field of inquiry that focuses on the dynamic character of the symbolic heritage of collective memory (or societal long-term memory) as it is objectified and institutionalized so that it can be stored, transferred, and reincorporated throughout generations. It is distinguished from communicative memory or inter-human interaction, which is limited to around 80–100 years, and refers to what may be called the "living memory" of personal experiences and autobiographical materials. Cultural memory is key to shaping a group or culture's identity, as it is not simply a means of archiving information, but rather a force or means for constructing a narrative of the past for the purpose of shaping the future. Such memory allows groups or cultures to respond creatively to both daily challenges and catastrophic changes.[10]

Religious cultural memory, like that reflected in *Passio,* comes with the establishment of dogmas and priests. Such dogmas and priests are necessary for ritual continuity. Moreover, a hermeneutical culture of trained and vetted exegetes for now sacred or classical texts is needed for textual continuity.[11] While there is no evidence to suggest that *Passio* was sacred in the sense of being considered canonical and unalterable, it was classical in the sense that it constituted a stable formative memory for future reflection and exegesis through textual continuity. Cultural memory pioneer Jan Assman notes that perhaps para-

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7 For example, *Passio* is not even mentioned in Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski's work, *Christian Memories of the Maccabean Martyrs* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

8 Dörrie, *Passio*, 3–5.

9 For an excellent historical study from a postcolonial and collective memory perspective cf. Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, *Christian Memories of the Maccabean Martyrs*; and see also Gerard Rouwhorst, "The Cult of the Seven Maccabean Brothers and Their Mother in Christian Tradition" in *Saints and Role Models in Judaism and Christianity*, edited by Marcel Poorthuis and Joshua Schwartz (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 183–204.

10 For an influential introduction to the theoretical basis of cultural memory studies cf. Jan Assman, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 5–7, 15–69, and the seminal work of Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. (with introduction) by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). See also Robert Segal, *Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

11 Assman, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization,* 49–50.

doxically, textual continuity is more open to variation than ritual continuity.[12] What Assman refers to is not the text itself, in terms of the signifiers used, as the textual critic might investigate, but rather the meaning the text communicates and creates.

To apply this to the texts under discussion, the Maccabean martyrs have been remembered in Jewish and Christian cultural memory by means of ritual and textual continuity, with the ritual of Hanukkah becoming primary in Judaism, and the texts of Maccabees becoming primary in Christianity, including *Passio* (at least for a time). Regarding the early textual continuity, which is the focus of this article, the formative texts upon which both Jewish and Christian communities have remembered the Maccabean martyrs are the literary works of 1–4 Maccabees.[13] So together 1–4 Maccabees preserve a pre-Rabbinic and pre-Christian cultural memory of what is generally called Second Temple Judaism, conventionally understood to begin during the Persian period, as groups of Judeans began to return to their ancestral homeland after the Babylonian Exile.

Accordingly, the shift from Israelite to Second Temple Jewish culture saw the gradual transition from prophets to scholars taking the role of cultural representation, as well as the more formal development of sacred and classical texts, alongside further developing rituals and liturgies. In this milieu religion as such began to stabilize and become a force for creating an identity based on "Israel," which was now independent of political and territorial limitations. However, this now *Jewish* self-definition would again become re-politicized during times of trauma when dominant political forces interrupted.[14]

The first prominent case of this was when the measures of Antiochus IV Epiphanes sought to force Hellenization, banning Judaism's νόμος (i.e., its laws and customs predicated upon the Mosaic Law), in Palestine, and thereby causing the Maccabean Wars.[15] In such a programmatic confrontation between Hellenism and Judaism,[16] Jewish identity was now a way of life built on religion, and the non-Jew-

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12 Assman, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization,* 81–86.

13 Note that the other extant ancient translations of 4 Maccabees are the Syriac and Coptic versions. The Syriac may be considered a generally faithful, but not very literal rendering of the Greek, and the Coptic an abridgement, especially of the later chapters.

14 Cf. Assman, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 175–205. See also Marie-Françoise Baslez, "The Origin of the Martyrdom Images: from the Book of Maccabees to the First Christians," in *The Books of the Maccabees: History, Theology, Ideology*, Papers of the Second International Conference on the Deuteronomical Books, Pápa, Hungary, 9–11 June, 2005, ed. Géza Xeravits and József Zsengellér, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 118 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 113–30.

15 For Weitzmann's skepticism about the historicity of these measures, cf. "Plotting Antiochus' Persecution," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123.2 (2004), 219–34. Note that cultural memory focuses on how the past was *remembered*, regardless of what "actually" or "historically" *happened* in the past. Thus, the historicity or veracity of accounts of the Maccabean Wars, especially martyrdom narratives, do not directly affect the current investigation.

16 Cf. Erich Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism. The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley:

ish life of the Hellenists was branded as heathen. It was in such a milieu that 4 Maccabees originated.

Christianized and Original Elements in *Passio*

The origination of *Passio* from 4 Maccabees took place in a very different milieu, and consciously so, based on the "Christian sense" referred to in its prologue.[17] It took place in a Roman environment where Christianity was on the rise globally, and no longer a persecuted minority. It took place in a religiously polemical environment where two religions, namely, Judaism and Christianity, were offering competing claims to be the legitimate heirs of the faith of Second Temple Judaism, and by extension true heirs of Israel and her inheritance.

The current study suggests that this background supplies the *raison d'être* for the transformations that take place through translation (which includes the presence of original elements as well as omissions) in *Passio* as the Maccabean brothers are re-remembered. A "transformation" is loosely defined here as changes, linguistic or otherwise, that occur in translation from a source text to a target text, with the "core" of the text being preserved. Stated otherwise, a transformation is a shift in meaning made during translation that is not simply the result of obligatory linguistic factors or translation technique.[18] However, we are not primarily concerned with analysing the translation technique of *Passio*, or even necessarily how *Passio* reworks the general narrative of 4 Maccabees, but rather how and for what ends *Passio* introduces its ubiquitous and highly ideologically or exegetically motivated renderings.

Since space does not permit an in-depth discussion of each particular instance, a synthesis of commonly perceived patterns and trends will be offered. Again, our goal is to identify the "Christian sense" of how the Maccabean brothers are re-remembered. This study submits that it is most manifest in: (1) the tendency to lessen the distinctly Law observant features, and accordingly emphasize an interiorizing attitude toward religion and piety; and (2) to de-emphasize, omit, or replace the formal and exterior aspects of Law obedience.

The ubiquitous "law language" of 4 Maccabees is often simply omitted (nine

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University of California Press, 1998) who argues the opposition was less "Greek" culture, but more "the common way of life."

17 This "sense" turns out to be similar in many ways to Bhabha's notion of "hybridity" in postcolonial studies (especially with the Christian claim to be the true recipients of God's covenant with Israel), which is when the productions of colonial power adapt and reshape the colonized subject. See Homi Bhabha. *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994; reprint, London: Routledge Classics, 2006), 159.

18 This definition is based on the work of Theo A. W. van der Louw in *Transformations in the Septuagint: Towards an Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies* (Leuven; Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2007), 304. Note also that an original element is considered to be an element that is not derivative in character from 4 Maccabees.

instances are noted),[19] or a term that does not focus narrowly on Law obedience is used instead (12 instances are noted).[20] Notably, the priest Eleazar's expertise in the Law (4 Macc 5:4: τὴν ἐπιστήμην νομικός ["a lawyer by profession"])[21] is replaced with a fear of God (*Passio* 5:2: *disciplinae timoris Dei artibus eruditus* ["educated in the arts of the learning of the fear of God"]). The ideas of *cultus* ("reverence") and *veneratio* ("veneration") are stressed in *Passio* 17:6–7 in contrast to the praising of athletes contending for τῆς θείας νομοθεσίας ("the divine law code") in 4 Macc 17:16. In 4 Macc 18:10 the education of the sons in the Law is notably omitted from their education in *Passio* 18:10. And finally the guardianship of the Holy Spirit is explicitly mentioned in *Passio* 15:22, which replaces the guardianship of the Law in 4 Macc 15:32.[22]

In this connection, there is a noticeable lessening of distinctly ethnic Jewish elements. For example, the term ἔθνος, which refers to the nation of Israel in 4 Maccabees, often lacks correspondence (like, e.g., the standard equivalent *gens*) in *Passio* (nine instances are noted).[23] Accordingly, in 4 Macc 4:19 ἔθνος ("nation") is rendered as *omnes* ("all") in *Passio* 4:19; λαός ("people") in 4 Macc 4:26 is rendered as *omnes* in *Passio* 4:25; and γένος ("race") in 4 Macc 17:10 has no corresponding elements in *Passio* 17:10. Quite telling is the rendering of ἔθνος in 4 Macc 4:18 with *gentis Iudaeorum* ("the nation of the Jews") in *Passio* 4:19 as it reveals that the identification of ἔθνος with the Jewish people is not a given. And in the addition in *Passio* 17:2 (vis-à-vis 4 Macc 17:2), presumably being the original work of the author(s) of *Passio*, there is a universalizing element that over-

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19 Cf., *Passio* 1:30–31 / 4 Macc 1:34–35; *Passio* 6:23 / 4 Macc 6:21; *Passio* 6:30 / 4 Macc 6:30; *Passio* 7:11 / 4 Macc 7:11–13; *Passio* 8:8–10 / 4 Macc 8:7; *Passio* 9:2 / 4 Macc 9:2; *Passio* 9:29 / 4 Macc 9:29; *Passio* 11:5 / 4 Macc 11:5; and *Passio* 11:12 / 4 Macc 11:12. Note that all 4 Macc references are based on Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta. Id est Vetus Testamentum grace iuxta LXX interpretes. Editio altera quam recognovit et emendavit Robert Hanhart* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006).

20 For example, εὐνομία in 4 Macc 3:20 is rendered as *prudentia* in *Passio* 3:20, θρησκεία in 4 Macc 4:13 is rendered as *fides* in *Passio* 5:14, εὐνομία in 4 Macc 4:24 is rendered as *mens pura credentium* in *Passio* 4:24, ὁ νόμος ἡμῶν in 4 Macc 5:18 is rendered as *tradita nobis a patribus consuetudo* in *Passio* 5:18, τὸν νόμον in 4 Macc 5:29 is rendered as *mysteria sacrosancta* in *Passio* 5:29, παιδευτὰ νόμε in 4 Macc 5:34 is rendered as *fundamentum salutis* in *Passio* 5:34, νομίμου βίου ἡλικίαν in 4 Macc 5:36 is rendered as *disciplinam* in *Passio* 5:36, νομίμως φυλάσσοντες in 4 Macc 6:17 is rendered as *viam salutis* in *Passio* 6:18, τοῦ πατρῴου νόμου in 4 Macc 16:16 is rendered as *a Deo merita* in *Passio* 16:8, πείθεσθε τῷ νόμῳ in 4 Macc 18:1 is rendered as *in hac pietate durate* in *Passio* 18:2, and in *Passio* 18:10 the zealot Phineas is not mentioned in the list of scriptural figures. In addition, in *Passio* 9:15 *caritas* is added to the Law, in contrast to 4 Macc 9:15 where "love" is not mentioned.

21 Translations of Greek 4 Maccabees are taken from S. Westerholm, "4 Makkabees," in A. Pietersma and B. G. Wright, ed., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 2009). All translations of *Passio* are my own.

22 New Testament theological precedents for this can be found in, e.g., Acts 2:28; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Gal 4:6; and 1 Tim 4:6.

23 The uses of ἔθνος that lack a correspondence in *Passio* are 4 Macc 1:11; 3:7; 4:1, 7, 24; 7:11; 9:24; 17:8, and 20.

shadows the Jewish ethnic element, since admiration is said to come not just from *genti nostrae . . . , sed saeculo* ("from our nation . . . , but from the world")[24]

Though not our primary concern, but worthy of note, *Passio*'s "Christian sense" is also manifest in certain New Testament allusions. For example, the phrase "*sciebat cui se crederet*" in *Passio* 6:6 mirrors the language of 2 Tim 1:12. The language of *Passio* 9:23 mirrors that of Luke 1:52, Acts 5:29, and 2 Tim 2:4. In the addition of *Passio* 10:18 (vis-à-vis 4 Macc 10:18) the phrase "*scit omnia antequam postulemus*" mirrors the language of Matt 6:8 (which itself echoes Isa 65:24). And the designation of the mother as "*Dei ancilla*" in *Passio* 16:6 mirrors the designation of Mary in Luke 1:38.

Finally, the "Christian sense" of *Passio*'s re-remembering the Maccabean martyrs is also manifest in overtly Christian additions. For example, the brothers are called *militum Christi*, "(of) soldiers of Christ" in *Passio* 1:9, and *Passio* 18:18 ends the work with a Trinitarian formula.

In all, in addition to the "Christianizing elements" referred to above, the lack of text-critical distinctiveness, as well as the periphrastic nature of the author(s) translation technique, is characteristic throughout. This suggests that *Passio*'s exegetical relevance pertains more to a Christian theological reflection of re-remembering the Maccabean martyrs than to straightforward interpretive variants of 4 Maccabees, making them apropos for our inquiry.[25]

Conclusion

In conclusion, who are the Maccabean brothers in 4 Maccabees in contrast to the Maccabean brothers in *Passio*? How are these Maccabean brothers remembered in 4 Maccabees in contrast to their "re-remembered selves" in *Passio*? In 4 Maccabees they are Law observant Jews. They are nationalist heroes who endured persecution unto death. They are guardians of the Law. They are faithful to their father, who educated them in the Law and the Prophets. Such were the models of faith and piety that Second Temple Jews sought in light of their situation of resisting empire and cultural assimilation.

Who are the Maccabean brothers in *Passio*? They are soldiers of Christ. They are ascetics who despised fleshly concerns and overcame their passions. They are models of pious reason for every people and nation to emulate. They are guard-

24 In addition to these, in *Passio* 18 the mother is responsible for the sons' religious education, unlike 4 Macc 18 where the father is responsible. This switching of roles may reflect a Christianizing element, where mothers and virgins are praised for rearing and educating their sons.

25 A few minor observations deserve mention. A certain factual error appears to have been corrected. In 4 Macc 4:15 Antiochus is called the son of Seleucus, when he was in fact his brother. *Passio* 14:15 simply states Antiochus ruled when Seleucus died. And in 4 Macc 17:24 it is grammatically ambiguous as to what the pronoun αὐτούς refers, namely, Antiochus's soldiers or the Hebrews. The footnote in NETS reads αὐτούς to refer to his soldiers, whereas in *Passio* 17:10 Antiochus clearly gathers Hebrew soldiers to fight for him.

ians of the Spirit. They are faithful to their mother, who educated them, and who is a figure of Mary. Such were the models of faith and piety that Christians needed: Christians who were no longer resisting empire and assimilation, but instead embarking on molding a new world of Christendom, which would become the dominant culture of the Roman Empire, and its later successors.[26]

As we consider how the Maccabean brothers were remembered and re-remembered[27] as models to be emulated or revered, I conclude here by posing several questions for further reflection. How do contemporary communities properly (ethically) go about the process of remembrance? For exactly what ends and purposes should this be done? What is it about our communities that should not be forgotten? Indeed, how do we want to shape our identity for future generations?

As the contemporary church is confronted with its own daily challenges and potentially catastrophic changes, I submit that such questions are highly significant, and yet perhaps insufficiently contemplated by many communities of faith. The need for "remembrance" as integral to identity formation is surely no less a concern in today's world than it was for the early Jewish community that gave rise to 4 Maccabees, or the early Christian church that creatively transformed this text in *Passio*. As those who produced *Passio* strove to pass down appropriate models of Christian faith and piety to the next generation, it is equally incumbent upon today's church to seek ethical and otherwise responsible ways to do the same.

26 This is not meant in any way to exculpate early Christians of anti- or allosemitic productions of power. See the discussion of Josyln-Siemiatkoski, *Christian Memories of the Maccabean Martyrs*, 167–74, on "ethical remembrance."

27 To be sure, this is *not* to imply that the dynamic process of remembering and re-remembering can be delineated into neat, distinguishable stages, or anything of the sort.

God's Loyal Opposition: Psalmic and Prophetic Protest as a Paradigm for Faithfulness in the Hebrew Bible[1]

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Abstract

In contrast to the posture of unquestioning submission to God that informs spirituality in many faith traditions, the Hebrew Bible assumes a stance of vigorous protest towards God as normative. This essay investigates the theology underlying the stance of the petitioner in lament/complaint prayers in the Psalter and the prophetic model of intercession on behalf of the people (with Moses as prime exemplar). In light of the background of expostulation with the divine as a mode of faithfulness, the essay briefly addresses the anomalous case of Abraham's silence in the Aqedah and the possibility that the book of Job might constitute an inner-biblical response, signaled by the use of the term "God-fearer" to characterize both Abraham and Job, and by the phrase "dust and ashes" found on the lips of both (and nowhere else in the Bible).

Personal experience is often generative of hermeneutical questions. In my case, a time of darkness regarding my vocation, and even my purpose, combined with doubt about God's goodness, led to the discovery of the psalms of lament in the Bible.

The Significance of Lament Prayer in the Bible

These psalms, comprising perhaps as much as one-third of the Psalter (on some counts), are the dominant form of prayer in the book of Psalms, indeed, the dom-

1 Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies, Calgary, AB, May 2016, and in the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures program unit of the Society of Biblical Literature, San Antonio, TX, November 2016.

inant genre of psalm.[2] It was the darkest of such psalms, the eighty-eighth, which precipitated a re-awakening of faith.

Psalm 88 as a Door to Hope

Most individual laments (which are more common in the Psalter than communal laments) are composed of sub-genres such as *complaint* (an honest description of what has gone wrong), *confession of trust* (an affirmation of the prior goodness of God), *petition* (the psalmist's request, even demand, that God intervene), and *vow of praise* (a commitment to respond appropriately after the intervention). However, Ps 88 is one of a few that omits the vow of praise. Since the psalm contains no explicit expectation of God's intervention, this would seem to be a prayer devoid of hope.[3] Yet that appearance would be deceptive.

Although Ps 88 is dominated by complaint, with no articulated expectation of God's intervention, and only one slender confession of trust near the start (where the psalmist names YHWH "God of my salvation"; Ps 88:2 [Eng. 1]), I found this psalm generative of hope.[4]

First, the psalm's articulation of darkness was appropriate to express the depths of my own experience. Anything more explicitly hopeful might have seemed Pollyannaish. And having prayed Ps 88 (and meditated upon its words), I found my own faith beginning to be reawakened. Indeed, it began to undergo a process of deepening.

This reawakening and deepening is certainly related to the sense of being part of a community, stretching back in time, of others who had analogous experiences to my own. Psalm 88 proved I wasn't alone.

Beyond joining the community of lament, hope was generated by the very presence (indeed, dominance) of this form of address to God in the prayer book of Israel and the Church. Given the status of this text as Scripture among believers, lament prayer could be taken as a normative model or paradigm that was serviceable in approaching God. This psalm (and the presence of other laments in the Psalter) gave me permission to articulate pain and need to God, to question God's goodness, and even to accuse God of complicity in my disorientation.

2 See Appendix B: "Index of Psalms According to Type" (219–24), in Bernhard W. Anderson, with Stephen Bishop, *Out of the Depths: The Psalms Speak to Us Today*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 2000 [1983]).

3 For an in-depth study of Ps 88, see Anthony R. Pyles, "Drowning in the Depths of Darkness: A Consideration of Psalm 88 with a New Translation," *Canadian Theological Review* 1/2 (2012): 13–28.

4 Unless otherwise noted, quotations from the Bible will be from the NRSV (one departure from such translations is that the tetragammaton will be rendered as YHWH). All italics in biblical quotations are my own emphases.

The Divine-Human Relationship Assumed in Lament Prayer

The presence and number of laments in the Psalter suggests that, in the consciousness of ancient Israel, God desires such prayer. Thus, beyond the sense of joining in an ancient community of lament, and beyond the modeling of such prayer in the canonical text, part of the empowerment of lament prayer may come from the divine-human relationship that it assumes.

As feminist theologian Cynthia Rigby proposes, in her essay on Ps 22, it may be the experience of having been heard by a *Thou* who is the transcendent Creator of the universe that emboldens the one praying. Rigby describes women in refugee camps in Latin America who pour their hearts out to God in classic lament prayer (combining complaint, trust, and petition). She notes that after prayer these very women are energized by hope and proceed to organize sanitation, childcare, and medical treatment for others in the refugee camp. That the Lord of the universe would host (even welcome) prayers that express pain and need, is what ultimately generates hope, and, with it, energy for creative living in the human community.[5]

The Honesty of Lament Prayer

Lament prayer, whether in the Psalter or elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, thus contains an implicit theological claim, namely, that God desires and welcomes honesty in the divine-human relationship. This honesty is evident in two parallel dual-pronged prayers of Jeremiah and Habakkuk.

Thus Jeremiah first affirms what is supposed to be true of God: "You will be in the right, YHWH, / when I lay charges against you." Then he supplements this affirmation with a complaint: "but let me put my case to you. / Why does the way of the guilty prosper? / Why do all who are treacherous thrive?" (Jer 12:1). Similarly, Habakkuk first confesses to God: "Your eyes are too pure to behold evil, / and you cannot look on wrongdoing" But then he boldly goes on to ask: "why do you look on the treacherous, / and are silent when the wicked swallow those more righteous than they?" (Hab 1:13). Both these prophets first acknowledge what is believed to be true of the God of Israel (equivalent to the confession of trust in the lament psalms); they then follow this up with a complaint, in the form of questions (which is also typical of lament psalms).

But as Ps 22 indicates, it is possible to begin immediately with complaint: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Likewise, Jeremiah's prayer in 20:7–18 opens with the accusation: "YHWH, you have enticed me, and I was enticed; / you have overpowered me, and you have prevailed." And Ps 88 exhibits an un-

5 Cynthia L. Rigby, "Someone to Blame, Someone to Trust: Divine Power and the Self-Recovery of the Oppressed," in *Power, Powerlessness and the Divine: New Inquiries in Bible and Theology*, ed. Cynthia L. Rigby (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 79–102.

relenting focus on complaint, implicating God personally in the suffering: "You have put me in the depths of the Pit, / in the regions dark and deep" (Ps 88:7 [Eng. 6]). "I suffer your terrors; I am desperate. / Your wrath has swept over me; / your dread assaults destroy me" (Ps 88:16b–17 [Eng. 15b–16]).

It is certainly not theologically correct to accuse God of evil. The question is, however, what to do with such thoughts in the case of one committed to YHWH. Thus the author of Psalm 39 begins by recounting his initial reticence, even refusal, to pray; and then goes on to explain the reason: "I was silent; I would not open my mouth, / for it is you who have done it" (Ps 39:10; [Eng. 9]; NRSV adapted). And such speech seemed improper. Yet in his newfound boldness, he petitions God: "Remove your stroke from me; / I am worn down by the blows of your hand" (Ps 39:11; [Eng.10]). And the psalm ends with the audacious request: "Turn your gaze away from me, that I may smile again" (Ps 39:14; [Eng. 13]).

The Expectation of God's Action in Lament Prayer

Not all lament prayers are as abrasive as Pss 88 and 39. Yet all laments call on God to intervene in some way. Granted, petition or supplication is mentioned in only one verse of Ps 88 (verse 3 [Eng. 2]). And neither Ps 88 nor Ps 39 contains a concluding vow of praise. Yet both psalms contain the implicit hope of God acting in accordance with the deepest needs of the psalmist.[6] The very point of voicing the complaint is to have God change the situation, to receive succor (in some form). In speech act theory, lament might be called an illocutionary speech act (which highlights the *intentions* of the speaker often beyond what is explicitly stated) with perlocutionary effects (which focuses on the *effect* of the speech on another party).[7]

The watchword of lament prayer is thus well articulated in the words of Joel 2:32. "Everyone who calls on the name of YHWH shall be saved." That these words are quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:21, and by Paul in Rom 10:13, suggests that lament, in the form of supplication, also finds a home in the New Testament.[8]

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6 Psalm 39 contains at least seven explicit petitions, in the form of imperatives to God: Deliver me from my transgressions (v. 9); do not make me the scorn of the fool (v. 9); remove your stroke from me (v. 11); hear my prayer (v. 13); give ear to my cry (v. 13); do not hold your peace at my tears (v. 13); turn your gaze away from me (v. 14). Verse numbering is from the Hebrew.

7 Although some have tried to restrict the application of speech act theory to oral discourse (claiming that it is inapplicable to written texts), there has been a significant movement against this restriction. Steven T. Mann not only argues for the application of speech act theory to written biblical materials, but shows the usefulness of such analysis in *Run David Run: An Investigation of the Theological Speech Acts of David's Departure and Return (2 Samuel 14–20)*, Siphrut 10 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013). See ch. 3 for his explicit argument, which includes interaction with the previous discussion, including other biblical scholars who have fruitfully applied speech act theory to biblical texts.

8 Patrick D. Miller, *They Cried Unto the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1994) shows that lament continues into the New Testament, esp. in ch. 3: "'They Cried to You': Prayers for Help." Although the focus of that chapter is the Old

Jesus's Teaching on Prayer

This is nowhere more evident than in the Lord's prayer, taught by Jesus as a model for his disciples (Matt 6:9–13; Luke 11:2–4). This prayer is constituted purely by supplication or petition from start to finish (this excludes the doxology added in later manuscripts to Matt 6:13 and used in the church's liturgy). Although the opening petitions are explicitly God-oriented ("may your name be sanctified," "may your kingdom come," "may your will be done on earth as in heaven"), such petitions are not purely disinterested, since the granting of them will positively affect the supplicant, who is associated with God's name and lives on earth.[9] And the prayer continues with requests for daily bread, forgiveness, preservation from testing, and deliverance from evil—all of which affirm the legitimacy of articulating human needs to God.

This focus on petition is congruent with two parables about prayer ascribed to Jesus, both of which fit the pattern of biblical laments.

In the parable of the importunate widow (Luke 18:1–8), prayer is compared to a widow who badgers a judge who has refused to give her justice (presumably because she is a relatively powerless person, without much status or influence). Her boldness and persistence in bringing her case to the judge until he enacts the justice due her is analogous, says Jesus, to the steadfastness (and I would add, audaciousness) required in asking God to meet our needs.

In the parable of the friend at midnight (Luke 11:5–8), prayer is compared to knocking on the door of a neighbor's house late into the night in order to ask for food to feed a visitor. The persistence required to get the neighbor to come to the door at that hour is analogous, says Jesus, to the steadfastness (and also the audaciousness) required in intercessory prayer.[10]

Both of these parables about prayer combine complaint with petition or supplication—the articulation of need with a request for help. The combination of humility and boldness required for such prayer is fundamentally an expression of trust in God (and leads to further trust, when practiced regularly).

Jesus himself embodies the lament tradition on the cross (Matt 27:46), when he prays Ps 22 from the depths of his suffering ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). But his lament prayer began earlier, in Gethsemane before his arrest. That Jesus can both honestly express his desire not to die ("Father, . . . re-

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Testament, Miller cites dimensions of lament in the New Testament. He continues the discussion in ch. 10: "'Teach Us to Pray': The Further Witness of the New Testament."

9 The translations of the petitions in Matt 6:9–10 are my own. Thanks to Rev. David Biberstein for his profound teaching on the Lord's Prayer when he was my pastor during my undergraduate theological studies in Jamaica.

10 This parable follows immediately on the Lukan version of the Lord's Prayer and is itself followed by the exhortation to ask, seek, and knock, with the assurance that God wants to give his children good gifts (Luke 11:9–13 par. Matt 7:7–11).

move this cup from me"), yet still affirm submission to God's purposes ("not my will but yours be done") suggests the requisite combination of boldness and trust characteristic of lament (Luke 22:42).[11]

Lament Prayer is Grounded in Trust in God

Whether or not such prayers (in the Psalter or elsewhere) explicitly include a confession of trust, it is clear they *depend implicitly* on such trust. The child of an abusive parent, cowering in the corner of a room, would not typically protest that parent's behavior or ask the parent to act differently. It takes a high degree of trust for a child honestly to voice criticism of a parent—whether that criticism is voiced in anger or only tremulously. The *sine qua non* of lament is thus a discernment of the character of God as one who desires and welcomes honesty, even abrasive and audacious honesty. This discernment may *motivate* one to pray with boldness. Or this discernment may *result* from the experience of such prayer (as was true in my case).[12]

In contrast to the posture of unquestioning submission to God that informs spirituality in many faith traditions (including the Christian tradition in which I was raised), the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (and even the New Testament) assumes a stance of honesty toward God in prayer as normative; and such honesty often borders on vigorous protest. The God of the Bible desires a dialogue partner with *chutzpah*.[13]

Lament and Healthy Ego Development

It is all too common in many churches that I have had experience of for believers to have absorbed the view that they must accept all calamities as the will of God and many think that they must suffer in silence or even affirm God's role in the calamities. But this stance of absolute submission to the divine will can be problematic.

The value of lament, with its boldness (and even resistance) toward God, not

11 For an in-depth exploration of lament in the New Testament, see Rebekah Ann Eklund, *Jesus Wept: The Significance of Jesus' Laments in the New Testament*; Library of New Testament Studies 515 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015).

12 Beyond my discovery of lament prayer in a time of personal darkness, years later I twice participated in a week of communal academic study shaped by Christian liturgy where a lament psalm was integrated into both morning and evening prayers. The *effect* of this regular hearing of words addressing God with the psalmist's troubles was to generate a deep sense of gratitude for God's attentiveness and mercy. My thanks to the Colossian Forum for these liturgical experiences in summer 2013 and 2014, which kicked off a multidisciplinary project published as *Evolution and the Fall*, ed. William T. Cavanaugh and James K. A. Smith (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017).

13 Belden C. Lane explores a Christian appreciation of the Jewish tradition of boldness in prayer in "*Hutzpa K'lapei Shamaya*: A Christian Response to the Jewish Tradition of Arguing with God," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 23 (1986): 567–86. Lane speaks of "an audacious faith, almost bordering on insolence" that is "especially prevalent in the rarefied air above Mt. Sinai" (567). The next section of this essay will address Mt. Sinai and the figure of Moses, who best exemplifies the attitude of "boldness towards heaven" (the *Hutzpa K'lapei Shamaya* of Lane's title).

as an alternative to submission, but in addition to submission, is illustrated by the account of personality development known as Object-Relations Theory, propounded by D. W. Winnicott and others. This theory suggests that the healthy ego-development of a child occurs when that child is first bonded in physical intimacy with its mother, which is the prime example of submission or surrender to a genuine Other outside of the self—hence the name Object-Relations Theory. Without this bonding, a child never learns to trust; and trust is essential both to healthy relationships in general and to the religious life in particular.

But Winnicott suggests that along with surrender, healthy ego-development also needs the experience of the child's *initiative* vis-à-vis the mother, to which the mother is responsive. She uses the metaphor of the child's experience of "omnipotence," which may be an overstatement, but it gets the point across. "A true self," Winnicott notes, "begins to have life through the strength given to the infant's weak ego by the mother's implementation of the infant's omnipotent expressions."[14] If the mother always initiates, and the child is simply compliant, it does not develop a strong ego, but rather a "false self," which then exposes the child later in life to the manipulations of others, including ideologies and fundamentalisms.

To apply this to the life of faith, let me cite Walter Brueggemann's words: "Where there is lament, the believer is able to take initiative with God and so develop over against God the ego-strength that is necessary for responsible faith. But where the capacity to initiate lament is absent, one is left only with praise and doxology. God then is omnipotent, always to be praised. The believer is nothing."[15] He goes on to note that: "The absence of lament makes a religion of coercive obedience the only possibility."[16]

This model of vigorous human agency vis-à-vis God, as a dialectic of resistance and submission, is well illustrated by Jesus as he contemplates his own death, and pleads, "Father, . . . remove this cup from me" (resistance), yet affirms "not my will but yours be done" (submission).

Prophetic Intercession in the Old Testament

God's desire for a vigorous dialogue partner is evident, beyond the lament psalms, in prophetic prayers of intercession, pre-eminently in the case of Moses (regarded as the paradigmatic prophet). Intercession is related to lament as *one particular form* of such prayer, one that is characterized by supplication or petition *on behalf of another*.

14 D. W. Winnicott, *The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development* (Madison, WI: International Universities Press, 1965), 145.

15 Walter Brueggemann, "The Costly Loss of Lament," in *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 103.

16 Brueggemann, "The Costly Loss of Lament," 104.

Moses's Intercession at Horeb

The paradigmatic episode of Moses's intercession is his prayer at Horeb on behalf of the people in the aftermath of the golden calf in Exod 32–34.[17]

Particularly important for our purposes is that it is *God* who initiates the move toward intercession. God signals to Moses that he is angry with the people for their idolatry, which constitutes a breach of the covenant (the second commandment had prohibited constructing and worshipping an image, even of YHWH, which seems to have been the function of the calf). However, God is not yet angry enough to destroy them. So he (somewhat ironically) tells Moses to leave him alone so that his anger may grow sufficiently for that purpose (Exod 32:9), which gives Moses the dialogical space to intercede for the people.

In a series of intercessions,[18] Moses persuades God not to destroy the people (Exod 32:11–13), with the result that God changes his mind (or "repents") of the evil he had planned (32:14). Moses then persuades God to forgive (or bear with) their sin (32:31–32) so that the covenant relationship can be maintained, and he convinces God to accompany them on the wilderness journey instead of simply sending an angel (33:12–17; 34:8–9), which is portrayed as a distancing tactic due to God's anger, since this anger might break out if the divine presence were too near (33:2–3).

Finally, Moses asks to see God's glory (33:18).[19] And God accedes to Moses's request, telling him that all God's *goodness* (which seems to be a variant of *glory*) will pass before him, with the caveat that he cannot see this manifestation full on (God's "face"). So God will place Moses in a cleft of the rock face of the mountain and cover him so he sees God's "back" (33:19–23).

What is revealed about the meaning of the divine name YHWH in Exod 34:6–7, when God "passed before" Moses, is God's abundance of love (*ḥesed*) and compassion (*reḥem*), including the desire to forgive all categories of sin (while still bringing judgment for such sin). This summary of the divine character turns out to be the ground and basis for God inviting Moses's intercession in the first place.

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17 For classic studies of this key text, see R. W. L. Moberly, *At the Mountain of God: Story and Theology in Exodus 32–34*, JSOTSup 22 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1983); and Michael Widmer, *Moses, God, and the Dynamics of Intercessory Prayer: A Study of Exodus 32–34 and Numbers 13–14*, FAT 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004). Interestingly, while the first volume (above) was Moberly's doctoral thesis, the second was Widmer's, doctoral thesis, written under the supervision of Moberly. Widmer has also addressed Exod 32–34 in his more recent *Standing in the Breach: An Old Testament Theology and Spirituality of Intercessory Prayer*, Siphrut 13 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), ch. 3.

18 There are four, possibly five different intercessory prayers of Moses in Exod 32–34, depending how they are counted; multiple sources have evidently been used in this composite account.

19 I won't get into the debates about whether (and in what way) *kābôd* refers to God's "body." For that discussion, see Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); and Mark S. Smith, "The Three Bodies of God in the Hebrew Bible," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 134/3 (2015): 471–88.

Yet, while such intercession is made possible by God's gracious character, we should not downplay Moses's role, which is highlighted in Ps 106:23. "Therefore he [YHWH] said he would destroy them— / had not Moses, his chosen one, / stood in the breach before him, / to turn away his wrath from destroying them" (Ps 106:23).

Later, in Num 14, Moses will appeal to precisely what he learned about God from this disclosure at Horeb, when he cites God's mercy and forgiveness in his prayer for the people after they refuse to enter the land at Kadesh-Barnea (Num 14:13–19). And just as at Horeb, God again forgives their sin (14:20).[20] And there are other narrative accounts of Moses's continuing role of successful intercessor before YHWH on behalf of Israel during the wilderness journey.

As Rabbi Johanan is reported to have said (in *Bereshit Rosh HaShanah* 17b) about the revelation of God's character in Exod 34:

> Were it not written in the text, it would be impossible for us to say such a thing; this verse teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, drew his robe round Him like the reader of a congregation and showed Moses the order of prayer. He said to him: Whenever Israel sins, let them carry out this service before Me, and I will forgive them.[21]

The Prophetic Tradition of Intercession after Moses

Not only did Moses learn this lesson, but intercession becomes part of the prophetic tradition, as various prophets stand in the breach between God and the people, bringing a divine word of challenge and repentance to the people *while defending them before God in prayer*, trying to avert judgment for as long as possible. As Mark Boda puts it with reference to Hosea: "the prophet functions mediatorially, challenging both covenant partners, whether Yahweh (9:14) or the people (14:3b–4 [Eng. 2b–3])."[22] And in association with prayers embedded in the first chapter

20 Psalm 51 also appeals (indirectly) to the paradigmatic example of God's forgiveness in Exod 32–34. For analysis of specific language from Exod 34:6–7 that the psalm uses, see J. Richard Middleton, "A Psalm against David? A Canonical Reading of Psalm 51 as a Critique of David's Inadequate Repentance in 2 Samuel 12," chap. 2 in *Explorations in Interdisciplinary Reading: Theological, Exegetical, and Reception-Historical Perspectives*, ed. by Robbie F. Castleman, Darian R. Lockett, and Stephen O. Presley (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2017), 26–45.

21 *The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Mo'ed*, ed. and trans. Isidore Epstein (London: Soncino, 1938), 4:68. This midrash is based on (among other things) the statement in the text that God "passed before" Moses (in later Rabbinic tradition a person leading prayers was said to "pass before" the leader's stand).

22 Mark J. Boda, "A Deafening Call to Silence: The Rhetorical 'End' of Human Address to the Deity in the Book of the Twelve," chap. 9 in *The New Form Criticism and the Book of the Twelve*, ed. Mark J. Boda, Michael H. Floyd, and Colin M. Toffelmire, ANEM 10 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2015), 187 (entire article 183–204). This was Boda's 2014 presidential address to the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies.

of Joel, Boda explains the sort of divine-human relationship that is assumed: "For the readers of this prophetic book these words [referring to Joel 1:15a, 19–20; 2:17] are reminders that the deity is open to hearing the verbal response of the community."[23]

Indeed, Jeremiah is so persistent in pleading for the very people that he has been challenging with the prophetic word, that God has finally to tell him *not* to intercede any more (Jer 7:16; 11:14; 14:11; cf. 15:1), since the people are too far-gone and judgment has become inevitable (in the form of the approaching Babylonian armies). Intercession is so crucial to the prophetic vocation that Ezek 13:5 lists *lack* of intercession as part of the accusation against false prophets (Ezek 13:1-16), while in Ezek 22:30, YHWH laments: "I sought for anyone among them who would repair the wall and stand in the breach before me on behalf of the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one."

This prophetic role, traceable back to Moses, is described by George Coats in a famous 1977 essay as "The King's Loyal Opposition."[24] A similar phrase shows up in Woody Allen's movie *Stardust Memories* (1980), where Allen's character quips: "To you, I'm an atheist. To God, I'm the loyal opposition."[25] The case of Moses and the prophets, combined with the lament psalms, shows that such opposition is not automatically a form of atheism, but may well be a mode of faithfulness to the God of Israel.[26]

Elijah as Anti-Moses

In the light of the tradition of prophetic prayer, Elijah's refusal to intercede for the people after the Mt. Carmel episode stands out in high relief.

Having defeated the prophets of Baal in the famous contest (1 Kgs 18:20–40),

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23 Boda, "A Deafening Call to Silence," 191. Without claiming that all Old Testament prophets engaged in intercession, Boda's nuanced literary reading of the Book of the Twelve, in tandem with Michael Widmer's previously cited *Standing in the Breach*, shows that intercession was indeed a significant part of prophetic activity in the Bible. For an alternative position, see Samuel E. Ballentine, "The Prophet as Intercessor: A Reassessment," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103/2 (1984): 161–73.

24 George W. Coats, "The King's Loyal Opposition: Obedience and Authority in Exodus 32–34," in *Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology*, ed. Burke O. Long and George W. Coats (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 91–107.

25 These words are spoken by Woody Allen's character (Sandy Bates) in Allen's autobiographical movie, *Stardust Memories* (1980).

26 The sort of vigorous prayer exemplified in psalmic lament and prophetic intercession is grounded in nothing less than the character and promises of God. Thus Coats highlights that in the case of Moses's plea for YHWH not to destroy the people in Exodus 32, "the intercession intends to persuade God to pursue the initial aim, to act in consistency with his own promise" (Coats, "The King's Loyal Opposition," 98). Similarly, Samuel E. Ballentine speaks of lament as "Holding to God against God"; Ballentine, *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible: The Drama of Divine-Human Dialogue*, OBT (Minneapolis: Augsbug Fortress, 1993), 146. And Claus Westermann describes Job's lament as follows: "He clings to God against God"; Westermann, "The Role of Lament in the Theology of the Old Testament," *Interpretation* 27/1 (1974): 32 (entire article 20–38).

Elijah then flees for his life before a threat from Jezebel (1 Kgs 19:1–3). When he arrives in the wilderness near Beersheba he prays that he might die (19:4). Succored by an angel with food for the journey to Horeb, he arrives forty days later and spends the night in a cave (19:5–9a). To be in a cave at Horeb already begins to have resonances of Exod 34.[27]

Twice God asks him: "What are doing you *here*, Elijah?" (1 Kgs 19:9b and 13b). That is, why are you at Horeb? And twice Elijah gives the same reply. "I have been very zealous for YHWH, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. *I alone am left*, and they are seeking my life, to take it away" (1 Kgs 19:10 and 14).

Moses, by associating himself with the people, despite their idolatry, refused to allow God to destroy Israel and begin again with him (Exod 32:10–14, 31–32; Num 14:12–20).[28] Elijah, however, *disassociates* himself from the people ("I alone am left"), thus opening the way for their destruction. Indeed, Elijah's myopic vision has to be corrected by God, who explains that there are *seven thousand* who have not bowed the knee to Baal (1 Kgs 19:18) and who will therefore be spared destruction—but not because of Elijah's intercession, which is simply absent.[29]

But there is another, equally significant contrast between Moses and Elijah in the two episodes at Horeb. Right after Elijah's first response of "I alone am left" (19:10), God tells him to "come out" of the cave "and stand on the mountain before YHWH" because God is about to "pass by" (19:11), a clear allusion to God causing his goodness to "pass by" in Exod 33:19.

I won't get into the issue of how to translate *qôl dĕmāmâ daqqâ* (whether "a still small voice" [KJV], "a soft murmuring sound" [NJPS], "a gentle whisper" [NIV]), or "a sound of sheer silence" [NRSV]). The point is that God was present in a mode different from the theophany at Sinai that Moses witnessed (that one had been accompanied by fire, earthquake, and storm).

But beyond the difference in the manifestation of God's presence, we find contrasting attitudes of Moses and Elijah to the event. In the first case *Mose*s is the one who asked God to show him his glory, and God placed him in a cleft of the rock. But not only does *God* initiate the manifestation of his presence to Elijah, God tells him to come *out* from the cave. And when Elijah hears the *qôl dĕmāmâ daqqâ*, which signified YHWH presence, he did come out, at least to the *entrance* of the cave, but "he wrapped his face in his mantle" (1 Kgs 19:13), in essence averting his eyes.

Could Elijah's lack of intercession for the people be related to his inability to

27 We are not told why he is going to Horeb, or whether it was by his decision or at God's instruction.
28 In Exod 33:16 Moses twice uses the phrase "I and your people," to make it clear he stands with the people.
29 YHWH does not bother to correct Elijah that it was Jezebel, and not the Israelites, who had thrown down his altars.

face God? Moses, after all, was one to whom God spoke "face to face," as one speaks to a friend (Exod 33:11).[30] Elijah, it turns out, lacked the requisite boldness to stand up either to Jezebel or to YHWH. Thus he is decommissioned from being a prophet, and told to appoint a successor, the only prophet ever given such instructions.[31]

The requisite boldness in approaching God is addressed in a ninth-century Rabbinic midrash that recounts the Queen of Sheba testing Solomon for his wisdom. In one of the tests she devises, "Solomon must distinguish between Israelites and non-Israelites in a homogeneous-looking group. To do so, he rolls back the curtains of the Holy of Holies to reveal before their eyes the ark of God. The non-Israelites prostrate themselves face-down entirely, but the Israelites bow at the waist *so they can crane their necks and see*."[32]

Based on this midrash, Moses is the true Israelite, while Elijah's reticence may be thought of as falling short of the Israelite ideal.

Abraham in Genesis 18 and 22

In contrast to Elijah's reticence we have the example of Abraham's bold intercession with YHWH in Gen 18, where he pleads on behalf of the inhabitants of Sodom, motivated (implicitly) by the fact that Abraham's nephew Lot is living there.[33] This episode of intercession prompts YHWH to tell Abimelech two chapters later that Abraham "is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live" (Gen 20:7).[34]

Abraham's prophet-like intercession on behalf of Lot/Sodom is the longest episode of his verbal interaction with God recorded in Genesis (18:16–33), and the subsequent rescue of Lot from Sodom (Gen 19) is one of the longest narratives in the Abraham story.[35] The significance of this extraordinary episode corres-

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30 And according to Num 12:8, God and Moses speak "mouth to mouth" (my translation).

31 On Elijah's failure at Horeb in the context of the prophet's dual loyalty (to God and the people), see Reuven Kimelman, "Prophecy as Arguing with God and the Ideal of Justice," *Interpretation* 68 (2014): 17–27 (esp. 25–26). For a consideration of the larger context of the proper attitude of anyone who would enter the divine presence and "see God" (namely, proper boldness combined with genuine humility), see Simeon Chavel, "The Face of God and the Etiquette of Eye-Contact: Visitation, Pilgrimage, and Prophetic Vision in Ancient Israelite and Early Jewish Imagination," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 19 (2012): 1–55 (p. 38 on Elijah).

32 Chavel, "The Face of God and the Etiquette of Eye-Contact," 52 (emphasis added). This episode is found in *Midrash Mishle*. See Burton L. Visotzky, *The Midrash on Proverbs: Translated from the Hebrew, with an Introduction and Annotations*, YJS 27 (New York; London: Yale University Press, 1992), 19.

33 The issue in the case of Abraham is the boldness required to address (and even challenge) God, not simply to "see" God or stand in the divine presence (God often appears in ordinary human form in the Genesis stories).

34 Interestingly, Abimelech uses language similar to Abraham's when he asks: "Lord, will you destroy an innocent [*ṣadîq*] people?" (Gen 20:4). Abraham had asked: "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous [*ṣadîq*] with the wicked?" (Gen 18:23).

35 Only the story of the finding of a wife for Isaac is longer (Gen 24).

ponds in an important way to the story of Moses's intercession after the idolatry of the golden calf.

A Teaching Moment for Abraham

When God tells Moses to leave him alone so that he may become angry enough to destroy the people, this serves to create space for Moses to intercede on their behalf; and the story ends with Moses learning about YHWH's mercy. This learning opportunity in Exod 32 is prefigured in Gen 18, where three "men" visit Abraham's camp and predict that Sarah will have a son. Two of the "men" (angels, it turns out) depart for Sodom, while the third, which turns out to be YHWH himself, remains, for he has something he wants to tell Abraham.

God muses to himself: "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?" (Gen 18:17)—that is, concerning the cry of Sodom that has come to him. And God decides to inform Abraham of this cry in order that "he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of YHWH by doing righteousness and justice" (Gen 18:18–19).

When God tells Abraham that he is going down to see if the cry he has heard from Sodom demands judgment (if not, I will know; Gen 18:20–21), Abraham over-interprets this to mean that God has already decided to destroy the city (where Lot is living).[36] No doubt this is partly due to the reputation of Sodom (already alluded to in Gen 13:10; and 14:21–24); but it is also likely due to Abraham's assumptions about the character of God, and what constitutes God's righteousness and justice.

But note, this is precisely what God wants to teach Abraham by revealing his intentions about Sodom. So if Abraham is to be equipped to instruct his children and his household in "the way of YHWH" so they will do "righteousness and justice," this means that Abraham must first *himself* be instructed in God's righteous ways. As with Moses at Horeb, the opportunity for intercession is a teaching moment for Abraham.[37]

What Is Revealed by God's Responses to Abraham?

Abraham does, indeed, intercede on Sodom's behalf, upbraiding God for unjustly planning to destroy the righteous or innocent with the wicked; he challenges God

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36 For a lucid analysis of Abraham's misread of the situation, see Nathan MacDonald, "Listening to Abraham—Listening to Yhwh: Divine Justice and Mercy in Genesis 18:16–33," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 66 (2004): 25–43.

37 The "way of YHWH" that God wants Abraham to learn, so that he may teach his children and household, could be read in light of Exod 32:8, where YHWH tells Moses that in constructing the calf the people "have turned aside from *the way* which I commanded them" (referring to the moral path they should have taken); it could also be read in light of Moses's request to God in Exod 33:13 to "show me *your ways*" (which, in context, are ways of mercy).

despite being, as he puts it, merely "dust and ashes" (Gen 18:27). In a series of requests, that God save the city, initially for the sake of fifty righteous, which he eventually ratchets down to ten (as his last offer), Abraham tests the extent of God's mercy; and God accedes to each request (Gen 18:23–33).

As Jer 5:1 suggests, God would forestall destruction of the city for just *one* righteous person. That Abraham stops at ten, however, suggests that he hasn't fully plumbed the depths of divine mercy.[38] Nevertheless, God rescues Lot and his family (Gen 19:12–23), even though Abraham hadn't thought to ask for that outright.

Abraham's Strange Silence in Genesis 22

Given the pervasive understanding of vigorous prayer in the Hebrew Scriptures as normative for God's dialogue partners—which grounds the boldness of the psalmists in their laments and the intercessory prayers of the prophets—it is striking to encounter Abraham's lack of protest when God asks him to sacrifice his son in the famous story of the Aqedah (Gen 22:1–19).[39] Against the background of lament and intercession (which I have termed "God's Loyal Opposition"), Abraham's silence stands out as anomalous. This raises the obvious hermeneutical question (obvious given this background): Why doesn't Abraham lament over—or intercede for—his son Isaac, in the wake of God's instruction to sacrifice him in Gen 22:2? *There*, in the Aqedah, is a "deafening silence," if there ever was one.[40]

Whereas Elijah in 1 Kgs 19 is differentiated from Moses, Abraham in Gen 22 stands in contrast not only with Moses but also with his own prior intercession on behalf of Sodom in Gen 18. Abraham's silent and unquestioning attempt to sacrifice his own son, broken only by the single word *Hinnēnnî* ("Here I am") addressed to God (once before the command in Gen 12:1, once after the command is rescinded in 22:11), seems to be validated by the angel's announcement on behalf of YHWH: "now I know that you are a God-fearer" (Gen 22:12).[41]

From Abraham to Job

This (seeming) approval of Abraham's attempt to sacrifice his son stands in stark contrast to Job, who is certainly not silent vis-à-vis God, but who vocally protests his suffering.[42] That the term "God-fearer" is applied to both Abraham and Job

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38 Contra the speculations of commentators in the literature about why he couldn't go lower than ten.

39 Sometimes called the (near) sacrifice of Isaac in the Christian tradition, this story is known in the Jewish tradition as the *Aqedat Yitzak* (the Binding of Isaac) or simply as the *Aqedah* (the Binding), from the verb *'āqad* in Gen 22:9.

40 Playing with the title of Boda's article, "A Deafening Call to Silence."

41 My translation.

42 Abraham could also be contrasted with the midwives in Exod 1:17, who "*feared God*; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they *let the boys live*." The irony in juxtaposing these two texts is that God in Genesis 22 seems to be parallel to Pharaoh—which is jarring. If God

(Gen 22:12; Job 1:1, 8; 2:3) suggests a possible intertextual connection between them.[43] Beyond that, the significance of the phrase "dust and ashes," which occurs in the Bible *only* on the lips of Abraham and Job (Gen 18:27; Job 30:19; 42:6), calls for analysis of the relationship between Abraham's silence and Job's protest—and this does not even touch on the other intertextual connections between Abraham and Job that could be explored.[44]

These intertextual connections have led me to wonder, for some time now, whether the book of Job could be thought of as a commentary on Abraham, intentionally juxtaposing Abraham's ominous silence in Gen 22 with Job's vigorous speech toward God, which receives divine approval at the end of the book (Job 42:7–8).[45] Having previously tried out, in various scholarly settings, my own interpretations of the meaning of the Aqedah[46] and of God's response to Job,[47] this present paper lays a foundation for a new project comparing Job with the Aqedah in the light of the biblical background of vigorous expostulation with God.[48]

Given the biblical background of the sort of vigorous prayer that God desires (exemplified especially by Moses), perhaps we could end with a hypothetical (but heuristic) question: Suppose *Moses* had received the command to sacrifice his son? I wonder what *his* response might have been?

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is acting (or seems to be acting) like Pharaoh, then the one praying can be thought of as "God's loyal opposition." But Abraham does not protest.

43 The term "God-fearer" (*yĕrē' 'ĕlohîm*) is less common in the Hebrew Bible than the general idea of fearing God, though even that idea would constitute a significant intertextual link between Abraham and Job. Besides its usage in connection with Abraham and Job, the specific phrase *yĕrē' 'ĕlohîm* (with *yr'* pointed as an adjective) is found only in Eccl 7:18. The term "YHWH-fearer" is likewise rare, occurring in only five places (Ps 25:12; 128:1, 4; Prov 14:2; Isa 50:10).

44 For further intertextual connections, see Middleton, "Does God Come to Bury Job or to Praise Him? The Significance of YHWH's Second Speech from the Whirlwind," *St. Mark's Review* no. 239 (March 2017): 1-27. Also Judy Klitsner, *Subversive Sequels in the Bible: How Biblical Stories Mine and Undermine Each Other* (New Milford, CT, London, and Jerusalem: Koren Publishers; Maggid Books, 2001), xvii–xxxiii.

45 That Job might be a commentary on the Aqedah has been suggested by Klitsner in *Subversive Sequels in the Bible* and also in her later (2016) online article, "The Book of Job and its Paradoxical Relationship with the *Akedah*" (http://thetorah.com/the-book-of-job-and-its-paradoxical-relationship-with-the-akedah/). My own approach to the relationship between Job's lament and Abraham's silence is quite different from Klitsner's, judging by her (admittedly brief) comments.

46 To be published as "Unbinding the Aqedah from the Straightjacket of Tradition: An Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Abraham's Test in Genesis 22," in *Lament Rekindled*, ed. Matthew Anstey, Jeanette Matthews, and Peter Lockwood. First presented (under the title "How Abraham Lost His Son") as the Zenas Gerig Memorial Lecture at Jamaica Theological Seminary, Kingston, Jamaica, September 2012.

47 "Does God Come to Bury Job or to Praise Him?" (*St. Mark's Review*, 2017) was first presented at the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, May 2004; then as the Peter C. Craigie Memorial Lecture, sponsored by the Division of Humanities at the University of Calgary, November 2005.

48 Under contract with Baker Academic, with the title: *The Silence of Abraham, The Passion of Job: Explorations in the Theology of Lament.*

Theology on the Move: Discerning Global Shifts in Theological Thinking in the Global South[1]

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Abstract

The observable shift in the center of gravity of global Christianity in the 20th century from the West to the Global South and East has given rise to new voices from the church in the non-western world. These emerging new voices reflect new Christian scholarship, imbued with new understandings and expressions of Christian theology. As Christian scholars in the non-western world passionately engaged in theological reflection, producing several new and emerging theological formulations within the contextual realties of the Global South and East, fundamental questions arise as to whether or not these emerging theologies represent "theology on the move." That is, do they present new theological projects that are growing deeper in knowledge and understanding, furthering Christian thought and practice in its most basic, rigorously conceptual, and integral forms? If indeed the emerging theologies from the Global South and East suggest that theology is on the move, then each new expression requires investigation, dialogue, and critique, as they encounter and seek to find their place in the global Christian landscape.

This paper outlines five of these emerging theologies, *theology in the public square, theology of work, theology of child and childhood, theology of environment, and theology of suffering and hope*, and examines each in the light of Scripture, and in the light of global and contextual realities. The author believes that these five theological propositions from the Global South and East deserve some space in the global evangelical theological community after critical reflection and assessment.

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1 This article represents a lightly revised version of the keynote address given at the Canadian Evangelical Theological Association (CETA) Fall Conference held at Tyndale University College & Seminary, October 3, 2015.

Introduction: The Rise of the Global South

It is now part of conventional wisdom and an accepted fact of history that in the last century the size and shape of global Christianity significantly shifted from the Global North to the Global South. Historians and researchers from the North have been telling that story with profound insight and concession.[2] The Pew Research Centre (June 2011) estimates that there are now 2.2 billion Christians globally. According to Pew (2012), over 600 million are on the continent of Africa. This includes the phenomenal growth of global Pentecostalism, which comprises approximately one-third of the total Christian population today.[3] The projections are that by 2050 the number of Christians globally will be around 3 billion, with over 70% in the Global South and East and, as Philip Jenkins points out, "only around one-fifth or fewer will be non-Hispanic whites."[4]

As we move further along this historical trend, what is of interest now is to discern the significance of this major shift in global Christianity for the global church, and to try to draw some theological implications, particularly for global evangelicalism. For example, Todd Johnson of the Centre for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary has raised three important questions about this shift. First, will southern Christians challenge northern Christianity's 1,000-year dominance in theology and ecclesiology by producing their own reflections and practices, harkening back to the earliest Christian centuries when they were in the majority? Second, will the dominant languages of Christianity continue to shift south (already by 1980, Spanish was the leading language of church membership in the world, and Chinese, Hindi, and Swahili are increasingly important languages of Christianity)? Third, will the closer geographic proximity between Christians and Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists on balance result in greater conflict or dialogue? Taking all three of these questions into con-

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2 Todd Johnson, "Worldwide adherents of all religions by six continental areas," in *2013 Britannica book of the year* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2013); Todd Johnson, et al., ed., "The Demographics of World Mission and Christianity, 1910–2010," in *2010, Boston* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2012), 3–12; Phillip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, *"From Times Square to Timbuktu: The Post-Christian West Meets the Non-Western Church"* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013); "Global Survey of Evangelical Protestant Leaders" (The Pew Research Centre: www.pewforum.org.); Lamin Sanneh and Joel A. Carpenter, ed., *The Changing Face of Christianity: Africa, the West, and the World* (Oxford. Oxford University Press, 2005); Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996).

3 Wonsuk Ma, "A Global Shift of World Christianity and Pentecostalism," in *The Many Faces of Global Pentecostalism*, ed. Harold D. Hunter and Neil Ormerod (Cleveland, TN: CPT, 2013), 62–70.

4 Phillip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 9.

sideration, a central question remains: "How well will the new global Christianity navigate its increasingly diverse composition and southern majority?"[5]

Historians and researchers from the Global South and East have also been telling their story. They are attempting to point out meanings and implications of this new Christian reality for the global church from their vantage point.[6] Theologians in the Global South and East have come of age, and have now reserved the right to their own hermeneutical paradigms and applications of the gospel, amidst their own contextual realities. They have proceeded with formulations of their own contextual theologies.[7]

There are many new and emerging theological formations from the Global South and East. They warrant investigation, dialogue, and critique as they encounter and seek to find a place in the global Christian landscape. Do these emerging theological formulations, in fact, represent theology on the move in its most basic, rigorously conceptual, and integral forms? In this article I shall outline five of these emerging theologies in the Global South that I believe deserve consideration in the global evangelical theological community.

Theology in the Public Square

Theology as *public theology* emerges from significant questions that arise within the contextual realities facing the church in the Global South. Many of these churches were planted in a colonial environment and have now emerged in a postcolonial context. In this new socio-political environment, several new political and theological questions arise from daily encounters in church-state relations in these new societies. For example, one of the issues that arise is the challenge of nation-building. In the modern state today there is much debate over the kind of national political culture that should be encouraged and cultivated for social transformation and nation-building. Since it is true that "power corrupts and absolute

5 "Christianity in Global Context: Trends and Statistics," April 2013. Todd M. Johnson, Director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Prepared for the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life: http://www.pewforum.org/files/2013/04/051805-global-christianity.pdf.

6 Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "Africa and the Changing Face of World Christianity," presented at the Now and Next: Together in Mission/INFEMIT SUMMIT, Nairobi, Kenya, 6–9 March 2011; Julie Ma, *The Growth of Christianity in Asia and its Impact on Mission* (Oxford: Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, 2007); Wonsuk Ma, in "A Global Shift of World Christianity and Pentecostalism" in *Global Pentecostalism*, 62–70; Dieumeme Noelliste and Sung Wook Chung, ed., *Diverse and Creative Voices: Theological essays from the Majority World.* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015).

7 As Jenkins, *New Faces*, 17, points out: "Looking at the impact of the Bible in the Two-Thirds World—the choice of texts and the manner in which they are read—should remind Northern churches of aspects of the scriptural tradition that might have seemed lost, or—as in the case of the apocalyptic or healing—tainted beyond recovery. Fresh Southern readings help restore these traditions to their ancient centrality within Christian thought, but without the ultra-conservative implications that 'fundamentalism' has acquired in our own culture. The more exposure we North Americans and Europeans have of such readings, the harder it might be for us to approach that scripture in the same way again."

power corrupts absolutely," should the fight for state power in national politics be allowed to be corrupted by the "big man"? Can this fight be engaged only with "big money," or support from special interests? Is state politics the hegemony of the capitalist class that primarily seeks to protect its own interests? What about the role of Christian conscience? Is there public space for the church to exercise its prophetic role in the politics of nation-building? Can Christian thought and action be exercised in ways that allow for influence on the secular state? Does the Christian citizen have a right to actively demand good governance with fair and equitable public policy? What principles of governance should inform the formation of laws in society, especially with respect to germane issues such as human sexuality, definition of family, access to education, public health services, and fundamental rights and freedoms? What about the infringement and sometimes suppression of religious liberty within the state by state and non-state actors? What should the role of the church be in response to issues such as these?

The Public Square?

Public theology is not only about theology done in public. It is also about theology in relation to public life and society. The public square is that space in society that allows opportunity for open dialogue and debate on matters pertaining to the common life of citizens. As evidenced by Garnet Roper, president of the Jamaica Theological Seminary, in the Global South today public theology centers more on the relationship between faith and society, faith and the formation of public policy for the public good.[8] Public theology in the Global South is surrounded by and engages with the legacy and impacts of colonialism. It addresses issues such as the use and abuse of state power, the cultivation and support of a culture of corruption, and the existence of structural and persistent poverty that entraps the under-classes. It addresses economic exploitation, anti-democratic influence of "big money" in political campaigns, and, ultimately, the capacity of developing nation-states for effective self-governance. Living with these as daily realities, evangelical scholars and leaders of the church in the Global South have now been debating and producing scholarly materials on these issues.[9]

Public Theology in a Postmodern Culture

It must be acknowledged that one of the impacts of the culture of postmodernity is a push-back on the traditional influence of the Christian religion in the public square. This is being done in the name of cultural pluralism. Increasingly, Christianity is being aggressively relegated from the public domain to being a privatized

8 Garnet Roper, *Caribbean Theology as Public Theology* (Kingston: Jugaro, 2012).
9 Paul Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

and personal matter. A good example of this in the West is the assertion of Alastair Campbell, spokesman for the former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair. When asked about the Prime Minister's faith, he famously said, "*We don't do God*." That public statement was reflective of a zeitgeist of the modern secular western society that, to a large extent, has displaced religion from public life. Former Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, and his son Andrew, responded in their recent book using Campbell's words as the title. They write,

> There is a deep malaise in modern Britain about the role of faith in the public square. At times it seems a 'crusade' is being waged by the militant wing of secularism to eradicate religion in general—and Christianity in particular—from any role in public life. Yet this is only a small part of the story we tell during the course of this book. For the most part, the 'unease' with which modernity regards the public manifestation of faith arises out of ignorance, historical forgetfulness, and well-meaning but mistaken 'multiculturalism.' There is a hard-fought conflict between a secular spirit and the Christian faith.[10]

That "militant wing of secularism" of which the former Archbishop of Canterbury of speaks has been allowed to muzzle Christian conscience and the Christian voice in the West, and weaken its influence in the public square. The church, including the evangelical church, has been forced into retreat, and, in some cases, even into hiding. Some in the Global South speak of the church now as fully in "*Babylonish captivity*."[11]

The Church Fights Back

As the influence of this zeitgeist has spread to the Global South, impacting local culture, it has encountered new dimensions of Christian theology that is on the move, seeking to reestablish a credible and compelling religious voice in the public square. The church in the Global South is fighting back. It refuses to be silenced. It is embracing "public theology" as the theology for engaging in public

10 George Carey and Andrew Carey, *We Don't Do God: The Marginalization of Public Faith* (Oxford: Monarch Books, 2012).

11 Burchell Taylor, "The Babylonish Captivity of the Church," *CJRS* 4.1.2 (1982). This "captivity" affects the church in the Global South. From time to time debates rages in Jamaican society about the role of the church and its influence on society. In 2014, one of its national newspapers, the *Jamaica Observer* (Friday, March 21, 2014) reported on the churches' reaction to a proposed government policy to change the work-life habits of the labor force, "Churches angry; Slam Gov't over flexi week snub," to which several members of the public responded. One responder wrote, "Governments are elected to lead, and religion should be seen to be a private personal matter with appropriate places and times for worship. It is not acceptable to bring religion into the public sphere to be used as extortion, or blackmail."

discourse on issues that affect the public good. For example, in 2015 the country of Singapore celebrated its 50th anniversary as a nation. As part of this celebration the Singapore Centre for Global Missions (SCGM) organized a Prayer Breakfast at the St. Andrews Cathedral, and focused on the topic, "The Gospel in the Public Square." The keynote speaker, a theologian of the East Asia Theological Seminary (EATS) in Singapore, Dr. Kwa Kiem Kiok, argued for the role of theology in the public space. Others in Asia, such as Methodist Bishop Hwa Yung of Malaysia, have been advocating a "theology of nation-building," seeking to retain and further build on Christianity's historical influence in shaping thought and life in the public arena.

In Africa, an Assemblies of God Bishop, Joshua Banda of Zambia, has been at the forefront in helping to create national policy on HIV/AIDS, and shaping constitutional reforms.[12] His views and voice in Southern Africa are heard all the way to the United Nations in New York. In Francophone Africa, Assemblies of God Pastor Philippe Ouedraogo, who founded the Evangelical Association for Social and Economic Development (AEAD) in Burkina Faso in 1988, has been championing sustainable development in the areas of education and literacy, youth and vocational training, agriculture and food security, animal resources, the promotion of women and gender issues, social action and national solidarity, economy and finance, as well as healthcare. AEAD projects amply demonstrate the practical dimensions of public theology and mission in the context of national development.[13]

In theological institutions on the continent of Africa there are now five such institutions that are part of a global network for public theology.[14] This network promotes academic research and partnerships, and invites theological contributions on public issues affecting the poor, the marginalized, and the environment. They offer broad perspectives on public theology within which dialogue takes place. For example, the Centre for Public Theology at the University of Pretoria argues that "public theology" is not about theologians or pastors "doing theology" in the public square. "Public theologians are the film directors, artists, novelists, poets, and philosophers."[15]

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12 See http://www.icofzam.org/index.php/81-our-leaders/african-leadership/206-bishop-joshua-h-k-banda.

13 See Philippe Quedraogo, *Female Education and Mission: A Burkina Faso Experience* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014).

14 These include: (1) Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa (contact Anlené Taljaard), http://academic.sun.ac.za/theology/centres.html#bnc; (2) Centre for Public Theology, University of Pretoria, South Africa (contact Etienne de Villiers), www.up.ac.za/; (3) Institute for Public Theology & Development Studies, University of Mkar, Nigeria (contact Godwin Akper), http://unimkar.edu.ng/; (4) Department of Religion and Theology, University of the Western Cape, South Africa (contact Christo Lombard), http://www.uwc.ac.za/.

15 Cf. Andries van Aarde, "What is 'Theology' in 'Public Theology' and What is 'Public' about 'Public Theology'?," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 64.3 (2008), 1213–34.

Public Theology and the Bible

In a sense, evangelical theology has been in the public square since the advent of Christ. He publicly incarnated his life-transforming gospel message in the first-century Roman Empire. His teachings about the dynamics of God's kingdom, and the new institution in society he inaugurated, the church, all took place publicly in the midst of burning social and political issues within the Empire. That Jesus's life and ministry represents "theology in the public square" is not least demonstrated by his public trial, condemnation, and execution by public authorities, in full public view. Those events generated great debates in the public square.

As the early Christian community sought to explain and account for the life and death of Jesus, as well as the truth claims of the message he proclaimed, they did so in open public arenas. They did so boldly and convincingly, at great risk to their own personal safety, even though public ideas, thoughts, and philosophies of life were daily discussions in Greco-Roman society. In the Aeropagus in Athens, for example, Paul was glad for the opportunity to bring evangelical theology into the public square for rational consideration and public debate (Acts 17:16–34). Although the mixed response to his Christian apologia, based on natural theology, was perhaps not what he anticipated, some did accept his arguments and became believers.[16] Paul's engagement in theological discourse in the public arena was not without an evangelistic concern. "Public theology," then and now, was and is not only about theology done in public, but also about theology as it affects public life and society.

The church in the Global South today has not only grasped the public dimension of the gospel, believing strongly that the gospel can engage the public square, it also seeks to establish the theological foundations of public theology in the tradition of the early church. The church in the Global South is doing theology that seeks to re-embolden the witness of the church in public life.

Theology of Work

Another emerging theology in the Global South is the *theology of work*. Throughout the Global South a small proportion of young, upwardly mobile professionals are innovating and creating new cultures, patterns, and systems of work. Whether in Bangalore, Nairobi, Accra, or Sao Paulo, encountering this new generation of upwardly mobile professionals is a refreshing and encouragingly hopeful sign. They are an impressive lot. On the other hand, however, a vast majority of youth

16 "Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, 'We will hear you again about this.' So Paul went out from their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them" (Acts 17:32–34). There are those who argue, however, that he was disappointed with his performance, and so he left Athens and went to Corinth with a different approach, a more Christocentric and evangelical approach.

in the Global South are daily wondering where they can find work. In a tight job market, stagnant economy, or failing state, what are they to do if they have no employment opportunity or hope of finding a job in their adult life?[17]

Throughout the Global South, the issues of poverty and high unemployment (and under-employment) are pervasive and very real problems for the church and society. There have been many responses to these problems by the state, by multi-lateral agencies, and by several non-governmental organizations. In Latin America, a theology of work (TOW) has been developed out of interaction with the poor and with graduates of university who struggle to find meaningful employment in society. Over the past 30 years, amidst concerns for the conditions of the poor, and from a period of Bible study and deep theological reflection on the issues of poverty, work, and employment, a TOW program has been developed. This program combines theological education and application to the needs of the poor in what is called "*mission integral*." Originally spearheaded by the Kairos Foundation in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the program is now driven by the Center for Interdisciplinary Theological Studies (CETI), which serves the entire continent. It began when Latin American evangelical leaders, including Rene and Caty Padilla, Samuel Escobar, and Pedro Arana, among others, were engaging university students and young urban Christian professionals who were determined to reach out to the poor, with a credible model of theological education that would serve the real needs of the poor. The program included a four-part curriculum, covering work, family, church, and society, as each having their place in life, and thus receiving the due attention they deserve in a full course of study and application. This curriculum is now being used not only in Latin America but also in Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America. The CETI program is offered in multiple levels—from a basic certificate level to the Master's level. The curriculum on work includes in-depth discussion on topics such as the relationships between faith and work, technology and poverty reduction, and consumerism and real human development.

In the Caribbean, a theology of work is emerging in surprising ways. Churches across the spectrum of denominations are experiencing a decline in the available pool of candidates for the pastoral ministry. This decline is being fueled by the perception, and sometimes the harsh reality, that the Christian Ministry as a voca-

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17 The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 47% of all unemployed persons globally are young women and men and 660 million young people will either be working or looking for work in 2015 (Ulrich Schoof, "Stimulating Youth Entrepreneurship: Barriers and Incentives to Enterprise Start-ups by Young People," ILO, 2006). In Jamaica there are high levels of youth and young adult unemployment. According to the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN), Jamaica's youth unemployment rate is currently 38.3% as at July 2014, close to three times the national average, which is at 13.8%. The age ranges measured for the youth population are 14–19 and 20–24 years.

tion is not economically viable, and therefore reduces the life chances of those who are called to it. Many in the pastoral ministry now engage in bi-vocational ministry. Pastors who are earnest about fulfilling the pastoral call are increasingly seeking additional employment that provides a viable financial basis on which to care for the needs of their family. At the same time, many churches are also engaged in some form of holistic ministry, or integral mission, attending to the welfare needs of the poor in their congregations and community. Pastors and people in general are struggling with the issue of work, its necessity and availability. In theological education, at least one Caribbean theological institution, the Caribbean Graduate School of Theology, has included TOW in its curriculum.

It was instructive and heartening to hear the remarks of Pope Francis, as he addressed New Yorkers in St. Patrick's Cathedral on September 24, 2015. In the city that, as Sinatra says, "never sleeps," Pope Francis, who is the first Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church from the Global South, challenged New Yorkers (and to an extent, the entire world, as many New Yorkers are from the Global South, North, and East) to come to grips with a theology of work that offers and secures a healthy work-life balance.

Francis received his ministerial formation in Buenos Aires, and was made the 266th Pope of the Roman Catholic Church on March 13, 2013. On his first visit to the United States, and his first visit to New York (of all places), he chose to speak about the value and meaning of work. "Work," he said, "was an expression of gratitude to God and service to others." He pointed out that work can mean self-sacrifice. That is, while it can be used as an act of self-enrichment, work is also a responsibility to community. Francis additionally warned about evaluating success by the standards of "spiritual worldliness," and further encouraged New Yorkers in the taking of rest. "We need to learn how to rest," he urged, as he pleaded for proper work-life balance.[18]

Theology of Work and the Bible

It is important to understand work from a biblical perspective. The Old and New Testaments are replete with theologies of work. Genesis begins with a portrayal of Yahweh as a worker who not only models work-life balance but who also demonstrates the value and significance of work as a creative enterprise. Likewise, the New Testament writers valorize work as a creative enterprise in which all human beings are invited to participate. In all, a biblical theology of work affirms:

1. Work is important, and has intrinsic value (Eccl 9:10; cf. Col. 3:23–24).
2. There is more to work than "living from paycheck to paycheck," or an

18 The full text of Pope Francis's address is available on the New York Times website: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/24/nyregion/pope-francis-homily-at-st-patricks-cathedral.html?_r=0

attitude that says, "I'm just trying to make a living." Rather, work fulfils humanity's "humanness," and is thus an integral part of life.

3. Human beings can experience joy, fulfillment, and meaning through work.
4. There is, however, a negative side to work that can undermine life. An unbalanced work-life relationship can destroy and bring "death." Work should not be the all-determining value of human identity and worth.

Thus, a theology of work is not just a philosophical exercise. It focuses on one of the deepest existential realities of human life, that is, how humanness is to be fully achieved. Work requires reflection on its true meaning and value—its theological and spiritual dimension as a human enterprise, especially in the demanding globalized marketplace of today's world.

Theology of Work, the Church, and the Working Poor

The modern world has experienced a series of revolutions in its recent history. Among them are the agrarian, industrial, cybernetic, and digital revolutions. The impacts of these revolutions, alongside the phenomena of urbanization, globalization, and commercialization of human productive activity, have all changed the meaning and value of work. It is in this context that the question arises: what is the future of work?[19] How does a theology of work help us to understand our place and purpose in the world?

A theology of work has become a necessity for emerging leaders of the church in the Global South. As the growing pressures of joblessness, poverty, social exclusion, and aging congregations affect the vibrancy and strength of church life, it is now becoming quite apparent that this theology is a necessity for all demographic sectors of society. For the church to respond meaningfully and in a comprehensive manner, it must re-examine its theology of work, developing new ways for work's intrinsic and therapeutic worth to find expression.

The new industrial revolution is delivering dramatic advancements in technology. However, the impact of this in the growth of the number of the working poor on the one hand, and the age of retirement on the other, brings new challenges to the nature and meaning of work. In some instances it is contributing to the nature of work and the workplace having to be re-imagined. For example, in trying to deal with the issue of joblessness and the need for job creation, especially among the youth, many states in the Global South are turning to the promotion of entrepreneurship as a way of encouraging new and creative forms of self-employment. The present global search for jobs thus presents an opportunity for the contempor-

19 This question has been around for decades, if not for centuries. See Fred Best, ed., *The Future of Work* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973). See also Leyland Ryken, *Work and Leisure in Christian Perspective* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1987).

ary evangelical church to demonstrate and apply its theology of work in creative ways. Accordingly, it is time that a biblical theology of work be a central focus in all our theological training institutions and church congregations.[20]

Theology of Child and Children

One of the most disturbing things on the planet today has been the way in which children and childhood are regarded and treated in society. On every continent, in many nations and communities, children are being traumatized, exploited, abused, trafficked, and murdered. The status of children is very low. Understandably, in the context of the reality facing children and childhood in the world today, particularly in the Global South, a third focus of emerging theologies is *Child Theology*.[21]

In 2005 the UNICEF global report, "Childhood under threat: The State of the World's Children 2005," offered a comprehensive report on the status of children at that time. The report stated:

> Children experience poverty as an environment that is damaging to their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual development. Children experience poverty with their hands, minds and hearts. Material poverty—for example, starting the day without a nutritious meal or engaging in hazardous labour—hinders emotional capacity as well as bodily growth. Living in an environment that provides little stimulation or emotional support to children, on the other hand, can remove many of the positive effects of growing up in a materially rich household. By discriminating against their participation in society and inhibiting their potential, poverty is a measure not only of children's suffering but also of their disempowerment.[22]

More than a decade later, has anything changed?

A devastating aspect of the current global refugee and migrant crisis has been its impact on children and families. The publicized graphic image of the little boy washed up on the beach in Turkey tells the sad story of children and families caught up in adult conflict and war in the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan, Nigeria, across Asia, and most cities in Latin America. So many other graphic

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20 The Caribbean Graduate School of Theology (CGST) in Jamaica has developed a new course in Christian Social Entrepreneurship (MBA/CSE) to bolster its MBA program, and add value and a unique dimension to business education and the historic Christian practice of business as mission. This study includes the contribution of the faith-based sector to GDP, and to the transformation of under-served communities, as recognized and affirmed by the state.

21 Cf. Keith White and Haddon Willmer, "An Introduction to Child Theology," http://www.childtheology.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Booklet-1-sample.pdf. The authors claim that the term "Child Theology" was first used in Penang, Malaysia in 2001.

22 https://www.unicef.org/sowc05/english/povertyissue.html. Accessed April 29, 2017.

images of children in crisis are in the public media today. The world has taken note of the recent bombings in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and the serious threat of devastating war in the Korean Peninsula. Millions of innocent children are being put at risk.

What of child poverty in Latin America, in Asia, Africa and the Middle East? In the Caribbean, the social phenomenon of "barrel children" is a very serious problem. This is a term coined by Dr. Claudette Crawford-Brown of the University of the West Indies, author of the book, *Children in the Line of Fire*.[23] It describes children who are abandoned by their parents as they seek a better economic life abroad and send remittances—i.e., barrels of supplies—for their children back home. Rooted in the history, legacy, and culture of violence from the days of Caribbean slavery in the 18th and 19th centuries, children in the Caribbean today suffer from significant vulnerabilities to domestic violence, child trafficking, abandonment and neglect, structural poverty, and early exposure to social violence and a culture of death.

I often draw attention to the monument in the city of Kingston where I live. The monument is in Justice Square, next to the Supreme Court and the Kingston and St. Andrew City Council. I call it, "Kingston's Monument of Shame." The monument was erected in 2008 in memory of children killed under tragic and violent circumstances. Over 1600 children have been murdered in the last decade. At the base of the monument are the names of some of these children placed in little plaques. There is no other city in the world that I know of where such a monument has been erected. Yet, who is not moved by the plight of children on the planet today, affected by war, poverty, disease, and the burdens of life? Children are at great risk in society. Their plight in the world challenges us to put everything we have toward rescuing and enabling them to survive and fulfill their God-given potential.

That is why one of the responses of the church in the Global South has been the development of a Child Theology Movement (CTM) focusing on a theology of child and childhood. The CTM emerged in the late 1990s and now, just over a decade old, has successfully held significant consultations in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, as well as in the UK and on the European continent. It has generated some important pieces of theological reflections and publications on the nascent academic and missional study of Child Theology.[24]

Initially motivated by the works of Oxford-based theologians Haddon Wilmer

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23 Claudette Crawford-Brown, *Children in the Line of Fire: The Impact of Violence and Trauma on Families in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago* (Kingston, Jamaica: Arawak, 2010).

24 See Siga Arles, et al, ed., *Now and Next: A Compendium of Papers Presented at the Now & Next Theological Conference on Children, Nairobi, Kenya, March 9–12, 2011* (Colorado Springs, CO: Compassion International, 2011); Dan Brewster and John Baxter-Brown, ed., *Children & Youth as Partners in Mission: A Compendium of Papers presented at the 4/14 Window Missiological*

and Keith White, Global South scholars like Bambang Budijanto (Indonesia), Rosalind and Sunny Tan (Malaysia), Jesudason Jeyaraj (India), Genevieve James (South Africa), Victor Nakah (Zimbabwe), and Shiferaw Michael (Ethiopia), along with children's advocates Menchit Wong (Philippines), Enrique Pinedo (Peru/USA), and Dan Brewster (USA/Malaysia) have been blazing the trail for the Child Theology Movement.[25]

Perhaps one of the most significant consultations so far was the 2012 gathering in Nairobi, Kenya. A major contribution from the Global North that informed that consultation was Marcia Bunge's paper, "Biblical Understandings of Children and Childhood: Resources for the Church and Mission Today." In her paper, Bunge articulated six biblical perspectives on children and childhood, and warned that

> whenever we as Christians retreat from this rich, complex, and almost paradoxical view found in the bible and Christian traditions and focus instead on only one or two biblical themes alone, we risk falling into deficient understandings of children and adult obligations to them, and we risk treating children in inadequate and harmful ways.[26]

The CTM focuses on the recognition and understanding of the integral role and significance of children and childhood in Scripture, in society, in Christian mission, in nationhood and nation-building. Its key theological paradigm is an understanding of the dramatic and symbolic placement by Jesus of a child in the midst of a theological discourse on the kingdom of God (Matt 18).

Child Theology and the Gospel

The Gospels record some very strong theological assertions by Jesus about the significance, importance, and treatment of children. These assertions carry implications for understanding how anyone accesses the kingdom of God, as well as the way in which the kingdom of God works. Indeed, how adults relate to children, and children's own access to and inclusion in the kingdom, were central in Jesus's teachings. In Matthew's Gospel, he warned,

> [U]nless you change and become like little children, you will never

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Conference, Seoul, South Korea, February 2013 (Colorado Springs, CO: Compassion International, 2013).

25 Jesudason Jeyaraj, Rosalind Tan, et al., ed., *Repairer of Broken Walls: Essays on Holistic Child Development: In honour of Dr. Dan Brewster* (Delhi: Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge: Christian Forum for Child Development-India: Global Alliance-HCD-South Asia Unit, 2014).

26 Marcia Bunge, "Biblical Understandings of Children and Childhood," in *Now and Next*, 7. See also Marcia Bunge, ed., *The Child in Christian Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

> enter the kingdom of heaven. . . . If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea (Matt 18:1–6).

Jesus affirms here that the *kingdom of God belongs to children*. The question that the CTM raises is whether the church has missed this important dimension of the gospel in its attitude and polices towards children.

It is instructive to note that amid his strong remarks to his disciples, Jesus said, "*Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them*" (Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16). He welcomed children in a gentle and affirmative way, creating a safe space for those who are to be counted among the most marginalized and vulnerable in any population. From the Gospel writers' account of Jesus and his relation to children, four things are clear:

1. *Jesus was on the side of children*. Whatever else can be said, Jesus's words and actions consistently point to this conclusion.
2. *The church must unblock access of children to Jesus*. Unlike the disciples who blocked the children's access to Jesus, the church must seek to remove all obstacles to children and youth involvement in the mission of the church and kingdom of God.
3. *The church must ensure appropriate ways to bless children.* In an age of legal restraints placed on physical contact with children, children still need and crave the blessing of adults. It is very important to them. In its ministry to children and youth the church must establish appropriate, clearly defined ways in which parents and other adults can bless children.
4. *Christian mission must be radically counter-cultural.* Christian mission, by its very nature, challenges the status quo and offers an alternative vision of the present and future. It cannot uphold cultures of exclusion or exploitation of children and youth. The dynamic of the Judeo-Christian faith is that it moves beyond the status quo, advancing towards the day when "*the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea*" (Hab 2:14).

Child Care and Protection, and the Church

Children are considered among the most marginalized and vulnerable group in any population. They deserve every care and protection. Spurred on by the wider context of the global scale of child abuse and exploitation, the CTM and its associated networks have taken up the issue of child care and protection from an ecclesiological point of view. Global statistics on children at risk through issues

such as child refugees, child poverty, infant mortality, child labor, child trafficking, and child murders are at alarming levels. The impact on the church of the extent of the problem has certainly not been lost. Pedophile priests have been exposed, the church made to pay a heavy price, and new legislations have been promulgated by governments following the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 by member-states.[27] Within a decade my own government in Jamaica brought in national legislation (1998), and established five state agencies in 15 years to protect and care for children.[28]

How sad it is that in the marketplace of today the world commodifies children, placing monetary and material value on them as products to be marketed, exploited, traded, or used to service the greed and indulgence of adults. I am amazed at how much money is spent by the advertising industry in advertisements targeted towards children. According to a Federal Trade Commission report on food marketing to children released in 2006, the US advertising industry spent approximately $1.6 billion marketing their products—mainly soda, fast food, and cereal—to children. They recognize the commercial power and appeal of the children and youth sector and devote significant percentages of their advertising budget towards them.

For the church, the concerns and questions are many. What is the role of the church in the midst of the crisis facing children and childhood both locally and across the globe? Is the church a safe and welcoming place for children? Are child protection policies in place in the local church? Are the children in church being excluded or exploited by the adults around them? How does the church show that it welcomes children and demonstrate a radically different valuation and affirmation of who they are in contrast to what obtains in the marketplace of the world? How does the church make space for children in their midst, as people of the community bring their children to church for divine blessing?[29]

In light of the above questions, Dan Brewster and the Compassion International organization have asked another very important one: what percentage of our church's budget is expended on children and youth? How much do we spend to recruit, train, and develop children into the men and women God created and

27 It should also be recognized that all almost all of the eight international millennium development goals set by the United Nations to be realized by 2015 have core concerns for the care and protection of children.

28 Since the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was enacted in 1989 the Jamaican Government has responded by establishing the following state agencies: The Centre for Investigation of Sexual Offences and Child Abuse (CISOCA) 1998; Child Care and Protection Acts (CCPA) 2004; Child Development Agency (CDA) 2004; Office of the Children's Advocate (2005); Office of Children's Registry (2007).

29 In my small and marginal contribution to this movement, I have given two biblical reflective pieces on the missiological implications of Jesus and children in the Gospels, as narrated by Mark and Matthew. See Las G. Newman, "Jesus, Children, Church and Mission" in Brewster and Baxter-Brown, *Children & Youth*, 199–209.

redeemed them to be? Quite recently the World Council of Churches (WCC) and UNICEF signed a partnership agreement pledging to work together to support children's rights, with special initial focus on two major issues: violence against children and climate change.[30] This is a significant move, and one that should be emulated by other church councils and organizations.

Theology of Environment

On a sunny Sunday afternoon while visiting my neighboring country of Haiti, I was invited to the evening service at a church in the capital city, Port-au-Prince. On arriving near the entrance to the church, I was struck by the mountain of garbage piled high on either side of the entranceway. Passing through the narrow entrance we arrived at the church that was very neatly perched on the hillside. The evening service was a powerful and vibrant testimony of faith and praise. But I felt like I had just come through what the children of Israel must have experienced when they passed through the Red Sea on dry land. Like the parted sea was the wall of garbage on either side of the church's entrance.

After the service we had to exit through that same entrance. I asked my colleagues why the garbage was allowed to pile up so high. The answer was a bit of a challenge to me. My colleague said that to attempt to do anything about it was risky, because that would be considered getting involved in "politics." The national government at the time was in a state of political gridlock that paralyzed public services, and things like garbage collection were left unattended. So what was the church going to do about the garbage right outside its door, I insisted. Surely that was a public health hazard. "The church can't get involved in politics," was the only answer I received.

While I recognized the political problem, that poignant juxtaposition of faith and environment that Sunday afternoon left me with a searching question. Is there a relationship between Christian worship (whether Pentecostal, Evangelical, Catholic, or otherwise) and the external environment? Is there any connection between the two, between creation theology and confessional liturgy? Which should inform the other? Should theology, at least biblical theology, not inform confessional liturgy? And should confessional liturgy not inform and shape Christian witness?

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30 The agreement was signed and announced on September 18, 2015. It asserted: "UNICEF will be working with WCC members—over half a billion Christians in 345 member churches in 140 countries—to recognize, monitor and promote children's rights within their communities and congregations. The partnership will leverage UNICEF's knowledge on children's rights and violence prevention with the WCC's longstanding theological legacy and commitment to children, in order to achieve positive change for children around the world." (http://www.unicef.org/media/media_85552.html).

Faith and Environment

There were more questions. In the face of this environmental crisis, I asked myself, what is the role of faith? How should the church as a community of faith respond? What should people in faith communities be doing? As a historian I have observed how faith has been a powerful agency for social change throughout history. Examples of faith communities that experienced renewal and regeneration have shown how hope, nurtured by faith, played an important role in their survival. For example, one of the main impacts of the Protestant Reformation in Europe in the 16th century was the formation of new communities of faith and practice. In the face of a deeply entrenched feudal agrarian society, the Radical Anabaptist Reformation gave rise to new communities and faith traditions. Among these were the Mennonite Brethren and the Hutterite movements. At the root of their formation and development was the conviction that faith has within it the power to create an alternative world. Groups such as these show that faith in the God of Abraham and of creation have been a key agency for social change. Indeed, the powerful relationship between religious faith and enlightened care for the environment has enabled the cultivation and development of a culture of environmental care, with sustainability as its essence. As evidenced by the Mennonites and Hutterites, it is a culture that has been able to survive for over five centuries.

Global Evangelical Theology and Creation Care

A fourth emerging theology in the Global South is the *theology of environment*. Global evangelical theology has not always embraced an active environmental theology. However, a defining moment came in the 2010 Lausanne Congress in Cape Town, South Africa. Not only was creation care a major topic on the agenda in the multiplexes in that gathering of over 4,200 global evangelical leaders from 198 countries. It was also highlighted in a significant way in the published statement, "The Cape Town Commitment" (CTC). The statement on creation care was a major affirmation of the core of biblical convictions about the created world and about human responsibility for its development and survival. The CTC spoke clearly and boldly:

> *We love the world of God's creation.* This love is not mere sentimental affection for nature (which the Bible nowhere commands), still less is it pantheistic worship of nature (which the Bible expressly forbids). Rather it is the logical outworking of our love for God by caring for what belongs to him. "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it." The earth is the property of the God we claim to love and obey. We care for the earth, most simply, because it belongs to the one whom we call Lord. The earth is created, sus-

> tained and redeemed by Christ. We cannot claim to love God while abusing what belongs to Christ by right of creation, redemption and inheritance. We care for the earth and responsibly use its abundant resources, not according to the rationale of the secular world, but for the Lord's sake. If Jesus is Lord of all the earth, we cannot separate our relationship to Christ from how we act in relation to the earth. For to proclaim the gospel that says "Jesus is Lord" is to proclaim the gospel that includes the earth, since Christ's Lordship is over all creation. Creation care is thus a gospel issue within the Lordship of Christ.[31]

Biblical Theology and Creation Care in the Global South

Since Cape Town, a global movement known as the "Lausanne/WEA Network on Creation Care and the Gospel" has been engaged in action plans and a series of consultations and conferences in Latin America, East Africa, Southern Europe, the Middle East, East Asia, Nepal, Canada, and the United States. The first consultation was held in Jamaica in 2012 in which theologians, scientists, writers, and environmental practitioners from 23 countries (as diverse as Argentina, Bangladesh, Benin, Kenya, Uganda, Singapore, the UK, the USA, and Canada) met for five days to pray, discuss, and reflect on the state of the earth, the home in which we live, and on the role and ministry of the church in caring for God's creation. Within this movement a theology of the environment is emerging along lines that affirm the biblical worldview on creation:

1. Creation is Yahweh's intentional act out of his immense love and willingness to share fellowship with his created world.
2. Creation as we experience it is broken and degraded, and groans in peril (Rom 8:32).
3. Creation is not abandoned as the philosophies of modern atheism, deism, secular existentialism, and others assert.
4. Creation is being recovered and restored by providential design.
5. Human beings have a big part to play in that recovery and restoration.
6. Believers in Jesus the Christ look forward to a newly restored creation—a new heaven and a new earth in God's time (Rev 21:1).

Global South biblical scholars such as J. Richard Middleton have been making the case for a biblical theology of environment along such lines.[32] This creation

31 http://www.lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment#p.1-7.

32 J. Richard Middleton, "Islands in the Sun: Overtures to a Caribbean Creation Theology," in *A Kairos Moment for Caribbean Theology: Ecumenical Voices in Dialogue*, ed. Garnett Roper, and J. Richard Middleton (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013), 79–95.

theology is important for the Global South in general (and certainly everywhere else), but especially for the most vulnerable Small Island Developing States. The impacts of the global ecological crisis are issues that arise from human-induced environmental degradation, including damage to basic life sustaining resources. These issues demand immediate response by everyone, rich and poor alike.

How Has the Church in the Global South Responded to the Global Ecological Crisis?

Let me share three examples taken from Central America, East Asia, and the Caribbean. In 1998 one of the deadliest hurricanes in the annual Atlantic season was Hurricane Mitch. Mitch was a category 5 hurricane that devastated the countries of Central America, including Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. Over 14,600 people were killed and an estimated $3 billion in damage resulted.

Honduras, home to some of the highest rates of poverty in Latin America and a population of just over 7 million, was hit very hard. At least 2 million were made homeless, 70% of crops destroyed. Large warehouses and storage rooms for coffee were flooded; maize and corn crops were devastated; 80% of the banana crop was completed destroyed. Altogether, crop losses were estimated at $900 million. Critical food, medicine, and water shortages were felt everywhere. Hunger and near-starvation were widespread in many villages. At least 20% of the country's population was made homeless. Many of the unidentified dead were buried in mass graves or their bodies cremated.

Osvaldo Munguia, a Honduran conservationist and member of the Assemblies of God church, rallied his denomination of over 1,850 churches to the national restoration effort. He and his team mobilized the planting of over 5 million trees in the mountains and across the country. Osvaldo was invited to the Lausanne Consultation on "Creation Care and the Gospel" in Jamaica in 2012 to share his inspiring story. This faith-based project projected a strong vision of the importance of creation care and conservation efforts towards the sustaining and flourishing of human life and community.

In East Asia, the work of the Singapore Centre for Global Mission (SCGM) has been making its mark on the level of environmental awareness of the church. Lawrence Ko, founder and director of the SCGM, was also at the Jamaica consultation. He said,

> The world we are living in presently is indeed in the midst of a grave ecological crisis, if not a serious economic concern. Environmental crises are always intricately linked to energy issues and economic challenges. The consumptive lifestyle of the wealthy often leaves the poor with a degraded environment to live in. The

> poor are often left with very restrictive choices of energy and fuel options. They could only afford the cheaper fuel which may be lower in cost but higher in price, as they pollute the earth and cause global warming.[33]

Over the last five years Ko has led a team of young Singaporeans to participate in the Green Desert project. This is a very imaginative project aimed at cutting the pollution index in Beijing, the capital city of China, with its population of over 21 million. As citizens and visitors alike know from experience, Beijing is one of the most polluted cities in Asia. Much of the dust pollution comes from the deserts of Mongolia. The Green Desert project mobilizes students and young Singaporeans across denominations in a concerted attempt to reverse the desertification of the Mongolian desert.

He tells the story in his book, *Can the Desert Be Green? Planting Hope in the Wilderness*:

> Our participation in creation care and environmental stewardship projects are small acts with huge significance. They are small symbolic acts which seek to address the anguish of the helpless masses. They are small but prophetic voices, echoing voices of the empowered poor and seeking to address the "powers that be" which may be too busy to walk the streets enough to listen to the folks on the streets. These small symbolic acts, of caring for creation and the poor, are acts of faith, believing that things that have gone awry can be changed, that the bad situations can be redeemed, and the good can be restored. These small symbolic acts reach out to the poor and powerless, who are the beneficiaries of our creation care efforts. Acts of caring for creation are acts of painting the future, training us to tread gently, to handle both material creation and people with care. Acts of caring for creation teach us to appreciate the beauty of both the visible as well as the invisible.
>
> Envisioning the future possibility of a redeemed and restored creation encourages us to dare to dream of a future which need not be a nightmare. The future can still be a beautiful and realisable dream, a future worth creating because nature and culture are both valued, with eternal significance. These acts of creation care can become signals of transcendence, lifting us to the vision of hope and higher planes of living. They point us to the hope that the cre-

33 http://www.scgm.org.sg/creation-care-and-environmental-missions/

> ation will be restored to the way it was meant to be when it was created by the Creator God.[34]

In the Caribbean, the 2012 Jamaica Consultation deliberated on the statement in the Cape Town Commitment (CTC) regarding creation care and the gospel, namely, that "creation care is a gospel issue under the lordship of Christ," and that "urgent and prophetic ecological action is needed." The Consultation developed a major evangelical response and Call to Action, referred to as the "Jamaica Statement."[35] Since then, the themes and structure of the Jamaica consultation have been taken into regional and sub-regional forums in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. They focus on God's Word (*theology*), God's World *(science*), and God's Work (*our response*).[36] As the movement develops and expands, the call and charge in the Global South today is, "*Go Gospel, Go Global, Go Green*."

Theology of Suffering and Hope

The church in the Global South and East is facing unimaginable suffering today. As Philip Jenkins notes, "[the book of] Lamentations can be considered as a prayer book for Africans—a grim statement but undeniably true."[37] We have watched in horror the sufferings of the hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees, mainly from the Global South, flooding into Europe. The stories they bring of suffering and despair in their homelands that caused them to flee, often in grave danger of dying along the way, are truly heart-rending.

I have been calling attention to this issue in terms of "Christian mission in an age of extremes," drawing on the work of historian Eric Hobsbawm, who has described the 20th century as the "Age of Extremes."[38] If Hobsbawm were to take a look at global Christianity in the second decade of the 21st century, would he not describe it as no less an age of extremes? Would he recognize, on the one side, a church where millions of Christians across the globe proclaim their freedom, joy, and material progress thanks to a gospel of prosperity—a gospel of "health and wealth," and "bling" Christianity? Indeed, in the Global South, across Africa,

34 http://www.bibleadvocacy.org/news/planting-hope-in-the-wilderness-reflections-on-asian-journeys-green-desert-project/?lang=en.

35 http://www.lausanne.org/content/statement/creation-care-call-to-action.

36 A book was published as an outcome of the Consultation: Colin Bell and Robert S. White, ed., *Creation Care and the Gospel: Reconsidering the Mission of the Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2016).

37 Jenkins, *New Faces,* 77.

38 Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991* (London; New York: Penguin, 1994). Hobsbawm is known for his work on the history of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, and for describing the 20th century as "The Age of Extremes." That century, he says, was marked by incredible scientific and material progress on the one hand, and appalling acts of genocide and human atrocities on the other. It was an age of immense progress in freedom and democracy and the expansion of liberty on the one hand, and on the other, it was an age of total war, with the amazing rise of intolerance and repression, fundamentalist faiths, and the denial of liberty.

Asia, and the Americas, including the Caribbean, there are pastors of mega-churches mirroring the lifestyles of the rich and famous, suggesting that these are new ways in which Christianity and the gospel are to be communicated and experienced. But, on the other end, would Hobsbawm not also see the suffering church, in which millions of Christians are caught in daily conflict—persecuted, hunted down, killed because of their faith in Jesus Christ and their public loyalty to Him?[39]

The Suffering Church in North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia

Let me share several brief stories about this reality in the Global South from Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. In 2002 the Marxist government of Eritrea cracked down on churches, outlawing all religious practices except Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Sunni Islam. Around 3,000 Christians, including many pastors, were imprisoned without charge or trial pending denial of their faith. Several are known to have died after being subjected to severe mistreatment and torture. Many are still in prison. Global attention has been drawn to the case of Christian persecution in Eritrea. However, this situation has been understood as only one example of the problems surrounding the issue of religious liberty taking place on a global scale, as evidenced in the recent debate in the British House of Lords on Article 18 of the United Nations Universal Charter on Human Rights.[40]

A few years ago I had the privilege of visiting a country in North Africa where Christian witness is restricted to the expatriate community. It is forbidden for a Christian expat to witness to a native of that country. I was invited to meet with a group of foreign students studying in the universities in that country. I was picked up at the airport in the capital and driven four hours to the place where over 70 students had gathered for this meeting. As we arrived, one of the student leaders suddenly announced, “We’ve got trouble.” He noticed a car that was parked at the entrance with four men inside. We pulled up at the entrance and noticed that it was the secret police awaiting our arrival. Two men came over to our car and asked for the list of students who were attending this meeting. The student leader handed over the list and these members of the Government’s security forces then drove away. They returned later and remained for the three days we spent at this place. They listened to everything that was said and took notes. But what encouraged and fascinated me was the strong faith and determination of these foreign students who wanted to serve the Lord even in the face of intimidation and fear. They knew

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39 The World Evangelical Alliance, in its report to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, revealed that an unprecedented number of Christians now face disinformation, discrimination, and outright persecution worldwide. It reported that more than 200 million Christians are being persecuted worldwide.

40 http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201516/ldhansrd/text/150716-0003.htm; http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5593/archbishop-speaks-in-lords-on-religious-freedom.

the price they would pay if they were found guilty of violating the laws of the host country. But they were bold and courageous. And they strengthened one another by meeting in this way, even inviting someone from the "outside" to speak to them.

In the Middle East, the birthplace of Christianity, the crisis of suffering facing Christians today is pervasive and commonplace. Many Christians have fled the region, which is what prompted Pope Benedict XVI to refer to the situation in the Middle East as a modern-day "new exodus" of Christian believers.[41] Even before the advent of ISIS, the Hezbollah organization in Lebanon was exerting powerful, repressive pressures against Christian witness. In Egypt, Coptic Christians who form about 10% of Egypt's 90 million population are feeling the brunt of the increasingly radicalized Muslim population. The once dominant role of Christians in the Egyptian economy with employment opportunities in government and civil service has been drastically curtailed. Churches are torched, and young Christian girls are forced to convert to Islam. Relatives who go to the police end up being beaten and having to serve time in prison. On a recent visit to Egypt I was struck by the fact that outside the entrance of a church that we attended in a little town in the south, there was a group of security men with Kalashnikovs at the entrance guarding the Christians worshipping inside.

In India, in the state of Orissa, many Christians have been attacked and killed; many more have suffered for their faith. On August 25, 2008, two days after the outbreak of violence against Christians, a group of about 50 thugs set upon Fr. Thomas Chellan, a Roman Catholic priest in a local village. They stripped him naked and savagely beat him with sticks and axes.[42] A religious sister working with him was also subjected to violence and public humiliation.

Response from the Suffering Church

Fr. Thomas survived the ordeal, and was recognized with an award from a Catholic religious organization for his strong defense of the faith in the midst of severe persecution. In accepting the award, Fr Thomas said:

> I dedicate this Award to all the persecuted Christians in Kandhamal, especially to those who lost their lives and stood by their faith. When I received news of this award, I was overwhelmed by the

41 There are now over 1.5 million Palestinian Christians in exile as far away as Chile, South America. Arab-Palestinian Christians are afraid to complain to the foreign press for fear of retribution in the form of rape of their daughters or wives, beatings, and murder. A decade ago, the Christian population of Iraq was about 1.5 million. Today that has been reduced by half through the deliberate murder of Christians by their Muslim neighbors, and various jihadist groups. Many have fled to Jordan and other parts of the Middle East, and are now part of the flood of migrants into Europe.

42 Catholicagency.com reported the event with the following headline: "Six years later, Christians in India await justice for kandhamal massacre" (see http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/six-years-later-christians-in-india-await-justice-for-the-kandhamal-massacre-67937/).

> solidarity of Faith. Our Faith makes us one family, unites and bonds Christians beyond geographical borders, beyond barriers of ethnicity, nationality, or language. Beyond the limits of territorial boundaries. Faith makes us one family. I am grateful to be here with all of you. There were moments of crises; I felt rejected from the place, from the people I knew, and when the news of this award was given to me—from someone, whom I have never seen or heard from, they called me and offered their solidarity. I felt a deep sense of solidarity and comfort. I felt I was not left alone in my suffering. I was consoled that I was not abandoned, and I marveled that it was because of my faith [that] I endured the persecution, and know it was only because of my faith [that] I have been embraced by universal solidarity. Faith Unites, Faith Bonds, and Faith Heals, and Faith forgives . . . and this brings a lot of joy.

He went on to say that

> [T]he history of the church teaches us to experience joy through suffering, a faith that is tested through trials, and this is the history of the church universal, not just Orissa[. And] if we trace the history of Christians, they have gone through this struggle and persecution. I firmly believe that from these Christians of Kandhamal will spring forth new life of the Risen Christ.[43]

In Fr. Thomas's remarks, the ingredients of a *theology of suffering and hope* that undergird Christians in the Global South are clearly evidenced:

1. Suffering is part of the Christian life experience and there is a universal community of faith that shares this experience.
2. Thousands of others in the history of the faith have also suffered.
3. The resurrection of Jesus, as the other side of suffering, is the basis of Christian hope. Suffering will not have the last word.

This theology of suffering from the Global South provides an important lesson to the church across the globe. In an "age of extremes" it may be seen as a rebuff and counter-reality to the theology of prosperity and wealth that is also prevalent.[44] A theology of suffering and hope brings into sharp relief the power of the gospel, predicated upon what the Suffering Savior himself experienced, and publicly demonstrated, in his life, death, and resurrection. Accordingly, Heb 12:2 urges us to "[fix] our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set

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43 http://www.asianews.it/news-en/%E2%80%9CDefensor-Fidei%E2%80%9D-prize-awarded-to-Fr.-Thomas-Chellan,-one-of-Orissa%E2%80%99s-first-victims-15308.html.

44 See Femi Adeleye, *Preachers of a Different Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011).

before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (NIV).

Conclusion

In this paper I have shared five examples of emerging contextual theologies in the Global South. These five are the: (1) theology in the public square, (2) theology of work, (3) theology of child and childhood, (4) theology of environment, and (5) theology of suffering and hope. But they are by no means the only ones, or even unique to the Global South. Indeed, many Christian groups utilize global networks for collaboration, cross-fertilization, mutual learning, and support.

What these emerging theologies signify, therefore, is not merely contextual theologies, as a fourth arm of the "three-self" missiological paradigm set out by Henry Venn in the 19th century.[45] Rather, they represent authentic attempts to do theology, reflecting upon biblical texts in socio-cultural contexts, in order to discern, understand, and apply more deeply this knowledge of the self-revealing God to his creation, and to his church.

These emerging theologies may or may not represent a definitively growing shift in how theology is understood and taught in the Global South. But they nevertheless stand as a testament to the development of the Christian theological mind, and of Christian discipleship at the grassroots level in the Global South. They represent new thinking, a new search for authentic biblical Christianity, and new responses to old problems. As such, they bring additional voices to the global theological fraternity, new discourses and enquiry, and new streams of mobilization of the church for witness and action in the Global South, and elsewhere. Above all, these theologies represent the radical application of faith to life in *all* its existential realities and challenges in the 21st century. That, after all, is at the heart of the historic evangelical faith. A faith that proclaims the centrality of the *universal* redemptive work of Jesus Christ, through his eternally prevailing church wherever it is planted. It is *a faith that is on the move*.

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45 Henry Venn, the influential Secretary of the Church Missionary Society (1841–1873) promoted the idea that when a church is truly planted it would have three defining characteristics. It would be (a) self-governing, (b) self-supporting, and (c) self-propagating (cf. Wilbert Shenk, *Henry Venn—Missionary Statesman* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983]). What Venn did not envision was the day when the church planted by Christian missionaries would also become *self-theologizing,* as a fourth self-defining characteristic. That is what is occurring today as theology is on the move.

BOOK REVIEWS

The *Canadian-American Theological Review* gratefully accepts book review requests as well as book review submissions from potential contributors and publishers. All review submissions should be of academic quality and should conform to the standards laid out within the principal scholarly handbooks of style. We are also happy to provide publishers with prepublication reviews of their submitted material upon request. Review submissions, requests, and publisher volumes relating to the broader disciplines of Theology, Scripture, and Culture can be directed to the book review editor at the following address:

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A Peculiar Glory: How the Christian Scriptures Reveal Their Complete Truthfulness. John Piper. Wheaton: Crossway, 2016. ISBN: 9781433552632. Pp. 302. $24.99 (USD).

The earthquake of higher criticism continues to reverberate throughout the church, and John Piper's *A Peculiar Glory* is another addition to the library of books confronting the persistent question about the Bible's truthfulness. In contrast to others, the book takes a multifaceted approach, the main thesis of which is "that the glory of God in and through the Scriptures is a real, objective, self-authenticating reality" (15). Put differently, the *Westminster Larger Catechism* reads "The scriptures manifest themselves to be the word of God, by . . . the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God." "This book," writes Piper, "is an effort to press. into that answer as deeply as I can" (13). He does this in the following five sections.

The first ("A Place to Stand") provides an autobiographical sketch of Piper's "journey" with the Bible, from early years to doctoral study and full-time ministry. He recounts his co-writing of Bethlehem Baptist Church's doctrinal statement, which declares the Bible to be "the Word of God Written" and "verbally inspired by God," meaning the inerrant autographic text of the Protestant sixty-six-book canon (34).

The second part is entitled "What Books and Words Make Up the Christian

Scriptures"? In short sentences, steady pacing, and readable prose, Piper answers this question by giving brief arguments for why Protestants have the table of contents that they do. This section also explains why restricting "inerrancy" and inspiration to the autographs is a good idea, not a bad one. In fact, his whole bibliology, it is argued, can be located in the Bible itself.

The third section is a review of how the New Testament authors used the Old Testament, and what Christians today can learn by Jesus's use of Scripture. It also addresses the nature of divine discourse and how God speaks through people—whether prophets or apostles.

The fourth section asks "How Can We Know the Christian Scriptures are True?" As one might expect from Piper, the answer to this question is interlaced with quotations and insights from Jonathan Edwards. He also presses into the image of seeing God's glory and being blind to it. In a word, the Scriptures are "true" because they can be *seen* to be true, and (deferring to Calvin's argument) this internal testimony is of the Spirit. He says that doubts may come, but "the miracle of seeing 'the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' through the Scriptures can happen to a person who never will be able to explain sufficiently why he trusts the Bible" (173). Over and again, Piper stresses that trust in the Bible is not a leap in the dark—not because there is affirming evidence, but simply because "we have seen his glory."

The last section outlines several major ways in which the glory of God is revealed in the scriptures, such as the Incarnation, fulfillment of prophecy, miracles of Jesus, and "in the people the word creates" (253). This somewhat apologetic section concludes with reflections on the place of historical criticism and how there always remains work to do in order for the glory of the scriptures to shine through:

> My conclusion is that "the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the infallible Word of God, verbally inspired by God, and without error in the original manuscripts," and that this can be known with a well-grounded confidence because the peculiar glory of God shines in and through these Scriptures. (281)

For some—including those who regularly study and teach the Bible—*A Peculiar Glory* may come as a welcome reminder that the Scriptures are a remarkable collection of writings. And although great attention is given to the form of the Bible, Piper's overall thesis brings out the profundity of its content and story. Among other commendable features, the book also functions as a primer on how American evangelicals currently think of the Christian Scriptures.

On the whole, however, the volume represents perhaps the most overt act of

published bibliolatry/biblicism in recent times. Countless Christian scholars have been trying to correct this unfortunate development now typical of American evangelicalism.[1] *A Peculiar Glory* just adds fuel for the flame, functioning like similar books of its kind[2] by circling the wagons and turning a blind eye to the debates themselves. Among other things, this results in poor scholarship, which is most immediately revealed in noticeable ignorance of key contributions from the most important works on pertinent subject areas, and in strange conclusions: for example, that the Hebrew Bible, not the Septuagint, was the primary Bible of Jesus, Paul, and the early church.

There are also the more typical errors and misleading arguments characteristic of this shamelessly fundamentalist perspective, such as the idea that:

1. Christianity in general should see (and has always seen) the canon in terms of binary categories (inspired/non-inspired), when in fact the canon has always had a common core with blurred edges—including today throughout global Christianity.[3]
2. There is a single autographic text, as if biblical authors sat down and wrote one version of a book that was then transmitted through the ages, when in fact this concept can apply neither to most biblical writings because of their developmental origination (e.g., Psalms, Proverbs, and others are compilations of scribes that underwent adaptation, revision, in-

1 See, for example, Craig Allert, *A High View of Scripture?: The Authority of the Bible and the Formation of the New Testament Canon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007); Carlos Bovell, *Inerrancy and the Spiritual Formation of Younger Evangelicals* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2007); *idem, Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Authority of Scripture: Historical, Biblical, and Theoretical Perspectives* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2011); *idem, Rehabilitating Inerrancy in a Culture of Fear* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2012); James Dunn, *The Living Word* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003); Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005); *idem, The Bible Tells Me So: Why Defending Scripture Has Made Us Unable to Read It* (New York: HarperOne, 2014); Christopher Hays and Christopher Ansberry, ed., *Evangelical Faith and the Challenge of Historical Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013); Christian Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible: Why Biblicism is Not a Truly Evangelical Reading of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2012); Kenton Sparks, *Sacred Word, Broken Word* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012); *idem, God's Word in Human Words: An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); Thom Stark, *The Human Faces of God: What Scripture Reveals When It Gets God Wrong (And Why Inerrancy Tries to Hide It)* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2011); Ben Witherington, *The Living Word: Rethinking the Theology of the Bible* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009). Earlier efforts can be traced to Jack Rogers and Donald McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979) and to James Barr's three volumes on scripture and additional three volumes on fundamentalism.

2 E.g., Steven Cowan and Terry Wilder, ed., *In Defense of the Bible: A Comprehensive Apologetic for the Authority of Scripture* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Academic, 2013); Craig Blomberg, *Can We Still Believe the Bible?: An Evangelical Engagement with Contemporary Questions* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2014); Wayne Grudem, Thomas Schreiner, and John Collins, ed., *Understanding Scripture* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012). Blomberg's book, it should be mentioned, is more nuanced and critically-minded than the others.

3 See Lee Martin McDonald, *The Biblical Canon* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2008) and *The Formation of the Biblical Canon,* 2 vols (New York: T & T Clark, 2017).

tegration, expansion, etc. over time[4]), nor to many NT writings (where authors often kept a copy for themselves, revised another for a particular congregation, sized a copy down to fit a scroll, etc.),[5] so that speaking of "the original Bible" makes as much sense as saying "the original internet" or "the original Wikipedia."

3. 2 Timothy 3:16 teaches verbal plenary inspiration of the original autographs, when in fact (a) the text is extremely mild in its claims, defining "God-breathed" in terms of making one "wise for salvation" and equipping the person of God for "every good work", and (b) "scripture" likely refers to the Septuagint (a translation) and not to the Hebrew text at all.[6]
4. "Verbal plenary inspiration" is simply the default Protestant (even *Christian*) bibliology, when in fact there are entire Christian and evangelical denominations that do not hold this view, and Reformed theologians such as Herman Bavinck who intentionally *distanced* themselves from this rigid perspective (touted by his American friend B. B. Warfield) in favor of "organic inspiration" or "genetic-synthetic" bibliology.[7]
5. The idea that Jude wasn't quoting 1 Enoch (Jude 14–15) as "scripture" or "authoritatively," when there's no reason to believe (except preconceived bias) that he is doing anything different.

In addition to these and other elementary problems, there are the typical unanswered questions that readers are bound to have, such as:

1. If verbal plenary inspiration and words—as opposed to the message and meaning of the Bible—are so important, why do Jesus and the early

4 See Karel Van Der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

5 See E. Richards, "Reading, Writing, and Manuscripts" in *The World of the New Testament,* ed. Lee Martin McDonald and Joel Green (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 362. After elaborating this point, he reflects, "While I personally hold a high view of Scripture, I must admit that there are challenges to the concept of original autographs." Cf. Michael Holmes, "From 'Original Text' to 'Initial Text,'" in Michael Holmes and Bart Ehrman, ed., *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research* (Boston: Brill, 2014); John Brogan, "Can I Have Your Autograph?" in Vincent Bacote, Laura Quay, Dennis Ockholm, ed., *Evangelicals and Scripture* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2004).

6 See Timothy Law, *When God Spoke Greek* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), along with many exegetical commentaries.

7 "[The Bible is] a living whole, not abstract but organic. It is not given to use simply to parrot its exact words and phrases but so that we, drawing from the entire organism of Scripture, as free and thoughtful children, think God's thoughts after him. . . . Taking the text of Scripture seriously as the Word of God does mean that we do not read it atomistically, as though each word or letter by itself has its own divine meaning. Words are included in thoughts and vowels in words . . . not every text or passage or book is equally close to the circle of faith's center. Not all of the books of the Bible are of equal value." Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics,* trans. John Vriend, abridged (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 17, 106.

church feel free to create their own unique readings that comprise a mixture of the LXX and Hebrew text?[8]

2. If verbal plenary inspiration and words—as opposed to the message and meaning of the Bible—are so important, why is it continually repeated as being significant that textual variation doesn't affect essential Christian doctrines? This is significant for Christians who *don't* adhere to verbal plenary inspiration, not for those who *do*. (Piper seems unaware of the possibility that words/wording only matter to the extent that they affect meaning, as opposed to having independent divine value regardless of their functioning in sentences and semantics).
3. Why is it significant that the New Testament writers don't quote from and allude to Apocryphal writings when (a) they actually do[9] and (b) they don't quote from many other canonical books as well (e.g., Judges, Ruth, Esther, Ezra, Obadiah, Zephaniah, Song of Solomon, Lamentations)?

As far as I can tell, *A Peculiar Glory* is written to Christians of American fundamentalist persuasion who need re-affirmation that their own bibliology isn't irrational. It is worth pondering why this has to be continually argued in the first place, especially within a Christian context. In the end, whether the bigger picture or the specific issues are concerned, Piper's work largely points in the wrong direction. One is better off reading *Models for Scripture*[10] and *Scripture and the Authority of God,*[11] supplemented by *Engaging the Christian Scriptures*,[12] *The Word of God for the People of God*,[13] and *The Abingdon Introduction to the Bible*[14]—at least if one desires an equally impassioned but more informed, realistic, and tempered presentation.

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8 E.g., Mark 7:6–7; Luke 4:17–18; John 1:23; Acts 15:16–18; Rom 2:24; 9:33; 10:20–21; 14:11; Heb 10:5–7; etc.

9 E.g., Sir 4:1 in Mark 20:19 alongside Deut 5 and Ex 20; Sir 17:26 in 2 Tim 2:19-20 alongside Num 16; Wis 14:22–31 in Rom 1:24–32; Wis 2:23–24 in Rom 5:12–21; Ascension of Isaiah 11:34 or Elijah Apocalypse in 1 Cor 2:9; 1 Enoch 1:9 in Jude 14; 1 Enoch in 2 Pet 2:4 and 3:6; Wis 7:25–26 in Heb 1:3.

10 John Goldingay, *Models for Scripture* (Toronto: Clements, 2004).

11 N. T. Wright, *Scripture and the Authority of God* (New York: HarperOne, 2013).

12 Andrew Arterbury, W. H. Bellinger, Derek Dodson, *Engaging the Christian Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014).

13 Todd Billings, *The Word of God for the People of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

14 Joel Kaminsky, Mark Reasoner, Joel Nohr, *The Abingdon Introduction to the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2014).

After Lament: Psalms for Learning to Trust Again. Glenn Pemberton. Abilene: Abilene Christian University Press, 2014. ISBN: 9780891124870. Pp. 220. $17.99 (USD).

The spiritual practice of lament is slowly making a comeback in Western Christian liturgy. While it has languished on the far peripheries of spiritual disciplines both individual and corporate, there has recently been a new injection of thinking around the practice of lament in the life of the church (see, for example, *The Psalms as Christian Lament: A Historical Commentary* by Waltke, Houston, and Moore; and *Rejoicing in Lament* by Todd Billings). While this book is not specifically about lament alone, Glenn Pemberton's volume *After Lament: Psalms for Learning to Trust Again* contributes to this re-discovery of this important biblical practice in some significant ways, as it offers an exploration of the Psalms of Lament found in the biblical Psalter. Pemberton, who teaches Old Testament at Abilene Christian University, has written an accessible and highly personal reflection on the Psalms that places the practice of lament at the forefront, but also moves the reader into other dimensions of thinking and prayer in accordance with the movements of the lament psalms themselves.

This is a follow-up book to Pemberton's earlier volume *Hurting with God* and, like that book, *After Lament* is rooted in Pemberton's own journey of suffering. It is the personal nature of the book that flavours the contents and engages readers on a number of levels. The author is clear that the book "falls between the shelves of an academic treatise and popular Christian writing" (11). We will return to this aspect of the book's nature later, but suffice it to say at this point that it appropriately describes the overall tenor of the book. It is a mingling of pastoral and scholarly wisdom that offers spiritual direction to those who find themselves in the midst of deep pain, or who are trying to walk with someone in the midst of deep pain.

The book opens with a look at three biblical stories: Job, Abraham and Isaac, and Naomi and Ruth, where struggle and pain are key themes. Pemberton then offers an overview of his own journey through several personal and physical challenges that he has faced, and continues to face, in his life. Here he poses a key question that the book is interested in addressing, that of "when to stop lamenting and move on . . . ?" (22). While Pemberton is clear that there is not a simple or single answer to this question (not least because it is highly personal) it does form an intentionally significant underlying theme in the book.

From here, the next chapter explores various aspects of lament and offers a solid introduction to the topic itself. This lays the foundation for the rest of the book. The following chapter builds on that foundation to introduce the book's

central paradigm, "the wheel of lament." This metaphor invites the reader to picture an old-fashioned wagon wheel, with a central hub and several spokes that reach out from it toward an outer wheel. In Pemberton's construction there are six spokes, each of which represents a theme that can be found within the Psalms of Lament: trust and confidence, thanksgiving, singing a new Hallelujah (praise), rejoicing in the Lord, instruction, and broken hope. The subsequent six chapters explore these themes by looking at examples of Psalms that reflect them and examining their key characteristics. Each chapter offers a mixture of close scholarly perception joined with personal illustration and pastoral insight.

The book concludes by reflecting on how the biblical stories presented in chapter 1, as well as a couple of contemporary ones that Pemberton highlights, move past lament and into some lessons that can be derived from each of them, leading to some closing pastoral reflections.

As already mentioned, *After Lament* reflects genuine biblical scholarship, but is packaged in an accessible way that makes it readable for the non-specialist. In fact, it is ultimately not a book written for scholars but for those who find themselves suffering disappointment with God in the midst of life's trials. It is a work of pastoral/practical theology for the sake of the church. It is a very helpful resource because it is deeply relatable and practical, even as it reflects a depth of engagement with the biblical text that is rooted in a scholarly understanding of that text. This is a great feat. Doing this kind of writing well is not easy. Yet it is the kind of writing that is greatly needed by the contemporary church, as Pemberton himself notes (11).

Those familiar with the study of the Psalms may note that the author engages with a fairly limited range of scholarship in this study. It could be argued that extensive scholarly engagement is not really necessary because the study is not strictly an academic one. However, while a solid bibliography of academic sources is included, specialists may wish that a wider scope of study had been undertaken to better inform the book's conclusions. While there is no doubt that the author is capable of such scholarship, the goal of this book is clearly not to provide this sort of scholarly breadth.

Despite this debatable shortcoming, *After Lament* could be used as an introductory text in an undergraduate-level course on the Psalms, or in a course (even at the graduate level) on spirituality and suffering. It offers many important insights that would introduce the beginning reader to some of the realities of the Psalms of Lament. Most significantly, the book is what it intends to be, a helpful pastoral aid to those who are struggling with suffering, or who are given the pastoral task of ministering to people who are going (or will go) through times of great trial. It eschews pat answers, looks honestly at the reality of pain and the sometimes very real sense that God seems absent in the midst of it. Pemberton

should be commended for writing a book that seeks to take these realities seriously, combining his background as a biblical scholar with his background as one who has suffered much in his own life. The theological reflection that results in *After Lament* offers us a rich resource for embracing lament as a legitimate spiritual practice, but also providing us with help to move past it in due course.

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The Bible in the Contemporary World: Hermeneutical Ventures. Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. ISBN: 9780802872234. Pp. 192. $22.00 (USD).

Gathering fourteen of Richard Bauckham's previously published essays into one volume, *The Bible in the Contemporary World* provides greater access to Bauckham's varied reflections on the interplay of biblical and cultural interpretations. Bauckham's insights in these essays are imaginative, carefully nuanced, and attentive to hermeneutical and worldview subtleties. While possessing many merits, the benefit from compiling these essays into a single resource could have been even stronger with further attention to two structural matters, to be discussed further below.

Because of the project's intentionally piecemeal construction (xii), a conventional, chapter-by-chapter review of an author's progression of thought would not be helpful here. Instead, this review seeks to highlight four themes, each evident in Bauckham's introduction, that emerge across the essays. These thematic priorities are: (1) the need for ongoing contextualization of the Bible within contemporary culture; (2) the interests of the poor; (3) the metanarrative quality of the biblical story; and (4) the nature of human freedom.

As for the first of these themes, though not often directly stated, the working presupposition throughout this project is that Christians have a responsibility to continually contextualize the Bible within their current contexts. Bauckham argues for careful attention to both ongoing biblical and cultural interpretation, as well as to "the challenging interplay between the Bible and our own context" (ix). Bauckham models this attentive practice well throughout the project. For example, when considering C. S. Lewis's "Fernseed" lecture, Bauckham critiques the ongoing reluctance of biblical scholars to question their own traditions. In particular, he remarks that "Gospel scholars" have often been led astray because "they are not in the habit of distinguishing their more probable conclusions from their more speculative flights of fancy" (25). Likewise, Bauckham's essay on "Contemporary Western Culture" challenges the tendency for Christians to

over-identify the biblical story with either a modern metanarrative of progress or a postmodern rejection of metanarratives (33). Bauckham's practice of contextualization is also evident through his consideration of Steiner's thesis in *Grammars of Creation* (ninth essay) regarding the originality of human creativity, as well as in his pastorally driven theological pondering on human and divine suffering in the aftermath of the 11 March 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan (tenth essay).

A second thematic thread subtly woven throughout the project relates to care for the poor. Bauckham asserts that "any biblical-Christian critique of the contemporary world must prioritize the interests of the poor . . . especially at a time when the gap between rich and poor continues to grow, both globally and locally" (ix). In reflecting on the damaging effects of consumerism, Bauckham remarks that "our society's addiction to excess impedes the kind of sharing of resources that is needed to protect the vulnerable" (40). Moreover, he contrasts empires' universalizing subjugation of others with the particularized attention toward seemingly insignificant people that Jesus embodies throughout the Gospels (fourth essay). In "Humans, Animals, and the Environment in Genesis 1–3," Bauckham explicates a biblical-eschatological "ecotopia" that "is both impossible to realize short of the new creation but also an invitation to practice nonviolent, caring dominion to whatever extent might be possible in the meantime," including toward vulnerable people (89). Additionally, and quite provocatively, Bauckham, while describing the contours of relational truth, contends for a form of religious extremism in line with Mother Theresa's devotion to the poor (170). While this theme could have been more pronounced, Bauckham's attention to the interests of the poor serves to keep his theological reflections grounded.

The third thematic emphasis is the metanarrative qualities and claims of the biblical story. Bauckham points to "God's redemptive purpose" in healing all of the relationships that have been "painfully fractured," and that God cannot restore one aspect of creation "without in the same process healing the other" (x). In his first and third essays, Bauckham proposes that the Bible offers a non-modern metanarrative that respects Lyotard's postmodern critique of metanarratives. Throughout these essays, Bauckham demonstrates a rich, yet measured, assessment of postmodern concerns regarding modernity's tendency to use metanarratives as tools of oppression, while also suggesting that a biblical metanarrative can offer a robust mutuality between particularity and universality. Bauckham continues the metanarrative theme in assessing the impact of globalization (fourth essay), where he contends that God is "supra-global," serving both as the source of and unity for all things. In the thirteenth essay, Bauckham delves into the Colossian Christ-hymn, reflecting on the hymn's universal claims of reconciliation in light of the particular person of Jesus Christ and "the blood of his cross." Pieced

together, Bauckham's essays describe a worldview terrain in which postmodern critiques participate in—without dominating or prohibiting the development of—a biblical metanarrative.

Finally, Bauckham also prioritizes attention to human freedom, which "must lie close to the heart of any fruitful Christian engagement with contemporary western culture." Arguing that "[f]reedom from has usurped the more important value of freedom for," he contends that contemporary notions of freedom have become enamored with "ludicrously unrealistic dreams of individual fulfilment" (xii). During the third essay, Bauckham notes that freedom is not simply the absence of external oppressors, but also of the oppressiveness of sin within us. He contends that real freedom requires dependency on God and interdependency with other humans and the rest of creation, resulting in "service to God and others" (38). Bauckham further highlights the tension around human freedom again in his eighth essay, "Ecological Hope in Crisis?" There he writes about the human tendency to pursue an earthly utopia, noting that "[g]etting the relationship between ultimate hope and proximate hopes right has been continually problematic for Christians in the modern period" (106).

My primary concerns with this collection are not with the content but rather the structure of the project. First, each of the particular essays gathered here was written for different audiences and with different objectives. Yet, Bauckham does not offer a clear indication of his desired audience for this overall project. At least a paragraph regarding the desired audience(s) would have been helpful for understanding Bauckham's vision in gathering this particular collection of essays.

Second, the conglomeration of Bauckham's thoughts here means that the "best way to read a book of this kind is to start with whichever chapters make the strongest immediate appeal" (xii–xiii). While this style can occasionally work for an edited compilation of multiple authors, the intentionally "structure-less" approach does not, at least in this case, work as well for a single author. The result is a haphazard, disjointed conversation. As a collection of academic essays, the lack of movement or obvious connections between essays made this book easy to put down after reading a single chapter and not pick up again for quite some time. Thematic groupings of the essays (such as globalization, environment, postmodernity, or human freedom, as hinted at here) could have encouraged more sustained engagement with the material. As with the problem of desired audience above, a further thematic clarity would have allowed Bauckham a distinctive voice as the editor, not just the author, of his volume. As it stands, the collection is simply too broad and loosely defined to sufficiently unite Bauckham's various essays.

Ultimately, even with these structural disadvantages, *The Bible in the Contemporary World* serves as a helpful resource for more than those who are interested

in studying Bauckham's hermeneutical approach. The breadth of topics covered means that students in philosophy, theology, environmental studies, anthropology, and more will find at least one essay in this collection that resonates with their field of study.

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The Analogical Turn: Rethinking Modernity with Nicholas of Cusa. Johannes Hoff. Interventions. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. ISBN: 9780802868909. Pp. xxvi + 241. $38.00 (USD).

Even a cursory glance at the jacket of *The Analogical Turn* gives clues to the association of this book with the Radical Orthodoxy movement within Anglo-Catholic theology. Part of the Interventions series edited by Connor Cunningham, the volume is enthusiastically endorsed by both Simon Oliver and John Milbank. Hoff's own introduction explains how he came to be adopted by this circle when he left his homeland to teach at Heythrop College—and why the book could not have been written while he was still working in Germany (xviii). Many will be familiar with the Radical Orthodoxy movement via James K. A. Smith's *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, which uses theological cartography as a type of intellectual mapping for the movement. Hoff provides something of an autobiographical addendum to Smith's map, incorporating the Kantian influences of Tübingen on his own writing, and suggesting that the influence of Neo-Kantianism on German theology is the reason why it did not follow the liberalizing trend of twentieth-century English theologians.

But for all that, the book does not want to be too closely associated with the moniker of Radical Orthodoxy, for important reasons. The genealogical approach favored by Milbank et al. carries with it an air of fatalism insofar as it implicitly claims that the present, while wholly contingent on the flow of history, nevertheless cannot be conceived of differently. Hoff does not believe this simplistic account does justice to the centuries-long transition from the medieval to the modern mindset, and instead demonstrates very ably that Nicholas of Cusa represented the last, best chance for Western Christianity to preserve the ontic reality of creation in the face of an increasing instrumentalization of life and reason. Univocity did not irreparably poison the well of Christian tradition, and for centuries after Duns Scotus there were opportunities for correctives.

The book begins with an intellectual biography of Nicholas of Cusa that sets the Renaissance cardinal up as a foil for the emerging artistic/philosophical revolution initiated by the use of perspective in Italian art. The theories of Bruneschel-

li and Alberti, both associated with the new representationalist school of art, require a type of abstraction of the viewer for artistic purposes that culminate in the intellectual disembodied "I" of Descartes's non-spatial self (chapters 6–7). Hoff describes the counter-proposal Nicholas created as a thought experiment for a group of Tegernsee monks in his book, *De Visione Dei*, asking them to consider their gaze upon a painting not as disengaged viewers but as a face-to-face encounter. The book was sent along with an icon that appeared to look directly at viewers no matter how they moved (chapters 8–9).

In Hoff's hands, the portrait of Cusa's thought experiment is shown to be one in which the icon seems to encounter the individual directly, regardless of their location/direction. Yet aurally, when the monks describe their experience to each other as they all move about looking at the icon, it is discovered that what was is already an impossible encounter (how can an icon follow me as I move about?) becomes an even greater impossibility when the monks realize they all experience this impossibility simultaneously (If the icon is looking directly at me, how can my brother say it is looking directly at him?). These mutually exclusive impossibilities, or "coincidences of opposites" in Cusa's terms, are at the heart of Christian contemplation of the Divine person, named by Cusa as the Face of all Faces. Consideration of that face begins a mystogogical ascent to God "from the perception of the temporal adumbrations that accompany the alterations of my unique perspective (of the icon); via the realization that the invisible is visible in the social space of face-to-face encounters; to the contemplative insight that our finite mode of being participates in the mystical body of Christ" (141). We cannot hope to exhaustively understand the interplay of sight, sound, and encounter but instead are called to a learned ignorance (*docta ignorantia*) through which we approach, but never achieve knowledge of God.

The counter-proposal that Hoff attributes to the artistic revolution underway in Italy treats the interaction of image, vision, and hearing in totally different terms. Where Nicholas takes the face-to-face encounter as the orienting symbol for Christian interpretations of reality, Alberti and his Renaissance compatriots baptize the myth of Narcissus as a form of control over the "image" of the world. Hoff, quoting Alberti, says the new Narcissus enables "my oculocentric ability to gain control over my mirror image by putting myself in the position of the eye point of a mathematically generated picture; and, second, my phonocentric ability to gain control over the meaning of the words I have received from the past by putting myself in the position of their historically and philologically constructed author" (151). Hoff masterfully shows the way this artistic discussion anticipates Cartesian introspection by two centuries.

The overall experience of reading the book can be slightly unsettling until the final chapters. While Hoff is clear that the mystagogical ascent of Nicholas of

Cusa's *De Visione Dei* is a more fruitful alternative to the representationalist geometry of Alberti and his successors, the book can at times be actively frustrating in denying a clear thesis or a modern template for re-enacting this ascent. What appears to be lacking is either a reason for the failure of the Cusanian alternative-modern vision, or a corrective that can re-baptize the project for our postmodern time; lacking, that is, until Hoff declares that Nicholas "felt no longer constricted by the resentful obsession with master signifiers that had allowed former generations of thinkers to justify their way of thinking through the refutation of what they considered wrong" (200). Finally the similar patterns in life and work between Nicholas and Hoff himself become clearer.

Both are indebted to their "pagan" tutors, both had to leave their native Germany to fully consummate their thinking, and both use interdisciplinary sources as diverse as mathematics, art history, and optics as mirrors to reflect their theological imagination. And as for Hoff's mirroring of Cusa's rhetorical structure by refusing to create a master signifier within the book: the challenging structure and subject material make the book unsuitable for undergraduates and difficult for non-specialists. But the reward for taking up this difficulty is an exceptional work of scholarship that speaks to myriad fields of theology, aesthetics, art history, and Renaissance thought in a penetrating and contemporary voice.

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Biblical Authority after Babel: Retrieving the Solas in the Spirit of Mere Protestant Christianity. Kevin J. Vanhoozer. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2016. ISBN: 9781587433931. Pp. xii + 269. $21.99 (USD).

The Protestant Reformation was a watershed in the history of the Christian church—and in its priorities. For example, the doctrine of *sola scriptura* was the rallying cry of the Reformers and continues to be a key element in Protestant belief today. Rather than fostering unity, however, the result of *sola scriptura* for the Protestant church seems to be an interpretive Babel, as groups and individual Christians champion their right to interpret the Bible as they see fit. In this book Kevin Vanhoozer takes up the challenge of this interpretive chaos within the Protestant movement, retrieving the Reformation *solas* (grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone, in Christ alone, for the glory of God alone) as a framework upon which to build an interpretive standard consistent with the tradition of what he repeatedly and inclusively calls "mere Protestant Christianity."

In his introduction Vanhoozer contends that "retrieving the five Reformation *solas* helps to address the contemporary problem of pervasive interpretive plural-

ism, and that retrieving the priesthood of all believers (ecclesiology) helps to address the problem of the authority of interpretive communities" (25). In order to prove his thesis, Vanhoozer addresses each of the *solas* in a separate chapter, providing a statement of what the Reformers meant by each before listing other views, providing an argument relating to his core idea of "mere" Protestantism, and then showing how each *sola* informs the Bible, the church, and interpretive authority.

Chapter 1 begins the argument by discussing *sola gratia* (grace alone) and showing that the Reformers understood grace to be "the work which the Triune God is doing in and through Christ and his cross" (42). The Reformers experienced that grace "verbally, through the various ways in which the Bible presents Christ—the gift of God" (45). Vanhoozer argues first that grace is the focus (material principle) of biblical interpretation, and that mere Protestant Christians read the Bible as a single unified story which is fundamentally about grace in Jesus Christ. Second, it argues that grace is the framework for biblical interpretation (the formal principle), and that mere Protestant Christians believe that the Bible, the process of interpretation, and the interpreter are all parts of the triune economy of grace. Mere Protestant Christians read the Bible in the economy of grace in order to be drawn higher and further into the light of Christ, always looking to the ultimate centre: "God's unmerited favour toward us shining in the face of the biblical Jesus" (69).

Chapter 2 first explains the Reformers' cornerstone affirmation of salvation by faith alone (*sola fide*), which comes through hearing the Word of God. Thus *sola fide* refers to the way Christians come to know of and appropriate the gift of Jesus Christ through Scripture. Vanhoozer affirms the ultimate authority of God, revealed in Christ, and transmitted by the commissioned officers (the apostles) who are the "authorised interpreters of Jesus's person and work" (91). From this apostolic transmission comes a primary factor in the fiduciary framework of faith, namely Scripture, and a secondary factor, the church and church tradition. Faith alone calls individual interpreters to attend to the authoritative apostolic testimony (Scripture), as read within the context of the church. *Sola fide* provides the mere Protestant Christian with an answer to scepticism through a "warranted epistemic trust in biblical testimony" (106).

Chapter 3 brings the reader to the most commonly known, and in Vanhoozer's opinion, wildly misunderstood *sola, sola scriptura* (Scripture alone). He begins the chapter by showing that the Reformers did not mean that Scripture was an island unto itself, but that Scripture holds the primary or supreme authority, excluding all other rivals when it comes to infallibility. He addresses the sufficiency of Scripture, as well as the idea that Scripture must be used to interpret Scripture. Vanhoozer argues that *sola scriptura* means that "interpretive authority begins

with the Triune God in communicative action, accords first place to Scripture interpreting Scripture, but also acknowledges the appointed role of church tradition in the economy of testimony" (143). *Sola scriptura* leads not to sectarianism, but Holy-Spirit-sensitive, critical, catholic (united) biblicism. The Scripture remains the standard, but the corporate confessions of the church have testimonial authority to inform interpretation.

Chapter 4 argues that the Reformers found the concept of the priesthood of all believers to be wrapped up in the idea of *solus Christus* (Christ alone), seeing this priesthood not as an opportunity for independence and fissiparousness but rather as the rallying cry for catholic unity in the Body of Christ. Vanhoozer argues that in Christ, local churches have the authority to make binding interpretive choices, to minister the Word in different ways (i.e., public ministry of ordained ministers and private ministry of the royal priesthood of all believers), and to do so in communion with other churches.

Chapter 5 argues that the many different branches of Protestantism can find unity in diversity, as churches of many traditions gather around the Lord's table, ordered by the principle of doing works *soli Deo gloria* (for the glory of God alone). This work excludes human glorification, demanding a loving willingness to set aside self for the call of union and communion in Christ. Interpretive Babel likewise must be set aside for a God-honouring reading of the Word in community, allowing all judgments to be submitted to the correction of Scripture. He concludes the work by summarizing his argument and providing a standard of mere Protestant biblical interpretation for the future church.

It is rare to find an academic work that is not just accessible but truly engaging. Vanhoozer has a unique style that couples honesty and humility with thoroughness and systematic detail. Each objection that surfaced in my mind as I read was addressed in the next pages. Each step of the argument is well documented and supported by sources from across the spectrum of theology, as well as throughout the history of the church. The footnotes provide discussion and suggestions for further study, which will aid researchers who wish to explore his argument further. While occasionally perhaps too scathing towards groups around the edges of the Protestant table, he is as a rule irenic and measured in his approach to differing opinions. Though he comes from an American Protestant background, and admits his presuppositions, he ensures that his arguments are backed by solid evidence. Those who see the Protestant Reformation as a divisive and damaging period in the life of the church could perhaps find fault with his approach to the five *solas*, but even they would have to admit that he has put forward a sound argument.

Vanhoozer's approach to the problem of Protestant interpretive Babel is respectful of history, and yet not bound by precedent. He is retrieving the great principles of the Reformation while still looking for fresh ways to engage these

principles to create more unity and certainty in biblical interpretation, and to allow for greater catholic unity within the Body of Christ. I would recommend this book to anyone who would like to meditate more upon the role of biblical interpretation in the twenty-first-century church in a healthy, historically grounded manner.

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Discovering Genesis: Content, Interpretation, Reception. Iain Provan. Discovering Biblical Texts. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. ISBN: 9780802872371. Pp. ix + 214. $22.00 (USD).

Discovering Genesis is a concise introduction to the Book of Genesis, its ancient and modern interpretation, and its reception. In keeping with the goals of the Discovering Biblical Texts series, Iain Provan's introduction also includes discussion on the influence of Genesis upon Jewish and Christian culture. Drawing from a variety of author-, text-, and reader-centered methods to interpret the text, Provan's attempts to bring historical-critical, pre-modern, and modern interpretations of Genesis into fruitful dialogue. *Discovering Genesis* is divided into eleven chapters. Chapters 1–4 provide a broad introduction to the scholarly study of Genesis and its historical interpretation, and chapters 5–11 focus on the interpretation of particular sections of Genesis.

In the first chapter of his introduction, Provan provides an overview of the general contents of Genesis, and outlines some of the basic philosophical questions being addressed by the book's authors. Chapter 2 focuses on the interpretation of Genesis until 476 CE and in the medieval period (476–1350 CE), while chapter 3 surveys Renaissance and Reformation (1350–1648 CE) and modern (1648 CE–present) interpretations of Genesis. Though Provan considers both the Jewish and Christian interpretations of Genesis, he tends to give greater attention to the Christian reception of the text. Indeed, his overview of the history of reception of Genesis tends to favour some historical and literary sources to the near neglect of others. For instance, Provan often highlights early rabbinic works, such as *Genesis Rabbah*, but very rarely does he discuss the reception of Genesis among the Dead Sea Scrolls (despite a great interest in Genesis among the community at Qumran), which at times gives the sense that *Discovering Genesis* treats the reception history of Genesis in a rather unsystematic and haphazard manner. Provan, however, successfully exemplifies his main point in chapters 2–3 that two main forms of interpretation of Genesis—literal and allegorical—de-

veloped throughout the years, and suggests that a renewed interest in the literal interpretation of Genesis emerged during the Renaissance.

In chapter 4, Provan outlines his own method for interpreting Genesis, which involves a close, literal reading of the text. For Provan, such a reading necessarily involves contextualizing Genesis within the literature and thought of the ancient Near East. Provan notes how kingship was central to the societies of the ancient Near East. These societies worshiped many deities, who were believed to reside in palace-temples within city-states, which, in turn, were thought to reflect the order of the cosmos. Though Provan is careful to note that portions of Genesis may date from different time periods, he favours the setting of the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, when many cultures began to question their respective "old religions." Provan situates the authors of Genesis within this context, suggesting that the authors of Genesis similarly questioned many of the assumptions of the "old religion" of Israel. As a test example, Provan situates the two creation stories of Genesis 1–2 within this context, and suggests that these stories could have been composed by a single author who utilized the cosmology of Genesis 1 (particularly its focus upon God's transcendence) in order to help develop the anthropology of Genesis 2 and emphasize the dominion of creation allotted to human beings.

Provan then employs his contextualizing lens to interpret Genesis in chapters 5–11. Chapters 5–8 focus on the primeval history (Genesis 1:1–11:26), which receives much greater attention in Provan's introduction than Genesis 11:27–50:26. While Provan briefly considers certain "scientific" questions with regards to the study of Genesis (for instance: "How are we to understand the logistics of animal-care in the ark—eight people caring for an estimated 42,000 animals?" [118]), he reminds his readers that such questions likely do not address the fundamental concerns of the authors of Genesis, who sought to address their own concerns about the "old religion" of Israel. The final three chapters of Provan's work discuss the patriarchal narratives and focus especially upon the working out of the divine promise and covenant with Abraham. While Provan raises several significant exegetical concerns (e.g., whether the deluge of Genesis 6–9 was truly a universal flood), he is only able to introduce such key interpretive issues briefly and rarely discusses such problems in great detail. Chapters 5–11 also include sections on the reception of Genesis and its influence upon Christian tradition, culture, and art. In these sections, Provan consults early rabbinic, early patristic, and various medieval and Reformation-era sources, often with a special focus upon Christian Renaissance literature, visual art, and music.

In conclusion, *Discovering Genesis* is certainly an enjoyable read, and would serve well as an introductory work for an undergraduate or seminary course, which is indeed one of the stated purposes of the *Discovering Biblical Studies* series. *Discovering Genesis* would also be suitable for interested non-academic

readers. While the work is rather terse at points (for example, the work does not include a concluding chapter), often only briefly treating interpretive issues before moving on to new sections, this also makes the work apt for those readers who wish to gain an initial, general understanding of the scholarly study of Genesis. It also seemed rather surprising that *Discovering Genesis*, a work intended to serve as an introduction to the study of Genesis, did not include a more sustained discussion of the Documentary Hypothesis, even if only to familiarize readers with the theory and its influence upon the interpretation of Genesis in the modern era. Conversely, one of the principal strengths of Provan's introduction is its treatment of the overall reception history, which satisfactorily served to outline a brief history of the interpretation of Genesis from its composition until the modern era and to situate modern study within that historical continuity. *Discovering Genesis* thus implicitly offers a rare, yet timely, self-reflective meta-analysis of the history of interpretation of Genesis, which demonstrates the author's own awareness of the limitations of employing modern critical approaches to studying biblical texts. Overall, this book is as an excellent introduction to the study of Genesis, particularly in its well-handled guidance in addressing key (and common) exegetical concerns in the text, and in its clearly outlined history of the western reception and interpretation of the text.

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