CANADIAN THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

A Journal of Theology, Scripture, and Culture

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The Importance of Response in the Interpretation of Job

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Abstract

Taking a synchronic approach in this article I argue that a key to understand the overarching theme and theology of the book of Job is to be found by examining the direction of both response and address in the book. Particularly, I argue that Job's curse/lament in chapter three is a response to Job's wife *and* an address to God, and that the divine speeches in chapters 38–41 are a response to the curse/lament in chapter three. I conclude by arguing that what is affirmed as good speech in Job 42:7 is the direction of speech.

Introduction

It seems that there is something of a disagreement between those who emphasize a synchronic reading of biblical texts and those emphasizing a diachronic reading.[1] Typical of this divide is the disagreement between narrative critics and those critics who place greater emphasis on, what is commonly called, historical criticism.[2] Without detailing the argument, one of the critiques by those who favor historical criticism is that those who interpret scripture synchronically often are overly simplistic in their readings.[3] While this is certainly true in some instances,

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1 Indeed, regardless of whatever disagreements do exist within the academy, I have also personally found a great deal of support and collegiality. Thus, I would like to thank V. Philips Long, under whose supervision this paper began as a guided study, and Mark J. Boda, whose feedback was invaluable in revising the paper. I am extremely grateful for their help.

2 For a well-known critique of historical critical methodologies, what Robert Alter terms "excavative scholarship," see Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (rev. ed.; New York: Basic Books, 2011), 13–17. For a response and counter-critique, see the article by Manfred Oeming and Anne-Ruth Pregla, "New Literary Criticism," *Theologische Rundschau* 66 (2001): especially 21–23.

3 This critique suggests, for instance, that narrative criticism is not able to answer all "textual problems" in the text. See Manfred Deming, *Contemporary Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction*, trans. Joachim Vette (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 64–65, and Robert P. Carroll, "The Hebrew Bible as Literature: A Misprision," *Studia Theologica* 47 (1993): 85–89. See Manfred Oeming, *Contemporary Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction*, trans. Joachim Vette (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 64–65, and Robert P. Carroll, "The Hebrew Bible as Literature: A Misprision," *Studia Theologica* 47 (1993): 85–89.

when one approaches the book of Job, the more difficult reading is often the synchronic reading. In fact, there seems to be something of a difficulty among scholars when they try to understand the theme or the theology of the book of Job as an integrative whole.[4] Yet, the earliest extant fragments of the book attest to the integrity of the book as we now have it. Thus, lacking further evidence, it seems that current interpretations would do well to include all its disparate parts.[5] However, to achieve such a reading is no small task. It is beyond the consideration of this paper to suggest a fully comprehensive reading of the book of Job. However, this paper will suggest that one of the keys to understanding the overarching theme and theology of the book of Job is to be found by examining the response and direction of address within the book of Job, particularly Job 3, 38–41, and 42:7–8. Taken together, and by examining the direction of response and address, these passages suggest an understanding that aids in the interpretation of the book of Job as a whole.

Curse and Lament as a Response

Job's speech in chapter 3 is accurately seen as both a curse and a lament.[6] The phrase in 3:1, אחרי־כן פתח איוב את־פיהו ויקלל יומו ("after this, Job opened his mouth and cursed his day"[7]), introduces a cry in poetic form that David J. A. Clines has accurately called "deep, raw, and terrifying."[8] Powerful as it is, there is a question whether this cry—this initial curse—is to be understood in fact as a response to something or even someone. Some commentators see Job's curse as a type of monologue, something that starts dialogue but nothing more.[9] However, the question arises whether viewing chapter 3 as a "monologue" is sufficient. I suggest that the term "monologue," when applied to Job's cry in chapter 3, is misleading because there is validity in interpreting what Job says in chapter 3 as a response and not just to something—in the sense of responding to a tragic situation—but, rather, to someone.

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4 Dell is somewhat typical in this regard when, in her attempt to find an overall classification for the book of Job, she dismisses the Elihu speeches as secondary, later additions. See Katharine Dell, *The Book of Job as Sceptical Literature* (New York: de Gruyter, 1991), 195–98.
5 See the discussion by C.L. Seow, *Job 1– 21: Interpretation and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 26–39.
6 Most commentators tend to divide ch. 3 between a "curse" and a "lament." See Norman Whybray, *Job* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 38; Gerald Wilson, *Job* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 35; and Norman Habel, *The Book of Job* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 106. However, not all divide the chapter in the same way. For example, van der Lugt does not see a strict break between vv. 11–26 and vv. 3–10 if the former is a lament and the latter a curse. Pieter Van der Lugt, *Rhetorical Criticism and the Poetry of the Book of Job* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 57–58.
7 All translations unless otherwise noted are my own.
8 David Clines, *Job 1–20*, WBC 17 (Dallas: Word, 1989), 104.
9 Wilson is the clearest among the commentators when he calls ch. 3 a "passionate monologue." Wilson, *Job*, 35. However, the number of commentators who refer to ch. 3 solely as a "soliloquy" gives the general impression that Wilson is not alone in his view. See Marvin Pope, *Job*, 3rd ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973), 28 and Whybray, *Job*, 16.

However, I find myself somewhat uncomfortably in a minority position of one on this matter, and so the question arises can this be a valid understanding of chapter 3. The key to understanding Job's curse/lament as a response to *someone* is found in 3:2. To begin, it will be helpful to take a sampling of the major English translations:

"And Job said:" (ESV)

"And Job spake, and said," (KJV)

"And Job said," (NASB)

"This is what he said:" (NJB)

"He said:" (TNIV)

"Job said:" (NRSV)

If one were to follow only the English translations, the verse would misleadingly seem straight forward. Job speaks.[10] While appearing simple and straightforward, the verse does not *necessarily* read as simply as the translations would suggest. The MT of Job 3:2 reads ויען איוב ויאמר ("and Job answered and said"). It is, in fact, this word ענה (ויען) that is missing from both the major English translations as well as the translations of many commentators.[11]

This is not to say that commentators have not noticed the MT but, rather, choose not to translate ענה as "answer." C. L. Seow, who translates the phrase as "And Job responded and said," argues that the combination of ענה and אמר is a "frozen formula used in the introduction of speech" and can be speech that is not a response to previous dialogue.[12] Thus, supplying a translation of ענה is somewhat superfluous. Indeed, while this usage of ענה and אמר as the introduction of speech without response is attested to in the MT, it must be questioned whether this is the best understanding of the collocation in Job 3:2.[13] Significantly, the majority of the occurrences of ענה and אמר in the book of Job occur at the exact point where the speeches shift between the various characters with three exceptions (34:1, 35:1, and 40:1).[14] However, even within these three examples, the phrase still occurs within the context of a continuing response. These occurrences could arguably serve to heighten the dialogue or imply the continuation of

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10 Highlighting its succinctness, Alden notes "Job 3:2 is the shortest verse in the . . . Bible." Robert L. Alden, *Job* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 72.

11 For example, Pope translates 3:2 as "Job spoke out and said." Pope, *Job*, 26. Clines translates it, "and Job said." Clines, *Job 1–20*, 67.

12 Seow, *Job 1–21*, 312 and 38.

13 Places where the collocation of ענה and אמר do not imply response include Gen 31:36, Judg 18:14 and 1 Sam 14:28. For other examples, see Seow, *Job 1–21*, 338.

14 The other examples are Job 1:7, 9; 2:2, 4; 3:2; 4:1; 6:1; 8:1; 9:1; 11:1; 12:1; 15:1; 16:1; 18:1; 19:1; 20:1; 21:1; 22:1; 23:1; 25:1; 26:1; 32:6; 34:1; 35:1; 38:1; 40:1, 3, 6; 42:1.

speech—and response—and, thus, could validly be translated as "and character X *continued* to answer and say."[15] At the very least, the situation is more ambiguous, and to translate Job 3:2 only as "said" without any indication of response is to impose only one possible understanding of the text. Allowing for the possibility that Job's cry in chapter 3 is a response to something or someone and coupling this allowance with a reading that assumes some measure of integrity of the text, even if redacted, causes us to re-examine the text and look for to what—or whom—the character Job is responding.

Moving to the possibility of a response, Clines has suggested that Job is responding not to someone in particular but rather to his situation. Thus, in his commentary, Clines argues that ענה in Job 3:2 does not "imply any previous speech."[16] Rather, he cites *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (BDB), which notes that ענה can be understood as meaning to "respond to an occasion, *speak in view of circumstances*" (emphasis mine).[17] Cline's understanding of ענה in Job 3:2 implies an understanding of ענה as a *cry without a verbal precursor*. Therefore, it is unnecessary to translate the verb as implying that the character Job in chapter 3 was "answering" or "responding" to someone but was reacting to his situation. While this is just one possible understanding of ענה, it is unclear if this is the understanding meant in the context of Job. Consider that, in addition to Job 3:2, out of the 29 occurrences of the combination of ענה and אמר, 28 of these clearly occur in the context of dialogue and response with another character.[18] In one sense, Clines's understanding of ענה as "respond to an occasion" would be correct as it upholds the idea of ענה as a response. However, given that in the book of Job the overwhelming majority of collocations of ענה and אמר are only ever found in the context of dialogue and response between the characters, one is at least tempted to look for a suitable partner—a human character—to whom Job could be responding.

The three friends have not uttered a word at this point, and, as such, they would seem unlikely candidates. However, a more suitable dialogue partner could be in Job's wife, who is introduced in chapter 2. She makes the briefest of appearances in 2:9 when she says, "מחזיק בתמתך ברך אלהים ומת עדך" ("Still you are holding on

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15 Similarly, Clines argues that the collocation of ענה and אמר in Job 40:1, 34:1, 35:1 and 36:1 simply suggests the continuation of speech. David Clines, *Job 38–42,* WBC 18B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011), 1133.

16 Note 2.a. Clines, *Job 1–20*, 69.

17 Again, Clines, *Job 1–20*, 69. The citation is of Francis Brown et al., "ענה I," BDB, 772. It should be noted that, while Clines is working from the BDB, the reading is also supported by the *DCH*, which suggests that ענה in Job 3:2 is a "response to a situation." Clines, "ענה b," *DCH* 6:493.

18 The one exception to this is Job 23:5, where the character Job expresses a desire to know what God would ענה and understand what God would אמר, which still suggests a context of dialogue and response. See Habel, *Book of Job*, 349 and Georg Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1963), 364–65.

to your integrity, curse God and die"). However, given the character Job's immediate response in 2:10 to his wife's statement in 2:9, is it possible that one could interpret Job's curse in chapter 3 as also being a response to his wife's call to "curse God and die?" Particularly problematic is Job 2:10, where the character Job appears to chastise his wife's call by saying, "כדבר אחת הנבלות תדברי גם" ("According to the speech of one of the foolish you also are speaking"). But is the matter settled? A closer inspection reveals a strong connection to Job 3. Of particular interest is the use of the two imperatives (Piel and Qal respectively) at the end the verse, "*curse* God and *die*."

In the first instance, the use of ברך for *curse* is an unusual use of the word. The *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (HALOT) notes the typical meaning of ברך II in the Piel means 'to bless.'[19] However, there is also a rarer, "euphemistic" usage of ברך found in 1 Kgs 21:10, 13 and Ps 10:3, meaning "to curse," which HALOT states is synonymous with the root ארר.[20] Though the euphemistic usage of ברך as *curse* is rare, it is broadly accepted that this is the usage of ברך in Job 2:9. The theme of cursing is picked up again in the "curse" (קלל) of Job in chapter 3. Given this, perhaps it is meant to connect to the imperative of Job's wife in 2:9 to "*curse* God and die." Therefore, a closer look at the word קלל in Job 3:1, "and Job *cursed* his day," is warranted.

While not as common as the term ארר, lexicons note that the Piel of קלל can mean "curse" or "declare cursed."[21] What is clear is that the Piel of קלל can belong to the semantic range of words related to cursing, such as ארר.[22] Even more significant is the connection of the word ברך to קלל. Both HALOT and the *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (DCH) offer that the antithetical use of Piel ברך as "curse" can be related to the Hebrew word קלל.[23] Significantly, HALOT notes that there are various instances where קלל is explicitly contrasted with the word ברך (Pss 62:5; 109:28; and Prov 30:11).[24] What this suggests is that the use of קלל in Job's curse in 3:2 is meant to parallel Job's wife's statement in 2:9, "curse (ברך) God and die!"

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19 See Köhler et al., "ברך II," *HALOT* 1:160.

20 Ibid.

21 See Clines, "קלל," *DCH* 7:257 and Köhler et al., "קלל,"*HALOT* 2:1104. The latter nuance is also noted by Schottroff, who suggests קלל implies to "declare cursed" while ארר carries a more "concise meaning" of "curse." Willy Schottroff, *Der Altisraelitische Fluchspruch* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), 29–30. Similarly, Blank argues that the use of קלל can be considered a "less-offensive" term than ארר. Sheldon Blank, "The Curse, Blasphemy, the Spell, and the Oath." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 23 (1951): 84.

22 Indeed, Dell implicitly acknowledges this when she says that the "curse" (קלל) of Job 3:1b is a "clear parallel" to the "curse" (ארר) of Jer 20:14. Katherine Dell, ""Cursed Be the Day I Was Born!": Job and Jeremiah Revisited." in *Reading Job Intertextually*, ed. Katharine Dell et al. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 109.

23 Clines, "ברך" *DCH* 2:271 and Köhler et al., "ברך" *HALOT* 1:160.

24 Ibid.

However, it is not just the pairing of קלל and ברך that connects what is said in chapter 3 to the wife's statement in 2:9. It is also the wife's second imperative "and *die*" (מות) that finds a parallel in 3:11, when Job laments, "Why did I not *die* [מות] in the womb?" ("למה לא מרחם אמות"). Not only is this the first use of מות by the character Job, the use of מות in v. 11 is also significant because 3:11 is situated exactly at the break between Job's curse in 3:3-10 and his lament in 3:1-20—the two-fold structure of chapter 3.[25] Therefore, the structure of Job's curse and lament in chapter 3 is based upon the two imperatives in the wife's statement in 2:9. Given this, the structural repetition and the verbal connections (the parallelism of קלל // ברך and מות) between 2:9 and chapter 3, Job's curse and lament in chapter 3 may serve as a *response* to his wife's statement in 2:9. That there is an immediate response from Job in 2:10 is not a great concern, because the collocation of ענה and אמר is also used in the book of Job to designate continuing response to previous speech (e.g., 34:1; 35:1; 40:1).[26] The important point is that these three examples are still responses in the context of *dialogue* between characters, and, thus, suggest that Job 3 is meant to be understood as a response to some character's previous speech. Though the character Job had visitors in the verses between 2:10 and 3:2, there are no intervening speeches between 2:10 and 3:2 to make us think that Job is responding to someone else. Therefore, I suggest that in chapter 3, the character Job is again picking up his response to his wife.

However, the connections between Job 2:9 to chapter 3 also suggest that Job's curse/lament is a response to his wife only in part. For, Job's wife, in two imperatives, did not only say, "Curse and die," but, rather, had someone in view for that curse, "Curse *God* and die" ("ברך אלהים ומת"). Given the parallels of both the "cursing" (קלל) in 3:2 and the desiring for death (מות) in 3:11, I suggest that there is also a connection between Job's wife's call for God to be the object of his cursing in 2:9 and what is said in chapter 3. An initial reading of Job 3:1 would seem to offer no help here, since it appears straightforward that the object of Job's curse is "his day" (את־יומו).[27] So far, there is no disagreement with the commentators.

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25 Though some scholars, such as van der Lugt, do not see a strict break between Job 3:3-10 and 11:24, the majority of scholars accept such a division. For his view, see Van der Lugt, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 57–8. Clines, on the other hand, argues that the "marks of closure . . . are very definite" in Job 3 and notes that Job 3:3–10 ends with v. 10 acting as a "'motive' line" that gives ground for the following lament. Clines, *Job 1–20*, 17:76. Similarly, Seow notes that, in Job 3, a "causal *kî* ends each poetic movement at verses 10 and 24." Seow, *Job 1–21*, 315.

26 Indeed, Clines suggests as much when he likens Job 40:1 to 34:1 and 35:1, which he suggests "only . . . indicate that Elihu continues to speak." Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1133.

27 Most commentators allow that this refers either specifically to the day of his birth or his life generally.For those who hold יומו to mean the day of his birth, see: Wilson, *Job*, 35; Alden, *Job*, 71–72; S.R. Driver and George Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1971), *Book of Job*, 30; and Gerald Janzen, *Job* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 61. For those who broaden the understanding of יומו to Job's life beyond the day of his birth, see: Clines, *Job 1–20*, 78–79; Pope, *Job*, 28; and August Konkel, *Job* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale 2006), 46.

However, given the content of Job's curse/lament in chapter 3 and its parallel to 2:9, which calls for God to be the object of cursing, there is the suggestion that Job's curse and lament in chapter 3 intended to involve God.

It seem unlikely to the reader that the character Job, who is presented in Job 1:1 as "blameless and upright" ("תם וישר")[28] and as an "archetype" of the righteous human, would curse his deity directly.[29] However, this is not to say that what the character Job says in chapter 3— in both his curse and lament—does not *involve* God. Already, Perdue has noted that Job's curse in 3:3–10 echoes the creation narrative of Genesis 1:1–2:3.[30] The significance of this is not to be lost; it is not just that the character Job curses "his day" ("יומו"), but he does it in such a way that demands the "reversal" of creation.[31] Job has not cursed God, but he has cursed the created order. Doing so forces the hand of the one who ordered creation. There is a very real sense in which Job's calling for the "reversal" of creation is something to which the character knows the deity *must* respond. The character Job, while not cursing God directly, involves God in his "curse" by cursing God's created order. Thus, while in one sense chapter 3 is a *response* to his wife, it also functions as an *address* to God.[32] That chapter 3 is an address becomes clearer as one reads the whole of the book. Particularly, it is the God-speeches at the end of the book that bring clarity to this issue.

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28 This is a typical English translation of the phrase תם וישר (see ESV, NRSV, NASB, NIV). The translation of תם as "blameless" is preferred by some over the KJV rendering of תם as "perfect," because this can mislead the average reader into thinking the word implies "sinless perfection." See Alden, *Job*, 46. However, while also preferring the translation *blameless*, Clines does argue for an understanding of תם as "sinless" noting it fits the characterization of Job. Clines, *Job 1–20*, 12. Given the hyperbolic nature of the prologue and the questions of "innocence" within the book of Job, the understanding of תם as "perfection" is allowable. Ivanski concurs with this assessment when he says, "There is no doubt that the author wanted to depict him [Job] as a perfect individual." Dariusz Ivanski, *The Dynamics of Job's Intercession* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2006), 77.
29 David Burrell, *Deconstructing Theodicy: Why Job Has Nothing to Say to the Puzzle of Suffering* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008), 22. The presentation of the character Job in the prologue as almost "perfect," the archetypical righteous man, heightens the character's cry in Job 3.
30 Leo Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, JSOTSup 112 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 91–98. Engljähringer would seem to agree when she says that Job's curse "ist mit Gen 1,1–2,3 sitlich vertraut." Klaudia Engljähringer, *Theologie Im Streitgespräch: Studien Zur Dynamik Der Dialoge Des Buches Ijob* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2003), 27. See also Michael Fishbane, "Jeremiah Vi 23–6 and Job Iii 3–13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern," *Vetus Testamentum* 21 (1971): 153–55.
31 Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 98.
32 Indeed, this is the view of Balentine who, although he also sees Job 3 as "self-directed," asserts that Job 3 is additionally "God-directed." Samuel Balentine, *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible: The Drama of Divine-Human Dialogue* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 169. That this is a solid interpretive possibility is strengthened by work on the notion of "overhearing" in prayer. The basic argument is that some prayers are structured in such a way so that characters, while not being *directly* addressed in a prayer, are *included* in the hearing and thus are indirectly *addressed* in the prayer. For examples of this, see Derek Suderman, "Are Individual Complaint Psalms Really Prayers? Recognizing Social Address as Characteristic of Individual Complaints," in *The Bible as a Human Witness*, ed. Randall Heskett et al. (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 153–70.

A Response to Curse and Lament

To begin, many scholars are of the opinion that God, in chapters 38-41, does not in fact answer Job. J. G. Williams is representative of this consensus when he says that the God-speeches are a "riddle," because Job hears "none of his questions… answered."[33] Likewise, Katherine Dell suggests that the God-speeches are not an answer but are "designed to stop man's questioning by saying that God's ways are too mighty for him to understand."[34] It is suggestive of a view of the deity in the book of Job as a character who, though he speaks, is "lordly, haughty, condescending, dismissive, [and] reprimanding."[35] Such assertions, however, seem to miss a dynamic in the book of Job, namely the connection of the God-speeches to what was said in chapter 3. Undoubtedly, God does speak in "power" in chapters 38–41, but that is not to say that the deity ignores or does not address the concerns of the character Job.[36] To assert such a thing would seem to be, to my mind, a profound misreading of the book as a whole. It is best to argue this point by first looking at connections, particularly the connections between Job's curse and lament in chapter 3 and the God-speeches in chapters 38–41.

The connection between Job's curse/lament in chapter 3 and the God-speeches becomes most obvious in the subject of Leviathan (לותן). The word לותן first appears in Job 3:8 when he calls, "יקבהו אררי־יום העתידים ערר לויתן" ("Let the cursers of the day curse, those who are ready to rouse up Leviathan"). Lipinski argues the Hebrew word לותן corresponds to the Ugaritic *ltn*, which in the Ba'al epic is presented as a seven-headed sea monster and is related to the forces of chaos.[37] However, not all scholars agree with this.[38] Regardless of whatever the creature, לותן, might stand for, its mention is something that God does not allow to go unchecked.

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33 James Williams, "You Have Not Spoken Truth of Me: Mystery and Irony in Job," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 83 (1971): 241.

34 Dell, *Job as Sceptical Literature*, 135.

35 Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress 1997), 390.

36 Brueggemann represents this view when he asserts that God refuses "to entertain Job's profound question." Also, Brueggemann thinks that Job's "profound question" is found in 21:7: "Why do the wicked live, reach old age, and grow mighty in power?"(ESV) (390). Respectfully, this paper disagrees that Job's question in 21:7, which centers on issues of theodicy and justice, is Job's primary concern or even a question to which Job is seeking an answer. Job's primary concern will be addressed later.

37 Both Fishbane and Perdue argue this is the idea intended in Job 3:8. Thus, Fishbane argues that the "curse" in ch. 3 is a reversal of creation in ch. 3. Fishbane, "Jeremiah Vi 23–6 and Job Iii 3–13," 154 Furthermore, Perdue notes that the call in 3:11 for לויתן connects to the mention of התנינם הגדלים, which are understood to be "great sea monsters" and related to ANE forces of chaos, in Genesis 1:21. See Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 97.

38 Clines, for instance, argues "it is a mistake to see … Job invoking forces of chaos." Clines, *Job 1–20*, 87. However, this is curious as Clines notes in another place that Leviathan is found in several places in the OT as a "mythological creature," a "seven-headed sea-monster, personifying the waters of chaos." Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1191. Given this, Clines' argument—that we should not see Leviathan as "a symbol of . . . chaos"—is unconvincing. Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1191.

Thus, we encounter the word לויתן again in the God-speeches in 40:25 (Eng. 41:1), when the question is asked to Job, "Can you catch *Leviathan* (לויתן) with a fish-hook?" The connection between these two uses of לויתן is significantly strengthened when the series rhetorical questions, starting in 40:25, ends in the affirmation in 41:1 (Eng. 41:10) that none is "fierce enough in order to *arouse* [עור] him." The mention of עור again connects to Job 3:8, where Job calls upon those who could "rouse [עור] Leviathan."[39]

However, there are other connections between Job's curse in chapter 3 and the God-speeches of chapters 38–41. For instance, the phrase עפעפי־שחר, which only occurs twice in the book of Job, occurs in Job 3:9 and again in the God-speech in 41:10 (Eng. 41:18)—in the description of Leviathan.[40] Additionally, the theme of darkness raised in chapter 3 is revisited in chapters 38–41. Similarly, Ho's suggestion that God's question in 38:2—"Who is this one darkening (חשך); [my] plan with words without knowledge?"—is a reference to the calls in Job 3:4, 5 for "darkness" ("חשך") to claim "his day," is quite convincing.[41] Furthermore, the "clouds" ("עננה") that are meant to "settle" upon Job's day and the "death's shadow" ("צלמות") that is meant to "reclaim" Job's day become parts of the created order in the divine response in Job 38:9 and 17.[42] In another instance, the imagery of the "stars of twilight" ("כוכבי נשפו"), which Job wished to be darkened in 3:9, is reversed by God in 38:7, where the "stars of morning" ("כוכבי בקר") sing at the creation of the world.[43]

Themes of birth and the raising of young also connect the two sections. Language used in 3:10–12 is repeated in the God-speeches. Thus, in 3:10, Job laments that the "doors" ("דלתים") of his mother's "womb" ("בטן") were not shut and continues in 3:11 by asking why he did not die from the "womb" ("רחם"). This language is echoed in the divine speeches, in Job 38:8–10, where "doors" ("דל־תים") are the boundaries for the sea that is birthed from the "womb" ("רחם").[44] Secondly, in 3:12, Job asks why there were "breasts [for him] to suck;" this is

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39 Joachim Vette, "Hiob's Fluch und Gottes Antwort: Bedrohung und Erhaltung der Schöpfung als Thematische Klammer," *Communio viatorum* 48 (2006): 4–14, esp. 8.

40 Alter calls it "the pointed connection." Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 109.

41 Ho argues this connection is strengthened with the repetition of the word גבר in Job 3:2 and 38:3. Edward Ho, "A Quest for Coherence: A Study of Internal Quotations in the Book of Job" (PhD diss., McMaster Divinity College, 2012), 374. Similarly, Perdue makes the connection between God's "accusation" in 38:2 with Job's words in ch. 3 (particularly with Job's language that attempts to return "creation to the *darkness* of chaos" [italics mine]). Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 203–204.

42 Ho, "Quest for Coherence," 377. In regard to צלמות, Ho quotes Alter, who says צלמות in Job 38:17 is "part of the larger cosmic picture not to be perceived with mere human eyes." Robert Alter, "The Voice from the Whirlwind," *Commentary* 77 (1984): 36.

43 See Ho, "Quest for Coherence," 377, and Alter, "Voice from the Whirlwind," 36.

44 This connection of דלתים and רחם in Job 3 and 38 is made by Ho. See Ho, "Quest for Coherence," 378. Though the word used in reference to the sea in 38:8 is "burst forth" (גיח), the imagery is a reference to birth, albeit a very powerful birth. Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1101.

imagery concerned with the care of the young.[45] Thematically this has a response in the God-speeches—in the menagerie of animals—where young lions (38:39), ravens (38:41), mountain goats (39:4), and birds of prey (39:30) are described as nurtured and cared for.

There are numerous connections between the divine speeches and other parts of the book of Job.[46] However, it is also true that there are a significant number of *particular* connections between the divine speeches and Job 3. Enough to suggest, at the very least, that themes mentioned in Job 3 are picked up again in the divine speeches of Job 38–41 in a significant way. When this is taken into consideration it gives one pause, because the cry of Job in chapter 3 is not only a curse for creation to be reversed (a challenge addressed to God that seeks a response) but is also a lament. It is a lament that begins with that powerful question, "Why [למה] did I not die?" It is this visceral cry that is in fact Job's first question.[47] Thus, in responding to a challenge to the created order—to a challenge that was at least implicitly addressing the Creator—God did more than respond to the "curse" of Job. In His affirmation of the life of all creation, God *responds* to the question that Job asks in 3:11. By affirming all of life in the divine-speeches, the deity includes Job's life. Yet connecting Job 3 to the divine speeches raises an interpretive challenge.

An Affirmation of Response . . . to

Job 42:7 stands as a significant verse in the book of Job because it gives an evaluation of what has been previously said. A standard translation of the verse can be found in the ESV, which reads "After the LORD had spoken these words to Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite: 'My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.'" The importance of this apparent judgment is highlighted by the verbatim repetition of the latter half of the verse in 42:8b. The reference to 42:7 at one level seems quite simple; God chastises Eliphaz and Job's two other friends for not speaking correctly *about* God as Job had done. However, since Job had challenged God's creation in his curse and lament in chapter 3, it is unlikely that the character Job

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45 Alden, *Job*, 76. Furthermore, the reference to knees (ברכים) found in 3:12 is also a reference to nursing. Thus, Clines argues that it is likely "Job wishe[d] that…he had *not been nourished as an infant* but left to perish." Clines, *Job 1–20*, 90. Such an understanding makes the imagery of care and nurturing for the young animals in the God-speeches all the more poignant.

46 For example, Ho, following the work of Freedman, Johns, McCabe and Waters, notes the connections of the meteorological motif in Job 38:2–38 with the Elihu speeches. Ho, "Quest for Coherence," 378–79.

47 Furthermore, given that nowhere in the speech cycles with the friends are we led to believe that this question was ever removed I disagree with Brueggemann that the question of justice was the primary question for the character Job. See Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 390.

is portrayed as always having spoken correct content *about* God as most of the English translations suggest.

The difficulty of this reading is highlighted by the fact that commentators come to fairly different conclusions as to what is meant by correct speech "about" God. Thus, Whybray argues that since Job had not always painted a correct picture about God in the speech cycles of chs. 3–37, the reference to Job speaking correctly must refer to his "repentance" in 42:3, 5.[48] Similarly, Fohrer also suggests that the speech God was commending was Job's words in 40:4–5 and 42:2–6.[49] However, it is unclear how this could be the case when in the same context God also refers to the friends' speeches, which occurred in prior chapters. That is to say, there is a question as to why God would reference Job's final words in 42:3, 5 while in the same instance comparing it to the friends' speeches in chapters 4–37. Why would God not reference what Job said in the dialogue cycles with the three friends? Other commentators think that what God refers to in Job 42:7 is the speech cycles confirms the unlikelihood of this interpretation. However, even here scholars disagree as to what specifically about Job's speaking is being commended. For instance, Janzen and Konkel think that Job is commended because throughout his speech Job is continually hoping in God.[50] Pope, on the other hand, maintains that Job is affirmed in that he maintained his "innocence."[51] Brueggemann and Gutiérrez argue that Job is affirmed because he was bold to bring the question of justice to God.[52] While there is a diversity of opinion on exactly what is meant by *correct speech*, it must lay somehow in the content of Job's speech. However, then we are brought back to the original problem; the content of Job's speech does not always appear to be correct.

Undoubtedly, part of the difficulty in understanding this verse stems from how it has been understood traditionally. Particularly, there are questions about how the phrase "כי לא דברתם אלי נכונה" is to be translated. We will start with a sample of the English translations:

"for you have not spoken *of* me what is right," (ESV)

"for ye have not spoken *of* me [the thing that is] right," (KJV)

"because you have not spoken *of* Me what is right" (NASB)

"for not having spoken correctly *about* me" (NJB)

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48 Whybray, *Job*, 172.

49 Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 539. A suggestion also made by Gray. See John Gray, *The Book of Job* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010), 503.

50 Konkel, *Job*, 240 and Janzen, *Job*, 264.

51 Pope follows Delitzsch in this regard. Pope, *Job*, 350.

52 See Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 392. Brueggemann notes a similar theme to Gustavo Gutiérrez in his commentary on Job. See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987).

"because you have not spoken *of* me what is right" (TNIV)

"for you have not spoken *of* me what is right," (NRSV)

What becomes apparent in these translations is that the accepted understanding of 42:7 by English translators was that Job had spoken correctly *of* or *about* God, with the primary understanding being somehow the content of Job's speech. However, this understanding is less clear when approaching the Hebrew. Particularly, there are questions about how one ought to translate and understand the preposition אל.

The *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, HALOT, and DCH assert that the primary use of the preposition אל is directional, as in "to" or "towards." However, all three also list a figurative usage, closer in understanding to the preposition על, meaning "concerning" or "about."[53] In this regard, the translations are not incorrect as the preposition אל can mean "concerning," "about," or "with regards to."[54] However, in the context of the book of Job this may not be the correct understanding. Oeming notes that of the 76 occurrences of the preposition אל in the book of Job, it occurs nine times in combination with the root דבר ("to speak").[55] Furthermore, Oeming argues that in nine of these occurrences, not including the use in 42:7b and its repetition in 42:8b, the preposition אל means "to."[56] An example of this usage of אל occurs in 42:7a, when it says "after the LORD spoke [דבר] these words to [אל] Job." In this instance, אל is functioning as a directive indirect object marker.[57] While perhaps not conclusive, the proximity does at least give credence to the thought that the second occurrence of אל and אמר in 42:7 carries a similar meaning.[58] Considering that in the book of Job the character Job does not always spoken correctly *about* God and that in every other occurrence when אל is combined with the verb אמר in the book of Job the preposition marks the indirect object, the phrase in 42:7 ("כי לא דברתם אלי נכונה") is more accurately translated as "for you did not speak correctly [that is] *to* me."[59] Thus, what is

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53 For example, in Gen 20:2, Abraham says "about" ("אל") Sarah his wife that she was his sister Köhler et al., "אל," *HALOT* 1:51, and, in Jer 22:1, YHWH speaks "about" ("אל") Shallum. Clines, "אל," *DCH* 1:268.

54 Most of the entries noted occur primarily in the books of Samuel and Kings.

55 And 11 times in combination with the related verb אמר ("to say"). Manfred Oeming and Konrad Schmid, *Hiobs Weg: Stationen von Menschen im Leid* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2001), 137.

56 Oeming and Schmid, *Hiobs Weg*, 137.

57 This is in contrast to an understanding of אל as marker of specification. See Ronald Williams and John C. Beckman, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), §299, §300, and §306.

58 Further evidence comes from the LXX, which reads ἐνώπιόν μου, "before me." While not carrying the same connotation of *direction* as the Hebrew אל, Oeming notes the stress is laid upon the relational aspect of speaking rather than on the content of speech, as the English translations would seem to suggest. Oeming and Schmid, *Hiobs Weg*, 138.

59 It should be noted that there is some question whether a Niphal participle (נכונה) can be used in an adverbial sense. However, Oeming argues that the usage of the Niphal participle נכונה in the adverbial sense (while uncommon) is not problematic. Oeming and Schmid, *Hiobs Weg*, 138. In

being commended as correct speech in the book of Job is the *direction* of the speech not necessarily the *content*.[60] Moreover, this translation better fits the context of a book in which the direction of response and direction of speech is so important.

Moreover, this translation becomes a powerful commentary on the theology of the book as a whole, for it tells the reader that theology is neither sterile nor independent. It is doubtful that in the book of Job we are meant to see the theological content of the friends' speeches as *necessarily* wrong. They speak what is the accepted wisdom; they speak what is orthodox. However, they also speak only amongst themselves. Their moralizing, while in a sense accurate, is disconnected both from the reality the character Job is facing as well as the God whom Job continually addresses.[61] In short, it is a wisdom that is disconnected from reality.[62] Not so for the character Job. He has felt the full brunt of the situation. He has experienced profound loss and tragedy and responds with the weight of that experience. He first gives voice to this in chapter 3 in a curse that reverses the created order and calls for a return to chaos. It is not necessarily a response that the reader would have initially expected, but it serves as example of the dynamic development of the character. However, as we have seen, chapter 3 is not merely a response to tragedy or perhaps even to his wife, it is also an address to God. Furthermore, it is an address to which God responds.

These three parts together—the response of Job in chapter 3, the response of God in 38-41, and God's final adjudication of Job's speech, must be taken into account when seeking an overarching theme and theology for the book of Job. Some have suggested that the theme and theology of the book of Job is best characterized by what some would call *chutzpah*, an audacious faith bordering on

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particular, Oeming cites Gesenius, who notes that adjectives, especially in the feminine (which נכונה is can carry an adverbial meaning. Gesenius et al., *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar: With a Facsimile of the Siloam Inscription by J. Euting and a Table of Alphabets by M. Lidzbarski*, 2nd English ed.; 13th reprint (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), §100, 295. The *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* also provides an adverbial understanding of the Niphal (נכון) of the verb כון in 1 Sam 23:23 and 26:4. Köhler et al., "כון," *HALOT* 1:464. See also the *DCH*, which says that נכונה in Job 42:7 and 42:8 function adverbially. Clines, "כון," *DCH* 4:373.

60 Burrell makes this exact point: "What the voice from the whirlwind commends is… the inherent rightness of Job's mode of discourse: speaking (however he may speak) *to* rather than *about* his creator." Burrell, *Deconstructing Theodicy*, 109. Oeming and Burrell are not the only ones to hold this understanding. See also Seow who adopts such a reading. Seow, *Job 1–21*, 92. See also Phillips, who, while allowing for an understanding of the preposition אל as meaning 'to,' sees the situation as far more ambiguous. Elaine Phillips, "Speaking Truthfully: Job's Friends and Job," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 18 (2008): 31–43.

61 As Vogels notes, "Their language was a particular type of theoretical theological language, deaf to reality" ("Leur langage était un type particulier de langage théologique théorique, sourd à la réalité"). Walter Vogels, *Job: L'homme Qui a Bien Parlé De Dieu* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1995), 249.

62 While beyond the scope of this article, if this assessment is accurate, it would be a worthwhile endeavour to revisit the meaning of adverbial usage of נכונה.

"insolence," and indeed one wonders if what is affirmed in the book of Job is a boldness and dialogue with God.[63] Is this sort of behavior allowed in what it means to be תם וישר? While I lean towards this interpretation, at the very least we are presented with a vision of wisdom in the book of Job that is not merely about obedience to a sterile orthodoxy, as some understand the book of Proverbs to advocate. Rather, the vision of correct wisdom in the book of Job is one that is lived within context, the context of relationships both with others and with the deity. While this is not the final word on the overarching theme and theology of the book of Job, any attempt to reach an overarching theme and theology for the book of Job must pay attention to the dynamic of response and direction of speech within the book.

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63 See Darell J. Fasching, *Narrative Theology after Auschwitz: From Alienation to Ethics* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992), 50–54. Fasching's work reflects the understanding of the word as highlighted by Lane. See Belden C. Lane, "Hutzpa K'lapei Shamaya: A Christian Response to the Jewish Tradition of Arguing with God," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 23 (1986): 567–86.

The Story of Our Life:
Written by the God Who Suffers With Us and For Us:
The Role of the Church in the Treatment of
Mental Illness

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Abstract

In the era of the Fall, humankind's suffering is as variegated and ubiquitous as it is relentless. A major instance of such suffering is that concerning the scope, profundity, and diversity of mental illnesses, and the peculiar anguish these illnesses entail. Not infrequently pastors are the first people whom mentally ill people approach for assistance. Yet pastors are often ill-equipped to recognize major mental dysfunction, with the result that the pastor naively assumes the troubled person to be spiritually defective when she is ill. To be sure, she *is* spiritually defective, since her illness does not preclude her being a sinner. At the same time, the pastor who suggested someone's fractured limb or diabetes to be a spiritual problem would expose himself as ludicrous and incompetent. Psychiatrists too often find the clergy's outlook one-sided, simplistic, unsophisticated, and unrealistic. Clergy, on the other hand, have been underserved by a theology whose traditional categories owe much more to Greek philosophy than to Hebrew logic. Such a theology has yet to come to terms with a God whose Son's cross means not less than the Father's limitless vulnerability, and whose Son's resurrection means not less than the limitless efficacy of such vulnerability. While this article discusses major psychiatric categories and the relation of pastor and psychiatrist, it is concerned chiefly with exploring biblical theology with respect to the God whose suffering is the only hope for a suffering humanity.

Introduction

In my final year of theology studies (1970), University of Toronto, I enrolled in a course, "The Human Person in a Stressful World." The course instructor was Dr. James Wilkes, a psychiatrist connected with the Clark Institute of Psychiatry (now part of Toronto's Centre for Addiction and Mental Health). Until then (I was 25 years old) I had apprehended no more of psychiatry than the silly caricatures and stupid jokes that popularly surround "shrinks" and "wig-pickers." Months later I emerged from the course not merely with medical information I had heretofore lacked; I emerged with a new world. Wilkes hadn't simply added several items to my mental furniture; he had admitted me to a world I hadn't known to exist.

What was the world? It was the complexity of the human person together with the multidimensionality, pervasiveness and relentlessness of human suffering. It was the configuration of the stresses, frequently swelling to distresses—intra-psychic, social, biological, historical, religious—that bear upon people, together with the configuration of the manifestations of such stresses.

My debt to Dr. Wilkes is unpayable. I gained an appreciation of the scope, profundity, and versatility of human suffering. He spared me lifelong shallowness born of ignorance; spared me a simplistic, unrealistic approach to the people I would see every day for the next forty years in my work as a pastor.

One month after the course had concluded I was ordained to the ministry of The United Church of Canada, the nation's largest Protestant denomination. In no time I was living and working in northeastern New Brunswick, one of the most economically deprived areas of Canada. And just as quickly I found myself face-to-face with people whose difficulties were the "common cold" of the psychiatric world; e.g., mood disorders, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia. I also witnessed suffering less commonly seen in the 20th Century: hysterical paralysis (episodic leg immobility in someone devoid of a physical impediment), and even hysterical blindness when someone was "put on the spot" in a troubling social situation only to find her vision disappearing and returning repeatedly.

Biblical Logic

As I revisited my theological understanding I developed a constellation of key spiritual themes found in the Abrahamic tradition. This constellation of key spiritual themes formed the matrix of my ministry to psychiatric sufferers.

God is for us

The first spiritual theme is elemental: God is *for* us. Three thousand years ago the Psalmist exulted, "This I know, that God is *for* me" (Ps 56:9). This conviction is the bass note, the downbeat, the ever-recurring throb. It remains the stable basis and the governing truth of everything else: God is *for* us. It's picked up again in the apostle Paul's letter to the church in Rome: "If God is for us, who is against

us?" (Rom 8:31). The force of the assertion is, "If God is *for* us, who could ever be against us *ultimately*, regardless of all appearances to the contrary?" Since "appearances to the contrary" abound in anyone's life, and especially in the ill person's life, it cannot be iterated too often that God is *for* us.

To be sure, those who read Scripture are always aware that it says much else about God: God is judge, God is wrathful, God's face is set against evildoers, and so on. Ill people tend to fasten on these texts, convinced that their illness is the result of God's anger concerning them, and God's judgement upon them.

Nonetheless, the general tenor of Scripture (to use John Wesley's expression) is wholly different. Admittedly, God *is* judge (isn't any person who lacks judgement anywhere in life to be pitied?). Unlike our judgement, however, God's judgment is always the converse of his mercy. God bothers to judge us only because God has first resolved to rescue us and restore us. (If God didn't intend the latter he wouldn't bother with the former: he would simply ignore us.) God's judgement, then, is always and only the first instalment of our restoration and the guarantee of its completion.

Since, according to Scripture, God *is* love, love isn't merely something God does (the implication being that God could as readily do something else if he wished; namely, not love); rather, since God *is* love, love is all God is and therefore all God can do. God can never not love; that is, God can act only in a manner consistent with his character. For this reason, said Martin Luther, God's wrath is God's love burning hot—but always and everywhere *love*.

Mentally ill people, let me repeat, tend to assume their illness is the result of God's displeasure with them. Two comments have to be made here: one, their illness isn't the result of God's displeasure; two, if elsewhere in life they have mobilized God's displeasure (ill people like to remind me—correctly—that though they may be ill they are still sinners) God's judgement is only his love setting us right. God's judgement is God's mercy beginning its work of restoration.

God is *for* us. This note has to be sounded relentlessly, for this note determines the rhythm of human existence.

God's vulnerability

The second item in the constellation of key spiritual themes is that God shares our vulnerability; shares our vulnerability not least because God is vulnerable himself. Ill people, I have found, fault themselves remorselessly for not being invulnerable; for not being strong enough, able enough, competent enough, resilient enough; in short, for not being inviolable. They assume that finitude, limitation, weakness isn't or isn't supposed to be part of our humanness. They fault themselves for not being invulnerable in the face of life's assaults. I have noticed, by the way, that psychiatric sufferers who fault themselves for their fragility

would never fault themselves if they suffered a broken leg in a car accident. Without hesitation they would fault the driver whose car struck them. In other words, when they are physically incapacitated, they can legitimately blame others; when they are psychiatrically incapacitated they can only blame themselves.

There has arisen in our society a miasma that continues to settle upon and soak into the populace at large; namely, we are, or are supposed to be, invincible, devoid of fragility, frailty, and finitude. We are, or are supposed to be, nothing less than titanic in our capacity to withstand assaults. We are, or are supposed to be, possessed of an omnicompetence amounting to omnipotence. Worse, such omnipotence is deemed to be an attribute of God, and therefore a property of those made in God's image.

Omnipotence, however, understood as unmodified, unconditioned power, is terrible. A moment's reflection should assure us that power for the sake of power; power unqualified by anything; sheer power is sheer evil. Then why attribute it to God? (John Calvin, we should note, insists on this point.)

More profoundly, power, properly understood, is the capacity to achieve purpose. What is God's purpose? It is a people who love him and honour him as surely as he loves and honours us. How does God achieve such purpose? It is through God's own vulnerability. Scripture speaks relentlessly of the One who repeatedly, characteristically suffers at the hands of his people yet never abandons them. In Scripture God's suffering is likened to many things. But it is likened most often to a woman in end-stage labour whose child (conceived in pure joy) has brought her greater distress than she could have imagined, yet who will not renounce the struggle, but must see it through, until the child who is her delight is in her arms, and on her lap.

So it is with God. From an apostolic perspective, the cross attests God's limitless vulnerability (he hasn't spared himself anything for our sakes), while the resurrection attests the limitless *efficacy* of limitless vulnerability.

It is not only that we humans are *unable* to escape our vulnerability (regardless of the messages advertisers beam upon us); to *want* to escape it is to want to be Herculean. And to think we *can* escape it is to fancy ourselves "colossal," and to ignore our Creator who renders himself defenceless before us for our sakes.

At this point we should ponder the matter of God's suffering. To speak of it at all is to immerse ourselves in centuries-old controversies pertaining to the impassibility of God. Few have spoken on it as profoundly, I think, than Karl Barth.

Barth insists that as sovereign Lord, God cannot be made to suffer by anything apart from God or opposed to God. Nonetheless, God is free to will himself to take on the creature's vulnerability, suffering, and death. And in the Incarnation God unites himself with humanity in order to take humanity's misery into himself, in order to destroy it, and thereby triumph over it.

The God who is impassible (he can't be made to suffer, can't be bribed or bought by suffering, can't have his being altered through suffering); the God whose impassibility ensures that he cannot suffer so as to be "bent" into non-God, freely takes on suffering and death. And yet he isn't thereby threatened by them, but rather prevails over them.

Because Barth's Christology is utterly non-Nestorian (i.e., Barth doesn't understand Christ's suffering in such a way that Christ's human nature suffers while his divine nature does not), to say that God suffers in his Son is to therefore say that God suffers in himself.

In short, the impassible God becomes passible by grace (otherwise God is un-affected by our suffering, unacquainted with it, and unable to do anything about it), yet simultaneously remains impassible in that he isn't merely victimized in it, but rather triumphs over it.

Psychiatric sufferers should be helped to see that their fragility isn't a sign of moral weakness, or personal failure, or uncommon ineptitude, or unusual folly. They should be helped to see that owning their vulnerability, rather than denying it or attempting to flee it, might just be essential to their recovery. Sufferers should be helped to see that their vulnerability is the leading edge of their triumph, as surely as God's self-exposure to human anguish is the condition of his prevailing in the face of it.

God is the Ultimate "Story-Writer"

The third item in the constellation of spiritual themes is that God alone is the "story-writer" who can render the negative, seemingly opaque developments and details of our existence a story rather than a chaotic jumble that ultimately defies comprehension.

Imagine a line in the middle of a novel; e.g., "The man who had waited for hours finally walked away, dismayed that the woman hadn't noticed him." If the question were asked, "What does it mean?," the obvious rejoinder would be: "It all depends; it all depends on what preceded this event in the narrative, and, no less, on what follows this event. Ultimately, it all depends on how the narrative turns out; that is, it depends on the last chapter." The mentally ill person persis-tently comments, "I don't know why I'm ill; I don't understand what it's suppos-ed to mean; I can't make any sense of it." Lack of meaning is a stress in anyone's life, yet lack of meaning is something that confronts us all whenever we are face-to-face with evil.

We should admit that one aspect of evil's evilness is evil's sheer meaningless-ness. To the extent that evil could be understood, it would be rational event; its evilness reduced by the explanation. What is evil is finally inexplicable and will always lack meaning, not least the evil of illness.

In the face of the stress of that meaninglessness which makes the burden of illness all the more burdensome, the ill person is always prone to try to reduce the burden by positing a meaning, by "finding" a meaning (as it were) that actually isn't there, but the "finding" of which is easier to endure than no meaning. The problem here, however, is that the "meaning" the ill person posits is arbitrary, unrealistic, and worst of all, self-deprecating. Now she thinks the meaning of her illness is that it was "sent" to teach her a lesson, or to remind her of personal failure, or to make major changes in her life, or to confirm her inherent wickedness. In the interest of reducing her burden she has only increased it.

The truth is that the meaning of any one event in anyone's life depends on several factors. In the first place it depends on what has preceded the onset of illness. In the second place it depends on what is yet to occur in that person's life. Above all, it depends on the meta-narrative that gathers up and determines the ultimate significance of all the events, good and bad, in that person's life—which meta-narrative no one, ill or not, can write inasmuch as no individual is the author of her own meta-narrative.

All of us like to think we understand how life is unfolding and how life's ingredients are connected until—until a negativity occurs that is nothing less than a "surd" (in the mathematical sense); i.e., a development that doesn't fit anywhere, and can't be seen to fit or be made to fit; a "surd" development that defies the logic by which we had understood our own existence up to this point. Yet since the meaning of a story depends on the last chapter, and since the last chapter hasn't been written nor can be written by us, we must admit that *for the present* illness remains a surd: we cannot determine its meaning at this time, nor its place in the conclusive narrative that is anyone's life.

Scripture maintains, we must note, that the ultimate meaning of anyone's life can be entrusted to the One whose meta-narrative gathers up our self-determined, myopic narratives, and transmutes them into something whose meaning, truth, and splendour we can only await at this time, but which we need not doubt.

Let's change the metaphor. Instead of an author or master narrator let's think of a master weaver. A weaver weaves loose threads into a rug whose pattern is recognizable and pleasing; more than pleasing, desirable—why else would anyone find the rug attractive and want to purchase it? Two comments are in order here. One, what goes into the rug are hundreds of loose threads of assorted lengths and diverse materials. Two, even while these threads are being woven into a rug, anyone looking at the rug from underneath would see something that wasn't recognizable, wasn't attractive, and would seem little improvement on loose threads. And yet, when the weaver has finished and we can look at the rug from above we recognize a pattern, a completion, an orderliness that is comely and convinces us that the rug is a finished work, elegantly concluded. Only as we are

brought from looking up from underneath to looking down from above do we recognize what the weaver has accomplished.

Right now all of us are on the underside of the rug looking up at it; and while the apparent lack of order and attractiveness may puzzle us or even amuse us, the mentally ill person is never amused and is more than puzzled: she is dismayed, fearing that her life, seemingly a jumble now, will never be more than a jumble. Lacking coherence now, it will always lack coherence. Scripture, however, insists that ultimately no one's life is meaningless; no one has to posit an arbitrary meaning in order to render life endurable, fictively endurable. Instead, we affirm that the weaver gathers up all the elements of our existence, including the most painful and incomprehensible, with the result that our life, our concrete existence, finally is and finally is seen to be coherent, meaningful, attractive, useful, a finished work brought to completion.

The church must embody the truth it upholds

The fourth item in the constellation of key spiritual themes is that a community has to embody the truth it claims to cherish. In short, a community has to embody, exemplify, the constellation of spiritual themes discussed to this point. Since scripture attests, for instance, that there is no human being, anywhere, in any predicament, who is ever God-forsaken, the community that upholds this truth has to embody it.

Note: I didn't say there is no human being who doesn't feel God-forsaken. Neither did I say that people have no reason to feel God-forsaken. Indisputably they have. Nonetheless, since it remains true that God doesn't abandon, despise, or reject, there has to be a community that doesn't abandon, despise, or reject. Our concrete embodiment of this truth takes three forms.

Here we must invoke Martin Luther. Luther maintained that Christians live not in themselves but in another; more to the point, in two others: Christians live in Christ by faith and in the neighbour by love. While there is only one way of living in Christ by faith, there are three ways of living in the neighbour by love.

In the first place, and most simply, the community shares its material abundance with those who are especially needy. Everyone is aware, of course, that there is a government-enforced, non-voluntary sharing of our material resources with the needy. This enforced, non-voluntary assistance is found in the combination of graduated income tax and social assistance and health-care. While this arrangement isn't an explicit aspect of the life of the church, it is the indirect illumination arising from the witness of biblically-informed communities. We ought never to sell it short, and we should continue to ask ourselves what might be the social texture of our society if secularism succeeds in extinguishing the indirect illumination of biblically-informed peoples.

The Mississauga congregation I pastored for 21 years partnered with the local synagogue and Baha'i fellowship in developing two affordable housing projects (value: $35 million). This housing accommodated needy people, among whom were always many who were in psychiatric difficulty, and more than a few whose psychiatric condition was chronic. Quickly we noticed that many of the people we housed were undernourished; whereupon we developed Mississauga's first food bank. It still operates, and every year it distributes food whose market value is $12 million. Next we noticed that many children were so poorly fed they were underachieving at school; whereupon we fashioned a "breakfast club" in order to give them a nutritious start to the school-day. The "breakfast club" was headed-up by the rebbitzin, the rabbi's wife. She served unstintingly for 25 years. At one point there were 44 people from my own congregation serving in the "breakfast club."

The most elemental level of community is serving the neighbour's material scarcity through our material abundance.

The second way of living in the neighbor by love, said Luther, is more difficult: the Christian community shares the neighbour's suffering. To share the neighbour's suffering where mental illness is concerned is at least to befriend that person, and thereby at least reduce the suffering person's isolation and loneliness.

The mentally ill person suffers what every human suffers in terms of frailty, disease, bodily breakdown through accident, sickness and aging. In addition, the mentally ill person suffers from her particular psychiatric problem, indeed *lives*—lives out—that problem, as the non-psychiatrically afflicted do not live *that* problem, at least.

The third way of living in the neighbour by love, concluded Luther, is more difficult still: it is to share her disgrace. Unquestionably the mentally ill person suffers social stigmatization.

I cherish the friendship of a woman who has been diagnosed with a bi-polar mood disorder; in addition she has an intermittent borderline personality disorder; in addition she has psychotic episodes; and most recently she has become paranoid. She and I have tea together once per month. We relish each other's company, and we email each other as needed between tea-times. Recently at one of our afternoon get-togethers she said, "I don't care what the genesis of mental illness is. I don't care whether it is physiogenic, or psychogenic, or sociogenic. Just end the stigma."

What is the stigma? What has it been traditionally?: that the mentally ill are *humanly* deficient. (No one is denying a psychiatric deficiency, but human deficiency is something else, and theologically impossible for those God-stamped in his own image.) Or she is thought to be morally deficient; or uncommonly wick-

ed; or—perhaps worst of all—in league with the devil, and therefore a candidate for the witch-hunts that slew over 100,000 people in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The Christian community ought to be aware at all times of the appalling burden of the three levels of suffering. More to the point, the Christian community ought to be schooling itself in Luther's threefold understanding of how Christians live in the neighbour through love.

When I was a pastor in Mississauga my wife and I invited back to lunch each Sunday a different family from the congregation. Several matters need to be noted here. First, the unmarried person was still a family, and should not be overlooked in a society almost exclusively couple-oriented. Second, in a congregation of 400 families there were always several people who had been diagnosed with assorted psychiatric problems. Third, the mentally ill person is not only suffering atrociously herself; her family is suffering too, in a different manner to be sure, but suffering nonetheless.

I came to see that loneliness is a pervasive problem, found no less even among the socially privileged. How much worse is the loneliness in those whose mental illness heightens their isolation? And not to be overlooked is the loneliness in those whose ill family-member has found the family isolated.

In the course of our simple hospitality we welcomed to our home and table the bipolar person, the obsessive-compulsive, the phobic, the schizophrenic, the substance-addicted, and those afflicted with personality disorders. Among these were the "dual-diagnosed"; e.g., the mentally ill person who is also blind, or in trouble with the law.

The role of the community of faith isn't to mimic the mental health professional; certainly it isn't to suggest that medical intervention is superfluous. The role of the community of faith is to render concrete its conviction that ill people matter and shouldn't be ignored. Not least, the role of the community of faith is to hold up—for the sufferer herself but also for the wider society—the truth that Jesus Christ has appointed the troubled of this earth to a future release and recovery more glorious than their pain allows them to glimpse at this time.

Recent New Creation Conceptions and the Christian Mission*

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Abstract

In the past few decades, there has been a rising theological interest in biblical descriptions of a new creation. Particularly in the last fifteen years there has been a growing discontent with conceptions that emphasize the nature of the final state as primarily spiritual in nature. A number of theologians from various faith traditions within broad evangelicalism have expressed a notable interest in the idea that the world will be renewed and that the final state will have relative continuity with the present creation. In addition to affirming continuity between the present creation and the new creation, these theologians argue that there is continuity with regard to individual persons and with regard to human society and culture. In some cases, they perceive what I have termed a correspondence of identity so that an identity exists between particular aspects of the present creation and particular aspects of the new creation. In correspondence of identity, the point is that a single definite thing or person, or set of things or persons as distinguished from others, maintains the same identity in the final state as it does in the present state. The purpose of this essay is to survey specific examples of continuity and correspondence of identity within select recent new creationists such as N. T. Wright, Richard Middleton, Howard Snyder, Douglas Moo, and Russell Moore. I will argue that the concepts of continuity and correspondence of identity present in these recent conceptions have direct relevance for Christians' participation in God's mission today and unites their present participation with their future participation in God's redeemed new creation.

The world into which we shall enter in the Parousia of Jesus Christ is therefore not another world; it is this world, this heaven, this earth; both, however, passed away and renewed.

— Eduard Thurneysen[1]

In the book *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond,* Craig Blaising argues that a survey of the history of Christian thought manifests two basic models for conceptualizing the final state of the redeemed.[2] The spiritual vision model tends to view the final state as a heavenly and timeless existence. The new creation model emphasizes an earthly, material, time-sequenced, and embodied existence in a new heavens and new earth.[3] Though the two conceptions have their respective emphases, one should not think of the two conceptions as necessarily exclusive. Still, there is widespread consensus that the history of the church has been dominated by conceptions that could be categorized within Blaising's first model, the spiritual vision, and that the emphases of the new creation model generally have been ignored or rejected.[4]

However, over the past few decades there has been a growing discontent with

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1   Eduard Thurneysen, *Eternal Hope*, trans. Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth, 1954), 204.

2   Craig A. Blaising, "Premillennialism," in *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, ed. Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 157–227. Blaising explains an interpretive model as "a heuristic device for comprehending complex views." Ibid., 160. His description of the "two models of eternal life" as he calls them (160–64), along with his examination of the respective models throughout church history (164–81), serve as a foundation for his argument for premillennial return of Christ. Also see Blaising, "New Creation Eschatology and Its Ethical Implications," in *Ethics and Eschatology: Papers Presented at the Annual Theological Conference of Emanuel University*, ed. Corneliu C. Simut (Oradea, Romania: Emanuel University Press, 2010), 7–24. While the emphasis in the discussion of the two models is upon the final state, contemporary discussions of personal eschatology often revolve around passages of Scripture that inform a proper understanding of what occurs at the death of the believer when he is comforted in the presence of Christ, though without a body (e.g., Luke 23:43 and Phil 1:23). The term normally used to describe this state is heaven, a term that has a wide range of meaning in Scripture; see Mitchell G. Reddish, "Heaven," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:90–91.

3   The models that Blaising proposes are helpful in distinguishing tendencies throughout the history of the church. I use the word "tendencies" because there exists neither a strict definition of a spiritual vision view nor a new creation view. The various views, because of slight nuances, could be thought of as being positioned on a linear spectrum, where movement to either the left or the right would indicate a conception of the final state that emphasizes the spiritual and heavenly elements or, alternatively, one that emphasizes material and earthly elements.

4   In addition to Blaising's essay, other works in which this dominance can be seen include Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang, *Heaven: A History* (Princeton, NJ: Yale University Press, 1988); Bernard McGinn's series *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, 5 vols. (1 additional volume forthcoming) (New York: Crossroad, 1991–2005); Jeffrey Burton Russell, *A History of Heaven: The Singing Silence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); H. Paul Santmire, *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); Howard Snyder, *Models of the Kingdom* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991); and Benedict T. Viviano, *The Kingdom of God in History*, Good News Studies, vol. 27 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988).

conceptions that emphasize the nature of the final state as primarily spiritual and a rising theological interest in biblical descriptions of a new creation.[5] While not eschewing all elements of a spiritual vision model, the recent new creationism emphasizes characteristics that have been absent—or at least minimized—in the spiritual conceptions of the final state which have dominated church history. The issues involved in recent dialogue include not only distinctions between the inter-mediate state and the final state of believers (and, hence, the relationship between heaven and the final state[6]), but also the relationship between this world and the next (including whether the present universe will be annihilated or renewed and purified), ethical concerns regarding the impact of human activity in this world to life in the new earth (including creation care, responsible stewardship of the earth, societal and cultural concerns, worldview, the built environment, and even an emphasis on urban renewal), the relationship of the new heavens and new earth to history, and the idea that the work of Christ includes not only the salvation of the individual, but also the redemption of the entire creation from the effects of sin.[7]

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5   In *The Bible and the Future*, Anthony Hoekema argues that the world will be renewed and that the final state will have relative continuity with the present creation. Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979). See especially chapter 20, "The New Earth," 274–87. Hoekema highlighted a traditional feature of Dutch Reformed thought that was new cre-ationist in that it affirmed continuity between the present heavens and earth and the new heavens and new earth. Examples from the tradition include Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003–2008) (especially vol. 4); Hendrikus Berkhof, *Christ the Meaning of History*, trans. Lambertus Buurman (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966); G. C. Berkouwer, *The Return of Christ*, trans. James Van Oosterom, Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972); and Abraham Kuyper, *De Gemeene Gratie* (Leiden: Donner, 1902). Additionally, in his explanation of new creationism, Hoekema quotes the language of the Belgic Confession (Art. 37) that states that Christ will come to cleanse the old world in fire and flame. Although there seems to be dependence upon Hoekema among contemporary evangelical theologians arguing for a new creation concep-tion, widespread discussion of the issue was not manifested in the literature in the two decades that followed the publication of Hoekema's work. Within the last fifteen years, though, a number of theologians from various faith traditions within evangelicalism have expressed a notable interest in the issues that Hoekema addressed over thirty years ago.

6   See n. 2 above.

7   The growing discontent regarding the tendency toward a spiritual vision eschatology throughout history spans across various denominations and ecclesial traditions. A wide range of essays and articles from a Christian perspective have appeared within the last decade, each one emphasizing one or more of the issues mentioned here. Examples of brief non-technical articles and essays that embody a new creation emphasis include Charles P. Arand and Erik Herrman, "Attending to the Beauty of the Creation and the New Creation," *Classical Journal* 38 (2012): 313–31; Rodney Clapp, "Animals in the Kingdom," *Christian Century* 129, no. 13 (2012): 45; Eric O. Jacobsen, "We Can't Go Back to the Garden: Critiquing Evangelicals' Over-Ruralized Eschatology," Christianity Today, http://www.christianitytoday.com/thisisourcity/7thcity/ ruralizedeschatology. html (accessed August 23, 2013); Phil Hamner and Andy Johnson, "Holy Mission: The 'Entire Sanctification' of the Triune God's Creation," *Didache* 5 (2005): 1–8; Dan G. McCartney, *ECCE HOMO*: The Coming of the Kingdom as the Restoration of Human Viceregency," *Westminster Theological Journal* 56 (1994): 1–21; Jon Meacham, "Heaven Can't Wait: Why Rethinking the Hereafter Could Make the World a Better Place," *Time*, 16 April 2012, 30–36; Mark P. Surburg. "Good Stuff! The Material Creation and the Christian Faith," *Classical Journal* 36 (2010): 245–62; Al Truesdale, "Last Things First: The Impact of Eschatology on Ecology," *PSCF* 46 (1994): 116–22; Michael D. Williams, "On Eschatological Discontinuity: The Confession of an Eschatological

I would point out here that interest in these issues can be seen through a survey of recent presentations/sections at the meetings of the Evangelical Theological Society, the Canadian Evangelical Theological Association, and the Society of Biblical Literature, respectively.[8]

Representatives of Recent New Creationism

The first example of the recent interest in new creationism is N.T. Wright. Wright's new creationism is most explicitly stated in his 2008 work *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*, in which he confronts the idea that the Christian hope is going to heaven when one dies and the idea that heaven is the ultimate destination or final home for the Christian.[9] According to Wright, the NT is concerned more with life *after* life after death than it is with life after death. Another example is J. Richard Middleton, who has emphasized a redemption that is holistic in nature. In his work *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, he describes his vision of salvation as follows:

> [T]he redeemed human race will once again utilize their God-given power and agency to rule the earth as God intended—a renewal of the human cultural task, but this time without sin. . . . Far from being the end or cessation of history, this is history's true beginning, free from the constraints of human violation vis-à-vis God, or other

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Reactionary," *Presbyterion* 25 (1999): 13–20; Idem, "Rapture or Resurrection," *Presbyterion* 24 (1998): 9–37; and Idem, "Regeneration in Cosmic Context," *Evangelical Journal* 7 (1989): 68–80. Recent books that have emphasized the issues above include Randy Alcorn, *Heaven* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2004); Richard Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation*, Sarum Theological Lectures (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010); Idem, *Living With Other Creatures: Green Exegesis and Theology* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011); Steven Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care*, Engaging Culture (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001); David Bruce Hegeman, *Plowing in Hope: Toward a Biblical Theology of Culture* (Moscow, ID: Canon, 1999); Eric O. Jacobsen, *Sidewalks in the Kingdom: New Urbanism and the Christian Faith*, The Christian Practice of Everyday Life (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2003); Idem, *The Space Between: A Christian Engagement with the Built Environment*, Cultural Exegesis (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012); David Lawrence, *Heaven: It's Not the End of the World* (London: Scripture Union, 1995); Paul Marshall and Lela Gilbert, *Heaven is Not My Home: Living in the Now of God's Creation* (Nashville: Word, 1998); Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., *Engaging God's World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Michael D. Williams, *Far as the Curse if Found* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2005; Micheal E. Wittmer, *Heaven is a Place on Earth: Why Everything You Do Matters to God*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004); and Albert M. Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005). An investigation into what might be the cause or causes behind the growing discontent is needed, along with a thorough analysis of the literature included in the growing discontent.

8   The academic interest in these issues is even evidenced by shifts in the curricula in many Seminaries as seen in the findings of the "Report on Faith and Ecology Courses in North American Seminaries" done by The Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development. For the report see www.interfaithsustain.com/engaging-seminaries/.

9   N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008).

humans, or the earth itself. The climax of the biblical story, which many have called the "eternal state," is fundamentally this-worldly. When God brings his original purposes to fruition, we find not escape from creation, but rather new (or renewed) creation.[10]

In a number of brief articles and essays, and in the section on Eschatology in *A Theology for the Church*, Russell Moore argues that the picture of the restoration of all creation "is not of an eschatological flight from creation but the restoration and redemption of creation with all that entails: table fellowship, community, culture, economics, agriculture and animal husbandry, art, architecture, worship—in short, *life* and that abundantly."[11] Like Wright, Moore argues against the idea that the point of the gospel is that we go to heaven when we die.[12] Rather, the gospel points to God winning back his good creation by restoring and recreating "a world that vindicates his original creation purposes."[13] While he seems to be more cautious than Wright in keeping the redemption of human beings at the heart of God's plan, and evangelism as the church's primary goal, Douglas Moo proposes "that the attitude of an 'either/or' when it comes to evangelism and environmental concern is a false alternative."[14] A significant contribution of Moo to recent discussion is an article in which he argues that Paul's use of the phrase "new creation" in Gal 6:15 and 2 Cor 5:17 should be understood primarily as the description of a new age that

10 J. Richard Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 70.

11 Russell D. Moore, "Personal and Cosmic Eschatology," in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B and H Academic, 2007), 859. Moore's analysis of what the church has believed (873–92) manifests the dominance of what Blaising calls the spiritual vision understanding of eternal life, and thereby parallels the histories in n. 4 above. It is also in general agreement with Middleton's description of the hybrid idea that consists of a belief in bodily resurrection, and a final state that is essentially spiritual and heavenly, implying non-materiality.

12 Ibid., 912. He argues further, "Eternity means civilization, architecture, banquet feasting, ruling, work—in short, it is eternal *life*. The new earth is not the white, antiseptic, hyperspiritual heaven some Christians expect as their eternal home. Nor is it simply the everlasting family reunion with calorie-free food and super powers, as some hope." Ibid.

13 Ibid., 913. For Moore, this idea should impel the Christian to action in the present life. For his understanding of the effects of a new creation eschatology upon the Christian's present life (hope, ethics, social and political action, and corporate witness), see especially Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), and the section on how the doctrine of eschatology impacts the church today in "Personal and Cosmic Eschatology," (917–25). One may also consult the various articles at http://www.russellmoore.com/papers/ that speak to these issues.

14 Moo, "Nature in the New Creation: New Testament Eschatology and the Environment," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49 (2006): 454. He likens this dichotomy to that of evangelism versus social concern during the 1960s and 1970s, and understands both to be "profoundly out of keeping with the witness of Scripture" (454). Cautioning against subordinating Scripture to environmental concerns, Moo points out that evangelicals have responded at times "by retreating to a kind of rigid historical exegesis that deliberately brackets out the concerns of our own world." He calls this "a mistake in the opposite direction, in its extreme form creating an unbridgeable ditch between the Bible and the issues that press upon us so insistently." Douglas J. Moo, "Creation and New Creation," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 20 (2010): 40.

has come through Christ's first coming and will be consummated upon his return.[15] Moo attempts to provide justification for using the phrase "new creation" to refer to something wider than individual human transformation—the renovation of the cosmos and the fulfillment of new heavens and new earth prophecies such as Isa 65 and 66, including transformed Christians who live in perfected relationships with God, one another, and with the world of nature.[16]

A final example is Howard Snyder. In his *Salvation Means Creation Healed*, Snyder argues that as a result of the wide scope of sin, redemption has a wide scope as well.[17] Because sin is comprehensive, the cure has to be comprehensive as well.[18] The goal, Snyder concludes, "is not to reach heaven, but to have full fellowship with God and one another now and in the final new creation. Creation healed! This is salvation, true healing salve. It is the good news."[19]

While the emphases vary from theologian to theologian, the focus upon certain biblical themes can be seen throughout the conceptions of the recent new creationists. Three of these themes are the coming of God's kingdom, the reality of the resurrection of the body, and the reconciliation of all things. Overall, though, and what is most important for the present discussion, is the common affirmation that, instead of being annihilated, the present creation will be renewed and transformed (or regenerated and restored). Arguing that texts such as 2 Pet 3 and Rom 8 teach that redemption upholds the existence of the present created order in its materiality, these new creationists affirm that the present heavens and earth have an enduring role in God's plan of redemption.[20]

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15 Moo, "Creation and New Creation."

16 Moo writes, "'New Creation' is manifested in the present through transformed Christians who live in transformed relationships with God, with one another, with all people, and with the world of nature. 'New Creation' will be consummated when these relationships are perfected by God himself and when he brings his created world to its final state of glory." Moo, "Creation and New Creation," 59. Regarding the Isaianic prophecies and their relation to the Pauline passages in which he is interested, Moo writes that "in his familiar prophecies about a 'new heavens and new earth,' Isaiah envisages an ultimate salvation that extends beyond the people of Israel or even the land of Israel to include the entire comos [*sic*]: a 'new heavens and new earth' (Isa 65:17–22; cf. 66:22–24). It is quite unlikely, given the usual meaning of 'creation' in Paul, that he would use 'new creation' to allude to this Isaianic expectation without some reference to the cosmos." Ibid., 45–46.

17 Snyder describes the scope of sin as "alienation from God, from ourselves, between persons, and between us and our physical environment." Howard A. Snyder and Joel Scandrett, *Salvation Means Creation Healed: The Ecology of Sin and Grace: Overcoming the Divorce Between Earth and Heaven* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), xvi.

18 Thus, "If salvation means creation healed, then salvation must be as deep and wide, as high and broad, as creation itself." Ibid., 146. Snyder also writes, "As mind-boggling as the thought is, Scripture teaches that this reconciliation even includes the redemption of the physical universe from the effects of sin, as everything is brought under its proper headship in Jesus (Rom 8:19–21)." Ibid., 99.

19 Ibid., 227.

20 The focus of 2 Pet 3 is upon vv. 10–13, in which it states that in the day of the Lord the present heavens and earth will experience destruction, with the results that the heavens are burned and the elements are melted. The disagreement of interpretation primarily concerns the meaning of the language which describes the destruction (In recent decades, the discussion has revolved around

The Concept of Continuity in Recent New Creationism

John's vision in Rev 21 describes the new heavens and new earth in ways that are radically discontinuous from the present heavens and earth. However, this radical discontinuity, according to new creationists, does not require that the present heavens and earth be obliterated. Wright relates the problem of continuity/discontinuity to the image of birthing labor:

> This is no smooth evolutionary transition, in which creation simply moves up another gear into a higher mode of life. This is traumatic, involving convulsions and contractions and the radical discontinuity in which mother and child are parted and become not one being but two. But neither is this a dualistic rejection of physicality as though, because the present creation is transient and full of decay and death, God must throw it away and start again from scratch. The very metaphor Paul chooses [in Rom 8] for this decisive moment shows that what he has in mind is not the unmaking of creation or simply its steady development, but the drastic and dramatic birth of new creation from the womb of the old.[21]

According to Middleton, in salvation God is not doing something completely new, but is "*re-doing* something, fixing or repairing what went wrong."[22] Snyder quotes

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the issue of textual variants, specifically of the discovery of texts that use the verb εὑρεθήσεται. For a discussion of the recent discussion, see Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, vol. 50 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 316–21; Blaising, "The Day of the Lord Will Come: An Exposition of 2 Peter 3:1–18," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 169 (2012): 397–400; R. Larry Overstreet, "A Study of 2 Peter 3:10–13," *BibSac* 137 (1980), 354–71; Wim Rietkerk, *Millennium Fever and the Future of This Earth: Between False Expectations and Biblical Hope* (Rochester, MN: Ransom Fellowship Publications, 2008): 26–34; Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, NAC, vol. 37 (Nashville, Broadman & Holman, 2003), 383–87; Aaron Tresham, "A Test Case for Conjectural Emendation: 2 Peter 3:10d," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 21, no. 1 (2010): 55–79; David Wenham, "Being 'Found' on the Last Day: New Light on 2 Peter 3.10 and 2 Corinthians 5.3," *New Testament Studies* 33 (1987): 477–79; and Al Wolters, "WorldView and Textual Criticism in 2 Peter 3:10," *Westminster Theological Journal* 49 (1987): 405–13. Ultimately, the interpretive question is whether Peter is describing the new heavens and earth as utterly new or whether he is envisioning the new heavens and new earth as a renewed and purified present heavens and earth. New creationists have sided with those who argue that Peter envisions a renewed or purified cosmos, themselves arguing that the text should be read in light of the Noahic flood (see 2 Pet 3:5–6) and that the verb should be translated "shall be found" rather than "shall be burned up," because of the context of the passage, and because of the OT metaphorical usage of the language of burning to refer to a purifying process that is a part of judgment. Regarding Rom 8, new creationists have argued that vv. 19–22, which speak to the sufferings and groaning of creation in hopes of a redemption, point to cosmic redemption rather than the annihilation of creation. New creationists agree that, according to these two passages, the way that deliverance of the present creation is to take place is through a transformation of the present creation.

21 Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 103–104.

22 Middleton, "A New Heaven and a New Earth," 91. The problem, Middleton argues, is that many readers of Scripture get lost or overwhelmed in the details, and "tend to overlook the overall structure of the biblical plot (specifically its grounding in creation). But unless we have an understanding of the initial state (creation) and the nature of the problem (fall), we will systematically

approvingly David Field who writes, "Creation will be cleansed and transformed, yet this new creation will stand in continuity with the old."[23]

For Snyder, the foundation of the continuity between the present creation and the future creation is the continuity between the testaments:

> The continuity from Old Testament to New Testament here is crucial. We stress this because Christian theology often over-spiritualizes God's saving plan . . . . The New Testament pictures not a divine rescue from earth but rather the reconciliation of earth and heaven—of "all things, whether on earth or in heaven," things both "visible and invisible." God is "making peace through [Jesus'] blood," shed on the cross (Col 1:16–21). God's plan in both the Old and New Testaments is to bring *shalom* to the whole creation. In this sense Christians are still "being saved," because ultimately no one experiences *shalom* in its fullness until the whole creation enjoys *shalom*.[24]

Moore writes that the Christian does not simply look forward to "a heavenly city of refuge for flown-away souls, but an entire universe of rocks and trees and quasars and waterfalls—everything created in which [God] takes delight."[25] The reality of God's good design of creation, for Moore, necessitates continuity between the present cosmos and the future cosmos: "The material universe . . . was designed to declare the Creator's glory. In the new creation the heavens will declare this glory with unimagined brilliance, now freed from the bondage to decay."[26] For Moore, this even includes the existence of animals in the new heavens and earth.[27]

In discussing the meaning of "new creation" in Gal 6:15 and 2 Cor 5:17, Moo concludes the following: "Paul does not see 'new creation' as a simple replacement of this creation. The transition from this creation to the next will be discontinuous to some extent, but Paul's language of 'liberation' and 'reconciliation' requires a basic continuity as well."[28] For Moo, there is continuity between the

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misread the nature of this repair (redemption)—and thus the nature of the final fulfillment of God's purposes. Indeed, it will be difficult to see it as repair at all—that is, as fixing something that has gone wrong." Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 38.

23 Snyder, *Salvation Means Creation Healed*, 60. The source of the quote is David N. Field, "Confessing Christ in the Context of Ecological Degradation," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, no 98 (1997): 40.

24 Snyder, *Salvation Means Creation Healed*, 127–28.

25 Moore, "Personal and Cosmic Eschatology," 913.

26 Ibid., 914.

27 He writes, "The prophetic vision of Scripture is insistent, for instance, that nonhuman life is a part of God's eternal purposes, with Isaiah seeing a restoration of the original harmony of the animal order. . . . we must insist that the new earth will contain animals." Ibid., 913.

28 Moo, "Creation and New Creation," 60.

present creation and the creation to come, such that it "is not a 'creation out of nothing' (*creation ex nihilo*) but a 'creation out of the old' (*creation ex vetere*)."[29]

Continuity between the present creation and the one to come is evident in Middleton's understanding of the atonement of Christ. Regarding Col 1:19–20, he writes, "Paul does not myopically limit the efficacy of Christ's atonement to humanity. Rather, the reconciliation with God effected by Christ's shed blood is applied as comprehensively as possible to *all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven*."[30] After pointing out that Jesus is the firstfruits as a result of his resurrection, Snyder concludes that "Jesus is the prototype as well as the redemptive basis of new creation. He is the point of coherence between the visible and invisible worlds (Col 1:17)."[31]

In addition to continuity in the areas related to the natural order of the cosmos, new creationists argue that there is continuity with regard to individual persons and with regard to human society. Moore's description of the final state of the redeemed in the new heavens and new earth includes certain societal features and a variety of other activities which, excepting the presence of sin, are somewhat continuous to the features and activities that are present in the current age. Moore states,

> The new earth is not simply a restoration of Eden but a glorious civilization with a *city*, and the glory of the nations redeemed and brought into it. One can expect that the new earth would be abuzz with culture—music, painting, literature, architecture, commerce, agriculture, and everything that expresses the creativity of human beings as the image of God. We can also expect in the eternal state, of all things, politics. Believers are promised a reigning function with Christ that is everlasting.[32]

In this conception there is culture, work, and creativity. Affirming that the sphere of activities in the final state is not limited to the individual but extends to groups of individuals, Middleton writes, "The logic of biblical redemption, when combined with a biblical understanding of creation, requires the restoration and renewal of the full complexity of human life in our earthly environment, yet without sin. . . . [E]schatological redemption consists in the renewal of human cultural life

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29 Ibid. Moo references Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 265, and John Polkinghorne, *The God of Hope and the End of the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 31.

30 Middleton, "A New Heaven and a New Earth," 87–88.

31 Snyder, *Salvation Means Creation Healed*, 107. After stating this, Snyder quotes approvingly from Wright's *Surprised by Hope*.

32 Moore, "Personal and Cosmic Eschatology," 914–15.

on earth."[33] God promises that he will dwell in the midst of his people but there is no reason to think that the other relational elements of humanity's existence will not endure. So, Moore concludes, "Relationships begun in this life continue in the new creation . . . . We can expect to live life with friends, family members, mentors, and disciples forever; and we have forever to build new friendships as well."[34]

While one should be careful in making hard conclusions about the level of continuity in recent new creation conceptions, it seems justified to conclude that there is consensus that certain elements, both material and immaterial, that are a part of the present world will also be a part of the final state. Some elements perhaps are best described in terms of a general continuity in the sense that there is an undefined or unknown (yet to be revealed) relationship. Others can be described in terms of what I would call a correspondence of identity, meaning that there is an identity which exists between particular aspects of the present creation and particular aspects of the new creation. The foremost example of a correspondence of identity is that of the heavens and earth itself. Another example is the resurrection of individual bodies so that the person who is resurrected corresponds in identity to the person who exists/existed prior to death. In new creation conceptions the correspondence of the individual as it relates to the resurrection of the body is intimately connected to the correspondence of the cosmos. Wright states that "despite the discontinuity between the present mode of corruptible physicality and the future world of non-corruptible physicality, there is an underlying continuity between present bodily life and future bodily life."[35] The redemption of the cosmos, like the resurrection of the body, will improve but not replace the original good creation (e.g., Rom 8 and 2 Pet 3).

The idea of correspondence of identity also informs Moore's belief that human relationships endure into the final state because the persons involved in the various relationships have the same identity both prior to and in the new creation. The

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33 Middleton, "A New Heaven and a New Earth," 77. Middleton's argument regarding the renewal of human culture is related to his understanding of proper worship. He writes that "while various psalms (like 148 and 96) indeed call upon *all* creatures (humans included) to worship or serve God in the cosmic temple of creation (heaven and earth), the distinctive way *humans* worship or render service to the Creator is by the development of culture through interaction with our earthly environment (in a manner that glorifies God)." Ibid., 81. He develops his point in a corresponding footnote: "This [understanding of worship] is not meant to exclude what we call 'worship' from the appropriate human response to God. My point is twofold. First, the cultural development of the earth, rather than 'worship' narrowly conceived, is explicitly stated to be the human purpose in biblical texts recounting the creation of humanity. 'Worship' in the narrow sense may be understood as part of human cultural activity. Second, we should not reduce human worship/service of God to verbal, emotionally charged expressions of praise (which is what we usually mean by the term). Note that Paul in Romans 12:1–2 borrows language of sacrifice and liturgy from Israel's cult in order to describe the full-orbed bodily obedience (which, he says, is our true worship). This is the Bible's typical emphasis." Ibid. 81, n. 17.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid., 359.

way in which the new creation proponents discuss the biblical language of "restoration," "renewal," "transformation," and "redemption" to refer to various aspects of the present earthly existence (such as culture, society, work, government, etc.) points in the direction of correspondence of identity so that elements of each of these endures into God's new creation.

Implications for Participation in God's Mission

To be sure the new creationists do affirm at least two examples of discontinuity between the present heavens and earth and the new heavens and earth. The first has to do with those elements which are taken away or removed—i.e., sin, the wicked, etc. The second has to do with the addition of elements that are not a part of the present heavens and earth—i.e., peace, immortality, justice, etc. This addition may be understood as development, a development which allows for continuity and correspondence of identity. Middleton writes the following:

> [I]t is clear that redemption is not a simple return to primal origins. The Bible itself portrays the move from creation to eschaton as movement from a garden (in Genesis 2) to a city (in Revelation 21–22). Redemption does not reverse, but rather embraces, historical development. The transformation of the initial state of the earth into complex human societies is not part of the fall, but rather the legitimate creational mandate of humanity. Creation was never meant to be static, but was intended by God from the beginning to be developmental, moving toward a goal.[36]

What is that goal? New Creationists believe that it is life lived in the created order, an order which looks radically different from the present order not because the present order in and of itself is displeasing to God, and thereby needing to be annihilated or obliterated, but because the elements that make up the present order are negatively affected by the sin and futility that are a result of the Fall of humankind. One might say that much of what makes up the present created order—culture, architecture, community, music, art, fellowship, nature, politics, work, relationships, economics, our bodies, animal life, land, society, etc.—is inherently pleasing to God, but, in its current reality, this order is necessarily affected by sin and corruption such that the order itself must be renewed. As such, one could envision a world in which the makeup of the present created order endures in God's new creation. Is this not the reconciliation of all things?

I like Eduard Thurneysen's bold description of the final state. Thurneysen wrote in 1954 the following:

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36   Middleton, "A New Heaven and a New Earth," 76.

> The world into which we shall enter in the Parousia of Jesus Christ
> is therefore not another world; it is this world, this heaven, this
> earth; both, however, passed away and renewed. It is these forests,
> these fields, these cities, these streets, these people, that will be the
> scene of redemption. At present they are battlefields, full of the
> strife and sorrow of the not yet accomplished consummation; then
> they will be fields of victory, fields of harvest, where out of seed
> that was sown with tears the everlasting sheaves will be reaped and
> brought home.[37]

Though I have not argued the point here, followers of the Lord Jesus Christ are to
be doing all that they do for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31). This means that as
Christ followers live in the present created order they are participating in God's
mission in the present created order. If, as the new creationists argue, it is God's
desire to reconcile the present created order, does this participation carry even
greater weight than we might initially think? Does Christ followers' participation
not actually move beyond the present created order into the new creation order?

   In his interpretation of 1 Cor 13, N. T. Wright states the following:

> [T]his exquisite chapter looks forward . . . to the final discussion
> [chapter 15], which will concern the resurrection, the new world
> that God will make, *and the continuity between the resurrection
> life and the life here and now*. The point of 13.8–13 is that the
> church must be working *in the present* on the things that will last
> *into God's future*. Faith, hope and love will do this; prophecy,
> tongues and knowledge, so highly prized in Corinth, will not.[38]

   As we look toward the future and contemplate our participation, or lack thereof,
in God's mission, it is my hope and prayer that we might consider that our partici-
pation in God's mission in this life is only the beginning, and that our participa-
tion not only has lasting effects that endure into the new creation but that it also
informs our conception of our role in the new creation. May we look forward to
the return of our Lord Jesus Christ with expectancy, saying Come, Lord Jesus and
do so quickly, but not to the point that we miss or ignore what His coming might
entail for our life in the new creation.

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37   Eduard Thurneysen, *Eternal Hope*, trans. Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth, 1954), 204.
38   Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 296.

Biblical Precedent for Female Tempered-Radicals: A Closer Look at Huldah

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Abstract

In a recent article, Diane Zemke described women in church leadership as "tempered radicals" because they manage to work within an organization they believe in, yet with values that differ significantly from many within it. This article aims to compare her ministry framework to the leadership of Huldah, a prophetess during the reign of King Josiah (2 Kings 22–23), for further insight. It will address the subtle inflections of the narrative such as plot development, narrative tension, and character development to demonstrate God's affirmation of Huldah's ministry, her obedient commitment to God's call, while not denying the tension that builds in the patriarchal infrastructure of the time. Huldah is an example of a female tempered radical within Scripture, modeling a proper attitude of faithful dissent.

The life of women in pastoral ministry is often one of dual identity. They are both devoted servants and cautious outliers. The many talents and gifts that God has cultivated in the life of a female believer are celebrated and welcomed, unless, of course, those gifts and talents challenge the accepted norms for women within that Christian community.[1] Women often wrestle internally with the implications of their calling. Are they welcome participants in the kingdom of God or distrusted usurpers of power and authority? It depends on whom you ask. Many women, this writer included, have struggled with the painful tension and the disillusioning experiences that accompany their calling. If Christian women are certain of their

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[1] For an interesting analysis of women in ministry, see the recently completed dissertation of Roberta Mosier-Peterson from Northeastern Seminary. Roberta Mosier-Peterson, "Lived Experience of Female Pastors in the Free Methodist Church, USA: An Ethnographic Study" (DMin diss., Northeastern Seminary, 2016). Mosier-Peterson interviews several ordained women within the Free Methodist Church to better understand their experience as full-time ministers in the church. She finds that, though the church formally supports women in ministry, each woman struggled with the tension between their calling and their reception within Christian communities.

calling, and certain of their love for the church, how might they balance that conviction with their experience of distancing and distrust?

What are Tempered Radicals?

In a recent article in the *Journal of Religious Leadership*, Diane Zemke explores the pressure that women in leadership often experience as they work within an organization that they believe in, yet that organization has values that differ significantly from many within it.[2] These women hold in tension two seemingly contradictory ideals—their own belief in the value and integrity of women in ministry and their commitment to an organizational structure that either rejects women from certain leadership roles or does not promote women in leadership as clearly as men. Often, even if the organization affirms women in leadership roles, such women still struggle with dissent from members of the congregation.

Zemke calls the women who live in this tension "tempered radicals" because they "work to honor both identities simultaneously."[3] Though they may struggle under the pressure that their conflicting identities create, she urges women in ministry to embrace this radicalism because those who continue to work faithfully within the tension are able to slowly, but certainly, bring about change.[4]

According to Zemke, tempered radicals are able to bring change for the same reason they experience the pain of dissonance: their commitment to two ideals. They are both insiders and outsiders; they remain loyal to the goals of their community, yet offer an outsider's critique of its flaws. As they earn the trust of their community, they work slowly from within to establish a balanced ideal that others are drawn to. Zemke comments that "they live a 'now and not yet' life,"[5] trying to work past *what is* to see *what could be*. While this is an admirable framework with worthwhile gains, it raises some questions. Are modern tempered radicals merely compromising the ideals of their community (and, by implication, God's own ideological framework within Scripture) to make room for their own experience? Or are they following an ancient precedent of personal sacrifice and faithful dissent?

A Scriptural Precedent for Faithful Dissent:
Narrative Analysis of a Prophetess

While many have used Scripture to make a case for the full engagement of women in God's redemptive story and to validate the full participation of women in the church, little research has been done to understand how women in the biblical

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2   Diane Zemke, "It Takes So Much Energy: Female Tempered Radicals in Christian Congregations," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 11/1 (2012): 91 (entire article 91–111).
3   Zemke, "It Takes So Much Energy," 93.
4   Ibid.
5   Ibid.

accounts *managed* the tension that certainly existed in their patriarchal setting when God called them into leadership.[6] Although women are not portrayed as functioning in leadership roles as often as men, there are several examples of women in leadership throughout both Testaments. This paper will address the account of Huldah, a prophetess in ancient Israel (2 Kgs 22), for insight into both the experience and response of a woman called by God.

Only five women hold the title prophetess, or *nĕbî'â,* in ancient Israel, and in most circumstances they share the same authority and influence as the male prophet, or *nābî',* in the narrative.[7] Prophetic responsibilities differ widely depending on the situation of the prophet, but prophets are generally regarded as messengers of Yhwh during times of social and political turmoil. In his book on prophecy, D. Brent Sandy points out that the primary goal of a prophet is not to predict the future, but to *prosecute* human actions that merit divine consequences and then *persuade* the people of God to change.[8] The ultimate (and typically unrealized) goal of a prophet is to lead the people of God to repentance and to restore their relationship with Yhwh.[9] Huldah is identified by the narrator as a "prophetess" of Israel, therefore implying some form of authority in ancient Israel. Yet her brief interaction with Josiah's men leaves several questions unanswered. What role did she play? How was she received by her community? Or, for the purposes of this study, was she an *outsider*, an *insider*, or *both*? In addressing these questions, my aim is to determine whether, or in what way, Huldah might provide a model for female tempered radicals in the church today.

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6 Consider the many examples of women leaders in the Old Testament found in Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978); Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible: A Narrative Interpretation of Their Stories* (New York: Schocken Books, 2002); and Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003). This is only a brief sampling. This paper will not argue for the legitimacy of women in ministry; rather, it operates under the assumption that women should be accepted as full participants in ministry.

7 Female prophets mentioned in the Old Testament include Miriam (Exod 15:20), Deborah (Judg 4:4), Isaiah's unnamed wife (Isa 8:3), Huldah (2 Kgs 22:14, also in 2 Chr 34:22), and No'adiah (Neh 6:14). For a full treatment of female prophets in ancient Israel, see Wilda C. Gafney's monograph, *Daughters of Miriam: Women Prophets in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008). Gafney argues that female prophets are not as rare in ancient Israel as is commonly thought. She points out that many references to prophets (*nĕbî'îm*) are often assumed to be masculine because of the masculine plural ending, but according to the conventions of the Hebrew language, even if only there is only one man in the group, the noun receives a masculine ending. She suggests that female prophets were acceptable, perhaps even common, based on their reception in Scripture. Furthermore, the Bible does not offer a distinctively "feminine" aspect to their prophetic ministry regardless of the known gender of the prophet.

8 D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares & Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2002), 129–31.

9 While this characterization does not take into consideration false prophecy, it may be argued that false prophets alleged the same role (mouthpiece of God) with the same ultimate goal (restoration of Israel), yet they were not truly speaking for God and so were not capable of bringing about the requisite goal.

This study will utilize literary and narrative analysis techniques to better understand the role and response of Huldah in 2 Kgs 22:1–23:27.[10] In Hebrew narrative, little is said about the thoughts and opinions of particular characters, but their disposition is shaped by the plot development, narrative tension, and well-refined characterizations.[11] In the brief account of Huldah's prophetic ministry, the biblical text celebrates the faithfulness of King Josiah, while also subtly critiquing the ingrained cultural perceptions of gender and leadership that were held by the male-dominated establishment. Furthermore, while Huldah would certainly have experienced tension between her gender and calling, the text depicts a woman who is trusted by God and therefore speaks boldly, delivering an oracle that first *prosecutes* the people for their unfaithfulness and then *persuades* Josiah and the nation to repentance, eventually spurring sweeping reforms in Jerusalem and Judah.

Huldah's Story: The Prophetess from the Second Quarter

Characterization of Josiah

According to Scripture, Huldah was the prophetess to King Josiah during the brief period of peace following the Assyrian Crisis, when Israel was defeated/exiled by the Assyrian empire and Judah was nearly destroyed (2 Kgs 14–20); this was before the threat of Babylon and destruction of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 24–25). On the surface, the narrative tells of a faithful king who exemplifies godly leadership in Israel. Josiah's characterization as a faithful king is almost ideological in nature. It depicting a king who "did right in the eyes of Yhwh" (2 Kgs 22:2a) and "did not turn to the right or to the left" (2 Kgs 22:2b). Specifically, Josiah offers seemingly genuine repentance in response to newly discovered Book of the Law (2 Kgs 22:11–13); he promotes Yhwh worship at the beginning and end of his account (2 Kgs 22:3–7; 23:1–24); he moves an entire nation into a covenant renewal, purging false worship from Jerusalem and Judea (2 Kgs 23:1–20); and he practices Passover for the first time "since the time of the judges" (2 Kgs 23:21–23). The narrator exalts Josiah by echoing the core teachings of Law, stating that "like him there was not a king before him who turned to Yhwh with all his heart, and all his soul, and all his might, according to all the Law of Moses" (2 Kgs 23:25, Deut 6:5).

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10 While the account of Josiah's kingship, and his interaction with Huldah, is retained in the book of Kings as well as by the Chronicler, this study will address the account in 2 Kings 22, since it constitutes the basic story that is later retold by the Chronicler. To understand the connection between these accounts, see Lowell K. Handy, "Reading Huldah as Being a Woman," *Biblical Research* 55 (2010): 6 (entire article 5–44).

11 This paper will utilize the characterization techniques of both Robert Alter and Shimon Bar-Efrat. See Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (2nd ed; New York: Basic Books, 2011); and Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (Understanding the Bible and Its World 70; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2004).

While on the surface Josiah is portrayed in a positive light, the narrator alludes to a far more complex story. After the king laments the iniquity of Israel for not obeying the words of "the book of the law" (2 Kgs 22:8) that was found in the temple, he commands his religious officials to go quickly: "Go! Inquire of YHWH for me, for the people, and for all of Judah" (2 Kgs 22:13). Here the narrator depicts a king who understands the gravity of his present situation, but Josiah's monologue also subtly undermines the portrait of the ideal king. While he is capable of recognizing the words of God, and the impending wrath the people have incurred, he is not able to "inquire of YHWH" on his own.

Not only Josiah, but his religious officials, Hilkiah (the high priest) and Shaphan (the court secretary), are not able to "inquire of YHWH" or even understand the nature of the book. While they find the book, recognize it is important, and bring it before the king, their characters remain silent. The fact that Josiah sends his religious leadership to find someone to "inquire of YHWH" suggests he realizes that they are not capable of doing so themselves. However, he does not seem to know of any other person (even a prophet) who may be capable of such a task.

Josiah's small monologue in 2 Kgs 22:13 clarifies something about his narrative introduction: He is a righteous king who did not previously have the Book of the Law and who does not know how to "inquire of YHWH." A nagging question surfaces: How can a righteous king have no communication with the God that he serves?

Structural analysis

The structure of the narrative demonstrates the pivotal role of Huldah's oracle in Judah's reform. Through her, the narrative moves from Josiah's good intentions to the restoration of Jerusalem and Judah. From Josiah's initiative without Law Book or prophecy (2 Kgs 22:3–13) to Huldah's prophetic utterance (2 Kgs 22:14–20), the story culminates in the extensive reformation of Jerusalem and Judah (2 Kgs 23:1–24).

After receiving Huldah's oracle, the religious officials returned to Josiah, which then led to the greatest restoration in the history of Judah (2 Kgs 23:1–24). The covenant was read aloud and renewed, the temple cleansed from idolatry and false worship, all traces of apostasy were destroyed throughout Jerusalem and Judah, and Passover was observed for the first time since the days of the judges.

Before the oracle the tension builds, as they grapple with the meaning and implications of the book. The tension is relieved only after the oracle, when Josiah gathers the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to initiate more expansive reforms (2 Kgs 23:1–2). Huldah's prophecy acts as a turning point in the narrative. She delivers an oracle that confirms the authenticity of the Book and offers both a stinging rebuke of the people and a note of mercy for Josiah himself.

The pivotal role of Huldah in the structure of 2 Kings becomes more apparent when compared to the retelling of Josiah's reform in 2 Chr 34. Huldah's oracle and demographic information are nearly identical in each account. However, the Chronicler restructures the narrative and places the oracle in the midst of reformation, rather than as the impetus for Judah's restoration. This change is likely due to the Chronicler's focus on shaping a more positive depiction of Judah's kings. In the Chronicler's rewriting of history, it is the king (not the prophetess) who receives credit for initiating the reforms. If this re-write was necessary for the Chronicler, then Huldah's prominence in the text was notable to some of the earliest interpreters of the narrative found in 2 Kings.

Narrative tension

So the narrator of 2 Kings recounts the bright story of a faithful king in the midst of a dark national history. Yet the narrative also acknowledges the odd circumstances and awkward moments of this encounter. The story includes several religious insiders—Hilkiah, the high priest; Shaphan, the secretary and scribe; Ahikam, son of Shaphan; Achbor, son of Micaiah; and Asaiah, the king's servant. While these religious insiders are trusted by Josiah (an admittedly good king), they are perplexed at the meaning of the scroll. Presumably, both Hilkiah and Shaphan have read the scroll before it reaches Josiah. But their demeanor remains unchanged and only Josiah responds appropriately to the scroll's contents, tearing his robes in lament. Thus, the three most powerful men in Israel (Josiah, the king; Hilkiah, the high priest; and Shaphan, the scribe) do not know what to do; they need to speak with Yhwh to discover a course of action. Yet Yhwh does not speak directly to them, but rather through Huldah. Although the narrator does not outrightly chastise the religious insiders, he casts a shadow on their competence as they struggle to understand the gravity of their present situation.

Later, this group of insiders consults Huldah in the *mišneh* (Second Quarter),[12] likely a residential area of Jerusalem.[13] What might the narrator be trying to suggest? Is she an insider or an outsider? Scholarship has offered several theories on the meaning and importance of the *mišneh*, but few arguments are satisfying. Early versions of the text (LXX, Peshitta, Vulgate, Targums, etc) offer non-literal translations that suggest the *mišneh* is a "college," leading some to theorize that Huldah was a well-known teacher, perhaps residing in a community of clergy and religious persons.[14] This would suggest that Huldah may have interacted with the

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12 This term is used only in three places in Scripture, two of them describing the location of Huldah (2 Kgs 22:14; 2 Chr 34:22) which makes the meaning of the text word difficult to discern. The third reference, Zeph 1:10, seems to understand it as a location in Jerusalem, but does not specify the nature of this location.

13 Lowell K. Handy, "Mishneh," In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* , ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2015).

14 Handy, "Reading Huldah as Being a Woman," 27.

religious insiders in a "teaching" capacity before the incident. The narrative seems to allow for such a reading, by having the officials go immediately to Huldah, an established prophetess in the community.

Yet the narrator also makes clear that the religious officials "went to" Huldah's location, rather than bringing her before the presence of the king or to the temple where they found the mysterious book. Judith McKinlay suggests that *mišneh* may imply that Huldah is a religious outsider, perhaps even residing in the second-class section of the royal city.[15] In all likelihood, the men were originally located in the temple, a sacred space that women were not permitted to enter.[16] Though Huldah may have been a known prophetess, and conventions of the time allowed for God to speak through a woman, still that woman still could not enter YHWH's holy temple. The narrator does not spell out the significance of Huldah's location in the *mišneh*, but by merely mentioning it he allows tension to build. Huldah is both a trusted advisor *and* a person who must be sought outside the confines of temple and court.

As the text is read and re-read, the nuanced inflections of the narrative lead to more uncertainty concerning Huldah's status. For example, she is introduced as the wife of Shallum, who was the keeper of the king's wardrobe; but why is this information important to the narrator? Even if her husband's name is included simply to suit the gender constructs of the time,[17] it does not explain why his vocation is included in the description of a prophetess.[18] Some have argued that this family background offers an explanation for Huldah's connection to the royal court, depicting her family as political insiders. Others see this information as a mark of relative obscurity. The closest Huldah or her family ever came to the palace was her husband's position as the keeper of the wardrobe, understood as a menial job that demonstrates the secondary status of this family, rather than their prominence among Jerusalem's elite.[19]

Perhaps the most perplexing tensions exist within Josiah himself. Why does Josiah call on a prophet to validate the document if he already knows its significance? In other Mesopotamian royal literature, kings consult an intermediary to "double-check" their conclusions,[20] but if Josiah's actions are merely for posterity (he needed someone to witness the document), why was a prophetess consulted rather than a male prophet? If the culture is as patriarchal as many assume, it

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15   McKinlay, "Gazing at Huldah," 3.

16   Ibid.

17   Some have taken issue with Huldah being married because it diminishes her character in that her husband would have had authority over her. On this, see Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 1: *Social Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 157.

18   Handy, "Reading Huldah as Being a Woman," 24.

19   Gafney refers to Shallum's occupation as "a glorified butler." Gafney, *Daughters of Miriam*, 12.

20   Lowell K. Handy, "The Role of Huldah in Josiah's Cult Reform," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 106/1 (1994), 40.

seems likely that if a male prophet were available, the religious insiders would be more likely to seek his testimony. Notably, Josiah's request for a prophet is vague, not asking for Huldah (or any other prophet) by name, even though the reader would be aware of at least a two reputable *male* prophets at his disposal: Jeremiah and Zephaniah.[21]

Moreover, the narrator never places Huldah and the king in the same space together. Though Josiah desires to inquire of Yhwh, he receives the oracle through his religious officials, not from Huldah herself. Kings often sought the advice of prophets and, regardless of whether or not they heeded the prophet's message, the prophet generally spoke directly to the king—unless the king had threatened the life of the prophet.[22] Here, the text is clear: Josiah sends his religious insiders to inquire of Yhwh (presumably through a prophet) and they return with the oracle from Huldah. The text never indicates that Huldah and Josiah were in the same place, nor is the king made aware that it is Huldah who delivered the oracle. Interestingly, though she may have been unknown to (or even barred from the presence of) Josiah, she is not unknown to the narrator. Years after Josiah's reign, when the narrator compiled the history of Israel's kings, her name was not forgotten or redacted to make the account more palatable to patriarchal readers; Huldah's reputation remains intact.[23]

The narrative tension mirrors the awkward position Huldah is placed in as one who is both an insider and an outsider; she is a reliable prophet of God, yet is not permitted in the official sacred space. Huldah is an ancient tempered radical, working within the rules of the establishment, but refusing to withdraw from her prophetic calling.

Characterization of Huldah

On the surface, the account seems far more interested in the actions of Josiah

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21 Zephaniah seems like an apt candidate to deliver an oracle on restoration because his prophecies condemn the same idolatry and false worship that Josiah's reform addressed; however, many scholars believe that he prophesied before the time of Josiah's reforms and was therefore not consulted. Jeremiah's career, on the other hand, began during the reign of Josiah (according to Jer 1:2). Some have claimed that Jeremiah must have been away from Jerusalem at the time the discovery (though his home was only two miles from the city), or that Huldah was selected out of convenience; yet it seems curious that Josiah did not ask for, and the religious elite did not call on, Jeremiah. The only valid explanation for seeking out the prophetess Huldah would have been her reputation; in other words, despite her being a woman, her calling was not questioned.

22 Isaiah delivers his oracle directly in the presence of King Ahaz (outside the city walls), even though his warning is disregarded by the king (Isa 7). Jeremiah is threatened by King Jehoiakim, therefore Shaphan the scribe presents his oracle on his behalf (Jer 36). Later, Jeremiah does speak directly to King Zedekiah (at one of the entrances of the temple), and the king does not comply with Jeremiah's advice, but is not trying to kill him either (Jer 38).

23 While some scholars suggest that earlier time periods in Israel's history would have offered women more experience in social, cultural, or political situations, it is likely that gender roles become differentiated during the time of the monarchy and the secondary status of women was solidified. Ackerman, "Why is Miriam," 51.

than the actions (or oracle) of Huldah. Josiah's actions, words, reactions, and narrative evaluation are clear and fill almost two chapters, whereas Huldah is the subject of only one verb (*watōmer* or "then she said," v. 15) and the object of two more (*wayēlek* or "and he went"; and *wayĕdabĕrû* or "and they said," v. 14), yet her prophecy serves as a catalyst for major change. Does this mean that Huldah is simply a "flat" character who serves as a prop for Josiah's reform? While the narrative suggests that her character is more function-oriented than literarily complex, she is anything but a stereotypical prophet in Israel. Huldah stands out in three ways—by the content of her message, by her success in bringing repentance, and (most obviously) as a woman in a traditionally male profession.

While there is no standard message in prophetic literature, the message of Huldah is notable for many reasons. Interestingly, Huldah is the first person, male or female, to determine the authenticity of a biblical text that would become binding in Israel. This moment becomes a turning point in biblical history, where a written text (which many scholars believe to be the book of Deuteronomy or perhaps its core) becomes the "cornerstone of the creation of authoritative biblical books and their proper interpretation."[24] This is not simply the first canonized book, but the first time in Israel's recorded history that a written text (aside from the tablets of Moses) becomes the social and religious standard for Israel. Huldah is also the first, post-Assyrian prophet to predict the fall of Jerusalem and Judah's ultimate destruction.[25] Before Jeremiah or Ezekiel, she declares the unavoidable devastation in Judah and her prophecy is proven true later in the book of Kings (2 Kgs 25:1–7), thus validating her role as a prophet (see Deut 18:22).[26]

Huldah is also unusual in that her prophecy is favorably received. While many prophets functioned as counsel to the kings, their advice was rarely heeded. Consider Elijah, whose message saw moments of acceptance by the people, but who was ultimately rejected by the king and pursued because of Jezebel's murderous rage at the rejection of her pagan gods (1 Kgs 17–19). Isaiah advised Ahaz to trust God for deliverance during the Syro-Ephraimite war, but instead the king turned to Assyria for help (Isa 7:1–15). Jeremiah's advice was not only rejected, but as a

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24 Handy, "Reading Huldah as Being a Woman," 32.

25 Isaiah also predicts the ultimate destruction of Jerusalem (Isa 20:16–18), but it is not the major message of his prophetic ministry. There are interesting parallels between Huldah and Isaiah on this point that may warrant further research.

26 While some have argued that Huldah's prophecy that Josiah would be gathered to his ancestors in peace (2 Kgs 2:20) does not come true because Josiah dies prematurely in Meggido (2 Kgs 23:29), her point was that the disaster prophesied for Jerusalem would be averted (it would not be in Josiah's time). Beyond this, the nature of prophetic language allows for some flexibility in fulfillment. In his book on the nature of prophecy (*Plowshares and Pruning Hooks*), Sandy points out that the primary purpose of a prophetic oracle is to bring about change, not to simply predict the future. This means that the actions of the individual (like Josiah) can redirect the path forward. Using Sandy's understanding of prophetic language, Huldah's oracle would have been successful because it brought about reform.

result of his ministry he was banned from the temple, thrown into a cistern, and eventually kidnapped and taken against his will to Egypt (to name just a few episodes in his turbulent ministry). The most notable exceptions to the rule of prophets being ignored include Deborah (like Huldah, a female prophet), Isaiah's prophecy to Hezekiah in Isaiah 36–39 (though Isaiah was not preaching repentance), and Jonah (who led Assyrians, rather than Israelites, into repentance). Having a successful response to prophetic ministry seems to be an exception to the rule, rather than the rule itself.

Finally, and most transparently, Huldah is one of only five female-prophets mentioned in the Old Testament.[27] The text treats this fact unremarkably, as do those who receive the oracle. Yet the silence of the text seems to hint at an unstated point. Robert Alter remarks that biblical narrative often uses *selective silence* in characterization in purposeful ways, which are just as important in shaping a character as a descriptive text.[28] Perhaps with this silence the narrator is poking fun at the paradoxical assumptions of a patriarchal system. If God is willing to speak in and through a woman, why should the conventional, male-dominated systems hinder their participation? Or, perhaps Huldah *is* a stereotypical character, not of a prophet, but of a prophetess—one who is equally trusted by God, yet far more successful in bringing restoration.

The significance of Huldah

In the midst of the tension and awkward moments, Huldah's obedience to her call is unwavering. In the narrative she is surrounded by men. These include the man whose name is part of her identity (her husband), the men who approach her for an oracle and return with the message (though not with the prophetess), and the man who responds to the word of God given through her. Though the narrator does not find her gender remarkable, Huldah seems well aware of the social tension that her gender brings. She is not afraid to draw attention to the controversy that everyone else has avoided, beginning her oracle with: "Thus says Yʜwʜ, God of Israel: Tell the *man* [îš] who sent you to me" (2 Kgs 22:15b). Huldah's introduction is surprisingly forceful, using an imperative, or command, to the religious leaders coupled with an odd title for a king "the man." As she points out the gender of the king, she draws the reader's attention to her own. She does not explicitly demand respect, but reminds the reader that she is aware of her social reality.[29]

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27 While these women are significant, they are still a minority compared to at least 29 men who receive the title, "prophet." See Susan Ackerman, "Why is Miriam also Among the Prophets? (And is Zipporah Among the Priests?)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 12/1 (2002), 49 (entire article 47–80).

28 Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 144.

29 While some may argue that "man" is there to relativize his royal status, rather than draw attention to gender, Huldah does not seem interested in chastising Josiah, referring to him as "king" in vv. 16 and 18.

Huldah is not intimidated or afraid. She has been entrusted with a message for Josiah and she will not fail in its delivery. Although some assume that Huldah is part of the covenant renewal (2 Kgs 23:1–3) and Passover (2 Kgs 23:21–23) that happen later in the account, the text no longer mentions her by name. She is an unnamed participant in a national restoration, rather than its trusted co-architect. Huldah did not seek, nor gain, social acceptance by the religious insiders, yet her role in the story of Judah's restoration was remembered for generations. The royal court may not have known her name, but the narrator in 2 Kings made certain that her faithfulness was recorded. Huldah's status in the eyes of society did not determine her faithfulness to God's message or the fruitfulness of her mission. She was able to enact change in Israel, even from the margins, and the narrator has preserved her memory for this reason.

Is Huldah a Female Tempered Radical?

Is Huldah a biblical example of Zemke's concept of female-tempered radicals? In some ways *yes*, and in others *no*. Although we do not know much about her ministry outside of this text, she was able to create a space that others were drawn to and she earned the respect of the religious insiders. Though trusted by the insiders of Josiah's court, she remains an outsider from the *mišneh* of Jerusalem. In many ways, she lives a life of "now and not yet."[30] She is trusted by God, but perhaps not welcome in the presence of his king.

Zemke suggests that the tempered radicals of today are working primarily to reshape the value system of the community to accept the full participation of women in ministry—a characteristic of the revolutionary feminist agenda. Huldah does not share in this primary goal. She is not fighting for a seat at the table, but is passing her notes to the ones who are already present. She faithfully delivers the message of God for the betterment of his people, regardless of what may or may not happen to her.

Though her gains may seem modest from a modern perspective, Huldah did bring about change, both in Israel's fidelity of worship and in earning a significant place in the narrative. The narrative introduces a faithful king and a female prophet, both anomalous figures in Israel's monarchic period. It invites the reader to struggle with the tension of Huldah's presence. The patriarchal systems may have limited her involvement, but God chose to speak to Josiah through her. The narrator is not pointing to the human systems that bring about reform (like monarchy or patriarchy). God can, and will, work through broken human systems, but that should not be confused with God's approval of the system itself. This story, in its focus on the obedience of one faithful prophetess, transcends social boundaries

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30   Zemke, "It Takes So Much Energy," 93.

and expectations and subtly depicts the difference between the world that is and the world as it should be.

Huldah did not she scorn the system that kept her at arm's reach when they finally needed her. Rather, she delivered God's warning as if faithfulness were an unremarkable thing. If God still calls female believers into his service, perhaps we may join the ancient tradition of tempered radicals, regardless of what we may gain or lose in the process. We, like Huldah, might be part of the mission of God, called into a world that will not always accept our presence. As biblical tempered radicals, we may respond to God's calling to the best of our ability and, through our faithfulness to God, we might even change the perceptions of what it means for women to minister in the church.

'This Land of Exile': Mechthild of Magdeburg's Imagery of Exile and Estrangement as a Resource for New Monastic and Evangelical Theology

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Abstract

Mechthild of Magdeburg (ca. 1208–ca. 1282/1294) lived much of her life as a beguine—a member of a lay sisterhood, living in chastity, poverty, and community. Her book, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead* (*Das fließende Licht der Gottheit*) conveys vivid experiences in contemplative prayer; she and her book became inspirational models for contemplative practice in her convent and beyond, but Mechthild's work was known only piecemeal, often anonymously, soon after her death and the end of the beguine movement. After a brief introduction to Mechthild and her work, this article focuses, first, on her use of the images of estrangement and exile as expressions of her longing for God. As previous scholarship has noted, Mechthild's writing is often implicitly and creatively counter-imperial; here, her descriptions of her life as an exilic pilgrimage, alongside her personifications of experiences like Estrangement and Pain, will be shown as contributing to a theology (particularly a Christology) that critiques and renounces claims to power. Second, Mechthild's exile/estrangement imagery will be studied as a potential provisioning for the creative shaping of mission and spiritual formation in the post-Christendom contexts that many churches face today. With help from Lee Beach and other conversation partners, the article concludes that Mechthild's imagery is especially helpful for "New Monastic" theology and praxis, as exile/estrangement informs practices like prayer, pilgrimage, and intentional community. Although this paper, as delivered at a recent CETA conference, speaks primarily to North American cultural contexts, it also has implications for the global, evangelical church.

Introduction

Mechthild of Magdeburg (ca. 1208–ca. 1282/1294) lived much of her life as a beguine—a member of a lay sisterhood, living in chastity, poverty, and community. Her book, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, conveys vivid experiences in contemplative prayer; she and her book became inspirational models for contemplative practice in her convent and beyond, but Mechthild's work was known only piecemeal, often anonymously, soon after her death and the end of the beguine movement. After a brief introduction to Mechthild and her work, we'll focus, first, on her use of the images of estrangement and exile as expressions of her longing for God. As previous scholarship has noted,[1] Mechthild's writing is often implicitly and creatively counter-imperial; here, we'll ask how her descriptions of her life as an exilic pilgrimage, alongside her personifications of experiences like Estrangement and Pain, contribute to a theology (particularly a Christology) that critiques and renounces claims to power. Second, we'll discern how Mechthild's exile/estrangement imagery might provision the creative shaping of mission and spiritual formation in the post-Christendom contexts that our churches face today. With Lee Beach and other conversation partners, we'll see that Mechthild's imagery is especially helpful for "New Monastic" theology and praxis, as exile/estrangement informs practices like prayer, pilgrimage, and intentional community. Although this proposal speaks primarily to North American cultural contexts, it also has implications for the evangelical church at large.

Mechthild and Her Writing

Although we know little about Mechthild beyond inferences from her writing, her literacy points to "reasonably wealthy" origins around Magdeburg, an important centre for medieval European commerce, in north-central Germany.[2] This context may also have furnished Mechthild's use of courtly love poetry[3] and *hovesprache* (court language): she describes herself and God as lovesick for one another, in the context of "the journey to court [*hovereise*] of a loving soul that cannot exist without God."[4] We also know she lived a major portion of her life as a beguine, dwelling in Christian community with other women, without a formal monastic

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1 Wendy Farley, "Mechthild of Magdeburg," in *Empire and the Christian Tradition: New Readings of Classical Theologians*, ed. Kwok Pui-lan et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 139–51.

2 Farley, "Mechthild," 139; Debra L. Stoudt, "Mechthild of Magdeburg," in *The Encyclopedia of Christian Literature*, ed. George Thomas Kurian et al. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2010), 2:459, and more broadly 2:459–60.

3 Farley, "Mechthild," 139; Stoudt, "Mechthild," 2:459.

4 Passages in English are quoted from Mechthild of Magdeburg, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, translated and introduced by Frank Tobin (Classics of Western Spirituality; Mahwah: Paulist, 1998), in this case from Book 1.4. German passages are from Mechthild von Magdeburg, *"Das fliessende Licht der Gottheit": Nach der Einsiedler Handschrift in kritischem Vergleich mit gesamten Überlieferung*, Bd. 1, ed. Hans Neumann (Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, Bd. 100; München: Artemis Verlag, 1990).

order—a life Frank Tobin describes as one of "moderate asceticism." With handicrafts, nursing, and embalming as typical work, "Beguines strove to be unworldly while living in the world."[5]

When Mechthild began to experience visions, she related them to her Dominican confessor, who encouraged her to write them down and share them, which she began to do in 1250.[6] These writings became her only book, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead* (*Das fließende Licht der Gottheit*), a unique mix of visionary poems and dialogues, originally written in Low German.[7] Around 1270, she entered a Cistercian convent at Helfta, where she struggled with illness, blindness, and letting the sisters serve her—the earlier portions of her book having made her a (reluctant) model of contemplative prayer. Her last section, written by dictation,[8] reflects these struggles but shows how she allowed them to enrich her prayer life. As Tobin notes in introducing the *Flowing Light*, having renounced the world to an extent among the beguines, Mechthild encountered a new level of renunciation in submitting to the convent's discipline.[9]

The appeal of Mechthild's text can be illustrated with a few examples. The first displays both her struggle to settle into the rhythms of cloistered life and her ambivalence about the writing task itself; the subsequent examples showcase some of her imaginative interactions with Scripture. In Book 7, the former beguine begs God "that I might stop writing. Why? Because I know that I am just as weak and unworthy, and more so, than . . . when I was required to begin." "I still have healing herbs," the Lord assures her, showing her "a spiritual convent" of personified virtues: the "abbess is sincere love"; the choir mistress, hope; the schoolmistress, wisdom, teaching even "the unlearned with even temper"; and the "mistress of the sick is toiling mercy." In these personifications, perhaps we glimpse Mechthild's prayerful imagination rising to the challenge of relying on (or identifying with) her new sisters, even in the frustrations of writing.[10] This penchant for imagina-

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5   Frank Tobin, "Introduction," in Mechthild of Magdeburg, *Flowing Light*, 2, 1, and 1–27 in total.

6   Stoudt, "Mechthild," 459.

7   According to Stoudt ("Mechthild," 459), the Latin translation (the *Lux divinitatis*) of books 1–6 appeared shortly after her death, and the complete work was translated into High German in the 14th century; the original text has been lost. In slight variance with Stoudt, Tobin ("Introduction," 6) indicates that only the "final chapters" of Book 7 were written by dictation; so too Ella Johnson, "Mechthild of Magdeburg," in *Handbook of Women Biblical Interpreters: A Historical and Biographical Guide*, ed. Marion Ann Taylor (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 359–61 (here 360).

8   Stoudt, "Mechthild," 459.

9   Tobin, "Introduction," 19–20.

10   7.36. Apropos here is Amy Hollywood's diagnosis of the relationship between the "role of suffering and visionary imagination" in Mechthild's writing: "Her book replaces her body as the site of wonders and wounding, but suffering . . . remains constitutive of her experience . . . love and attachment to embodiment continually erupt and disrupt her text"; in *The Soul as Virgin Wife: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Marguerite Porete, and Meister Eckhart*, Studies in Spirituality and Theology 1 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1995), 23. Also worth possible with regard to the virtues in Mechthild's "convent" is an echo of such biblical passages as Ps 85:10–13, where

tive identification also pervades Mechthild's interface with Scripture. Her courtly, even erotic language draws inspiration from the Song of Songs,[11] as when the Lord asks "Lady Soul" to undress, for "not the slightest thing can be between you and me" (1.44). As Christopher Garrett says, this "climaxes with identifying with the crucified Christ who bore agony and separation from God as [Mechthild] extends her experience to her readers, who must in turn experience the same passion."[12] Another example of biblical identification is a dialogue hinting at the parabolic "pearl of great price." Answering God's question, "What do you bring me, my queen?" the soul says she brings a "precious stone," weighing "more than the whole earth," "called my heart's delight . . . [b]ut now I can carry it no further"; she places the stone into God's triune heart and human breast (1.39–43). Further examples of such identification, pressing toward recapitulation, will be noted as we consider Mechthild's exile/estrangement imagery.

Images of Exile and Estrangement, and a Pilgrim Christology

Debra Stoudt argues that the *Flowing Light*'s tone "becomes more muted" toward Book 7.[13] This holds for the intensity of Mechthild's courtly love imagery—but not for her longing for God, expressed in terms of estrangement and exile. In some of her identifications[14] with, and recapitulations of, characters in the biblical story, exilic notes can be heard. As she identifies with an extensive sequence of cast members from biblical and historical traditions, beginning with Jesus, Mary, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, Peter, Paul, and Stephen, she names Mary Magdalene just before addressing God the Father: "Mary Magdalene, I live with you in the desert wilderness, because all things are foreign [*ellende*][15] to me except God alone."[16] Later, she says, "To the extent that we live a holy life in exile" (*ellende*), we resemble John the Baptist.[17] Rather than diminishing near the end of the *Flowing Light*, these identifications with biblical characters and situations of exile

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    faithful love, truth, righteousness, and peace are all personified in the course of God's provision for his people.

11 As noted by Stoudt, "Mechthild," 459. This article's positive assessments of Mechthild's interaction with Scripture should not be taken as an unqualified endorsement of her hermeneutic; rather, in moments where readers may part theological company with her (as when she intercedes before the Lord for suffering souls during a visit to Purgatory, 3.15), perhaps her shortcomings will remind them to stay close to the biblical text as we attend to the Spirit's leading.

12 Christopher E. Garrett, "Mystical Writings," in *Encyclopedia of Christian Literature*, 1:119–23 (here 121).

13 Stoudt, "Mechthild," 459.

14 Cf. Johnson ("Mechthild," 360), who notes that Mechthild "aligns" herself with Old and New Testament figures; Johnson also highlights texts on weakness and temptation (e.g., 2 Cor 12:7–10, and Jesus' temptation in the wilderness) as important to Mechthild's theology and to "validate her female religious authority" (361).

15 Cf. *ellenden*, "to go abroad": Joseph Wright, *A Middle High German Primer*, 5th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960).

16 *Flowing Light*, 2.24; "wilderness" here is *wöstunge*.

17 6.32: *Also vile als wir heleklich leben in ellende*.

grow stronger, as when she prays to the Virgin in Book 7: "Ah, Lady, remember all my longings and all my prayers, . . . when I leave this deplorable exile."[18]

Mechthild's original, vernacular text having been lost, there is of course a risk of making too much of common words and themes in a repeatedly retranslated work: in the examples cited above, the translator renders *ellende* as "foreign" in one instance, "exile" in others. But even allowing for what has been literally lost in translation, we see a strong, frequent use of a thematic vocabulary of exile and estrangement, building from the examples above; continuing through Mechthild's decision to rejoice in her experience of desolation, to welcome—paradoxically— the personified "blessed Estrangement";[19] and intensifying in Book 7, even as Mechthild's health and eyesight begin to fail. Her struggle with her longing for God, and with his apparent absence, is visceral. When God "chooses to with-draw"—when he *absents* himself from her, a cognate of the word for estrange-ment—she confesses, "My longing is higher than the stars."[20] The text evinces that the older and frailer its author becomes, the more the imagery of estrange-ment, alienation, and exile expresses her lived experience. "Lord, I dwell in a land called exile, which is this world," she writes.[21] Everything leading to possessive-ness and pleasure "has to become completely alien to me."[22] Even her final chap-ter holds this bittersweet lament: "This is how the tormented body speaks to the lonely [*ellendigen*] soul: 'When shall you soar with the feathers of your yearning [*gerunge*] to the blissful heights to Jesus, your eternal Love? Thank him there for me, lady, that, feeble and unworthy though I am, he nevertheless wanted to be mine when he came into this land of exile [*ellende*] and took our humanity upon himself.'"[23]

This mention of the Incarnation leads us from Mechthild's exile/estrangement imagery to her Christology, rich with images of pilgrimage. Years before she pic-tured Jesus entering "this land of exile," she observed that "God guides his chosen children along strange paths. . . . that God himself trod: that a human being, though free of sin and guilt, suffer pain. Upon this path the soul that aches for God

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18 7.20: *Eya Vrowe, gedenke aller miner gerunge und aller miner bette, . . . wenne ich hinnan wende us disem jemerlichen ellende.*

19 4.12 (*Siest willekomen, vil selig vrömedunge*), emphasized by Tobin as a point of evident growth in Mechthild's spirituality, in "Introduction," 18.

20 7.8: *Als got dem menschen wil wesen vrömede* (recalling *vrömedunge*, "Estrangement," in 4.12, noted immediately above) *min gerunge ist höher denne die sternen.* Note that *gerunge* connotes a wringing, a struggling or wrestling with; cf. 1.4, where Tobin renders *min gerunge* as "My de-sire." Note, too, the close, bittersweet wordplay, across Mechthild's writing, of *vrö/vröude/vreude/ vröuen* (connoting "joy"), *vrowe* ("lady," as a respectful address for the Virgin Mary, various personifications, et al.), and *vrömde/vrömede* ("strange"/"unknown," "absence").

21 7.48: *Herre, ich wone in eime lande, das heisset ellende, das ist disú welt.*

22 7.64: *das mûs mir alles vrömde wesen*, recalling *vrömedunge* and *vrömede* (4.12, 7.8, respectively) above.

23 7.65; anticipated by 5.35, in which Mechthild thanks God for his concern for "my ravaged body, for my forsaken soul" (*gepingetem libe*; *ellendigen sele*).

is joyful."[24] Even before the ravages of age and blindness, she desires to follow the cruciform example of her Lord—knowing this path is "strange" not merely in juxtaposing pain and joy, but because God himself has preceded her on it and is now her guide.[25] On later occasions, Mechthild envisions Jesus as a pilgrim, coming from Jerusalem. In the first, he was "seriously wounded" there: "I suffered deep humiliation, poverty, and pain. I brought it all to you" (6.33). In the second, Mechthild tells us that "Jerusalem" stands for Christianity itself, that Jesus has been "driven from my shelter," unacknowledged, unwanted, attacked (7.13). If the hardships of this life are best expressed as estrangement, alienation, and exile, then there is a fitting consolation in that the incarnate God was himself estranged, alienated, and exiled.

The intersection of exile and pilgrimage forms a suitable place to dwell, for a moment, on Mechthild's approach to Christology and discipleship as a renunciation of power. Not that there were opportunities for political capital to become a temptation for Mechthild, personally, other than her influence in the convent as a (locally) famous mystic, or that the contesting of power is prominent or systematic in her writing. Her theology was "lyrical," not systematic; as "a creative theologian . . . she encounters the paradoxes of an ecclesia struggling with the possibilities and temptations of wealth, political power, war, innovation, and dissent."[26] But political theology is not the only kind of theology with something to say about politics. It is significant that Mechthild, in embracing the images of the court, tends to reserve explicitly imperial titles for God and his (personified) love, not human rulers. She refers to Jesus unabashedly as the "imperial Son of God," and it is hard *not* to hear the echoes of ancient Rome in the "imperial," *keyserlicher* (7.23). And in a passage combining exilic and pilgrim imagery, Mechthild gives thanks to the "dear Love of God, Lady Empress" (*vrõwe keyserinne*) for her "help as I travel in exile on the road to heaven" (*ellendigen himmelwege*).[27] In a century Wendy Farley characterizes as "a time of great cultural and technological creativity as well as one of imperial ambitions and tumult,"[28] Mechthild notably reserves imperial honorifics for worship in visionary prayer.

In review, before we determine how Mechthild's exile/estrangement imagery might contribute to the mission of the church today, it is worth considering the role that personification plays in her theologically creative writing. We saw earlier that a tendency toward imaginative identification with (and recapitulation of) the lives of biblical characters constitutes her most substantive interface with Scrip-

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24 1.25, where "strange paths" = *wunderliche wege*.

25 Hollywood (*The Soul*, 54) rightly draws attention to the *imitatio Christi*, precisely in Christ's *humanity*, as integral to the beguine route to union with God.

26 Tobin, "Introduction," 13; Farley, "Mechthild," 139.

27 7.48.

28 Farley, "Mechthild," 140.

ture. As was implied then, this affinity for identification is closely related to Mechthild's penchant for personification. Although the first speaks the languages of biblical and monastic tradition, and the second, that of thirteenth-century courtly love, both reflect Mechthild's attempts to discern and practice the virtues and disciplines of the Christ-shaped life. Above, we noted her vision of a "spiritual convent," inhabited by virtues, as representative of her struggle to identify with and depend upon her new Cistercian sisters—and perhaps to cultivate such virtues as hope, wisdom, and mercy in their lives and her own. The same tends to hold true in other personifications in the *Flowing Light*. When Mechthild thanks the "Lady Empress," God's love, as we've seen, her "help" appears in virtues personified as ladies-in-waiting, such as Patience, Sanctity, and Hope—but also, notably, Fear (7.48). So, too, with envisioned (unlikely!) companions Lady Pain and Lady Estrangement.[29] For Mechthild, walking the path of lifelong discipleship as a pilgrim in exile entails the cultivation of these cruciform virtues and disciplines, companions she has learned to welcome, whatever the cost.

Mechthild's Imagery as Resource for Creative Mission in Post-Christendom Contexts

Mechthild's work could provision that of the church today in many respects, but we will focus on two, closely intertwined: (1) Her exilic imagery and pilgrim Christology lend potential help in mediating the growing discussion about the church "in exile," primarily in North America. (2) Her virtue-inhabited imagery of discipleship could nurture the development of such spiritual practices as prayer, pilgrimage, intentional community, and creativity.

(1) Negotiating exile and monastic "options"

In *The Church in Exile*, Lee Beach suggests that "Perhaps exile is the way that the people of God should understand themselves at all times in their history. . . . [I]t could be that the recovery of an exilic paradigm as a means of self-definition is absolutely necessary for the church in postmodern, post-Christian times."[30] His qualifiers—"perhaps," "could be"—nuance an otherwise unequivocal statement that exile is *the* definitive means of self-definition, but they seem hardly necessary

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29 4.12, as noted earlier. Mechthild could be understood as paradoxically welcoming Pain here, against Caroline Walker Byum's assessment of the same passage in *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 337: "suffering disease, isolation, and suspicion of heresy, Mechtild is no advocate of pain." And cf. personifications among Mechthild's near-contemporaries, such as Dante, who before *The Divine Comedy* (and his own exile!) followed the courtly tradition of characterizing Love as his Lord, as noted by Rod Dreher, *How Dante Can Save Your Life: The Life-Changing Wisdom of History's Greatest Poem* (New York: Regan Arts, 2015), 38; or St. Francis' "love affair with 'Lady Poverty'" (so Farley, "Mechthild," 141).

30 Lee Beach, *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope After Christendom* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015), 20.

now, a few months after the book's publication. The US Supreme Court's 2015 *Obergefell* ruling intensified an ongoing discussion surrounding the exile paradigm: a few weeks afterward, ethicist Russell Moore cited a friend's dismissal of the "'exile trope' . . . noting how tired he was of it."[31] As Moore says, some speak "of 'exile' as . . . a result of a narrative of cultural decline about contemporary America. Just as the Israelites were displaced from their land, . . . Christians are 'exiles' in 'post-Christian America'"; to Moore, "the political and cultural climate of America does not make us exiles. It can, however, remind us that we are exiles."[32]

This question, "What kind of exiles are we?" is important *because it implicitly governs our theological and practical response*. Intriguingly, the highest-profile responses have employed monastic paradigms. Rod Dreher forwards the "Benedict Option": "communal withdrawal from the mainstream, for the sake of sheltering one's faith and family from corrosive modernity and cultivating a more traditional way of life."[33] Dreher draws this Option from Alasdair MacIntyre's hopes for 'a new—and doubtless very different—St. Benedict.'"[34] Though Dreher has produced a thoughtful study of exile's impact on the life and work of Dante,[35] his Benedict Option could invite quietism,[36] isolationism, even culture-war en-

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31 Russell Moore, "Are We Exiles?" http://www.russellmoore.com/2015/07/14/are-we-exiles/ (accessed September 2, 2015). David Brooks, in a *New York Times* column, offered an incisive assessment of the "culture war" that has flared up since *Obergefell*, using language of estrangement and alienation not so different from Mechthild's: "More and more Christians feel estranged from mainstream culture. They fear they will soon be treated as social pariahs." In response, Brooks called his social-conservative (perhaps largely self-identifying as evangelical?) readers to renounce "a culture war that has alienated large parts of three generations from any consideration of religion or belief," imagining instead a more hopeful future, where "[t]he defining face of social conservatism could be this: Those are the people who go into underprivileged areas and form organizations to help nurture stable families. . . . The more practical struggle is to repair a society rendered atomized, unforgiving and inhospitable." Brooks, "The Next Culture War," http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/06/30/opinion/david-brooks-the-next-culture-war.html?smid=tw-nyt-davidbrooks&seid=auto&_r=3&referrer= (accessed September 2, 2015).

32 Ibid.; as Moore also observes, focusing on nostalgia is "not the sort of exile we've been called to be," but rather, to live as exiles "in whatever culture we inhabit."

33 Dreher ("The Benedict Option," http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/benedict-option/, accessed September 2, 2015) insists that this is not necessarily "neo-Amish" or separatist in character, though that would seem to be implied in the very act of withdrawal, even if only taken to a limited extent.

34 As Dreher ("Orthodox Christians Must Now Learn to Live as Exiles in Our Own Country," http://time.com/3938050/orthodox-christians-must-now-learn-to-live-as-exiles-in-our-own-country/ (accessed September 2, 2015) summarizes MacIntyre's position, "We who want to live by the traditional virtues, MacIntyre said, have to pioneer new ways of doing so in community."

35 Dreher (*How Dante*, 277) notes in *Paradiso* 17.55–60 that Cacciaguida "prophesies the pilgrim's exile: 'You shall leave behind all you most dearly love, / and that shall be the arrow / first loosed from exile's bow. / You shall learn how salt is the taste / of another man's bread and how hard is the way, / going down and then up another man's stairs'"; exile, Dreher concludes, is "not just something that happens to refugees; exile is the human condition."

36 Dreher, *How Dante*, 13, where the book takes one of its more self-help-oriented turns: observing that the "geographical cure" of moving away from relational problems won't fix internal ones, Dreher says, "The answers and the peace you seek are within you."

trenchment, as when he asks how "to live as exiles in our own country . . . under increasingly hostile conditions?"[37] Noting, in reply, other available monastic "options" like the Dominican and the Jeremiah Options, John Hawthorne admits, "I understand the appeal of the Benedict Option. [It] provides a focus on maintaining what we know in a changing world. It offers the hope of re-engaging the culture in some hoped-for future when things are more amenable to Christian thinking. But there is another way . . . that relies upon heightened engagement in place of withdrawal." Hawthorne names this the Patrick Option, after St. Patrick's deeply contextual approach to mission.[38]

What help does Mechthild bring here? I'm not suggesting a "Mechthild Option" that would further confuse matters by invoking yet another monastic name. Her contribution is simply this: where the Benedict, Patrick, and other Options make important points for exilic mission in response to cultural shifts, Mechthild's approach to exile and discipleship is primarily Christological. Amid competing monastic options of withdrawal, protest, and engagement, *she reminds us that God-in-Christ has entered into our land of exile—and that, concerning us as individuals and as whole societies, God has the right to withdraw, to estrange himself, from us, to cultivate a longing for him, his love, and his reign.*

(2) Nurturing development of spiritual practices

As we've seen, Mechthild offers her readers the gift of what we might call a discipleship inhabited by virtues. When describing a novel or film, we may label it a "character study," affording a view of what drives the characters, what they're made of. Perhaps we should call the *Flowing Light* a "characteristic study," for it lets us see characteristics of the cruciform life as Mechthild herself sees them: as ladies-in-waiting, given by God's Love, joining her pilgrimage; or as sisters in an allegorical version of her own convent. Again, Mechthild might not have chosen all these companions, but she learns to welcome even Fear, Pain, and Estrangement.

This visionary approach to the virtues—the cultivation of an ability to see es-

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37 Dreher, "Orthodox Christians." From his earlier post ("Benedict Option"), a case could be made that his approach to exile conflates biblical and Roman imperial precedents, as he compares the end of (especially American) Christendom to the fall of Rome; and it is easy to lose sight of monasteries as communally engaged, *teaching* institutions when he stresses their isolation so firmly: "Rome's collapse meant staggering loss. People forgot how to read, how to farm, how to govern themselves, how to build houses, how to trade, and even what it had once meant to be a human being. Behind monastery walls, though, in their chapels, scriptoriums, and refectories, Benedict's monks built lives of peace. . . . Because monks of the order took a vow of 'stability,' meaning they were sworn to stay in that place until they died, Benedictine monasteries emerged as islands of sanity and serenity."

38 John W. Hawthorne, "The Patrick Option," http://johnwhawthorne.com/2015/08/03/the-patrick-option/ (accessed September 2, 2015).

trangement[39] and exile[40] as unlikely but providential gifts—could be a great gift to the church today. It might prove especially helpful for "New Monastic" communities, largely ignored among the aforementioned monastic "options."[41] According to Jonathan Wilson, "New monastics are living intentional, disciplined lives in response to a critique of the culture, but the nature of that critique, and more importantly their understanding of the gospel, lead them more deeply into the culture and into mission in the midst of the world."[42] Rather than prescribing a precise model of how to "do" monastic life, New Monasticism commends "marks" that characterize its communities: hospitality, creation care, peacemaking, etc.[43] We could suggest a connection between Mechthild and New Monasticism because they share an attributive approach to discipleship, i.e., a discipleship shaped and driven by virtues and/or practices. But the connection goes deeper, in that Mechthild's own journey *anticipates* New Monasticism: the "ascetic but uncloistered" beguine lifestyle[44] is not so different from New Monasticism's emphasis on building "intentional community," and Mechthild ended that portion of her life by entering the convent, modeling the submission to the church that New Monastic communities would affirm.[45]

If this connection is valid, what might Mechthild teach New Monastic communities and the evangelical church at large, in post-Christian, exilic contexts today? Certainly she encourages greater creativity in prayer (and in writing!). Her visionary prayer life might be more mystical in character than some evangelicals are comfortable with, but such "pushing the envelope" can be a healthy thing.

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39 See the prescient Jacques Ellul's *Hope in Time of Abandonment*, translated by C. Edward Hopkin (New York: Seabury, 1973).

40 Dreher (*How Dante*, 284) agrees concerning exile as a gift, though more in a personal way than a communal one.

41 Dreher ("Benedict Option") notes New Monasticism as too radical for most. Such a dismissal makes the "new" in "New Monasticism" somewhat ironic, as it predates the monastic "Options." Dreher also seems unaware of New Monasticism's previous engagements with MacIntyre's new-St.-Benedict statement. See Jonathan R. Wilson, *Living Faithfully in a Fragmented World: From After Virtue to a New Monasticism* , 2nd ed., New Monastic Library 6 (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2010) as well as his introduction (pp. 1–9) to *School(s) for Conversion: 12 Marks of a New Monasticism*, ed. The Rutba House, New Monastic Library 1(Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2005), 3: "Monastic communities have been a persistent feature of the life of the church. . . . Today's new monasticism . . . must be historically-situated in the narrative provided by MacIntyre's *After Virtue* and the subsequent rise of a new Empire."

42 Wilson, *Living Faithfully*, xi. There is promising potential for interaction between Mechthild's virtue-inhabited discipleship and MacIntyre's rehabilitation of virtue ethics (along with Wilson's response to MacIntyre).

43 See the chapters of *School(s)*, cited above, for examples of such "marks." As the book's subtitle implies—*Marks of a New Monasticism*, not *the* New Monasticism—these marks are not intended as an exhaustive list.

44 Stoudt, "Mechthild," 459.

45 See Ivan Kauffman, "Mark 5: Humble Submission to Christ's Body, the Church," in *School(s)*, 68–79, and perhaps especially his account of coming to see the church as a *gift*, not an *accomplishment* (71).

Recalling Mechthild's "spiritual convent," for example, we might invite the Spirit to use this text to shape us: how do we and others in our churches embody these virtues? Where might God be calling us to nurture and complement one another's practices of love, generosity, or peacemaking? Concerning pilgrimage, Mechthild's prophetic imagining of her life as an exilic pilgrimage, one which Christ himself walked before her, could further enrich a growing conversation and practice of pilgrimage as a spiritual discipline[46]—especially with respect to Christology. Lastly, on intentional community-building: it has been observed that New Monastic communities (and, very likely, evangelical communities in general) should be marked by a longing for God and his kingdom, and by a deliberate *maintenance* of that longing,[47] as individuals must protect one another from temptations toward detachment and despair[48] when facing a deeply fragmented world. Mechthild of Magdeburg is particularly prescient in this regard, constantly, creatively reminding her readers not to lose hope in their yearning for God.[49]

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46 See for example Arthur Paul Boers, *The Way Is Made by Walking: A Pilgrimage Along the Camino de Santiago*, Formatio (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2007); Michael Yankoski, *The Sacred Year: Mapping the Soulscape of Spiritual Practice* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2014), 209–25; and Charles Foster, *The Sacred Journey*, Ancient Practices Series (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010). Linking this discussion to the use of "prophetic imagination"—as Beach (*Church in Exile*, 140–52) expands this practice from Walter Brueggemann's work—we could suggest that the practice of pilgrimage is one way of almost literally "giving legs" to the use of imagination in prayer.

47 Sherrie Steiner and Michelle Harper Brix, "Mark 7: Nurturing Common Life among Members of Intentional Community," in *School(s)*, 97–111, quoting 102 here, reflecting a welcome eschatological orientation that runs through most of this volume.

48 Steiner and Brix ("Mark 7," 104–105) note these as especially problematic issues for New Monastic communities.

49 See Margot Schmidt's comments in her preface to Mechthild's work, highlighting the *Flowing Light* as a meditation on the human soul's *capax Dei*, its capacity and yearning for God; and as a celebration of the experience that God, despite his "remoteness, emptiness, and immensity," is also joyfully near; in Schmidt's "Preface," in Mechthild of Magdeburg, *Flowing Light*, xxv–xxxvii (here xxv and xxxvi).

Resources for the Disenculturation of the Church: Benjamin B. Warfield and the Triangulation of Truth

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Abstract

Richard Lovelace argues in *Dynamics of Spiritual Life* that an in-depth understanding of the atonement should manifest itself in at least five "secondary" elements: an orientation toward mission, dependent prayer, community among believers, theological integration, and disenculturation. Within this matrix of grace the spiritual life of the church can sustain prophetic and priestly engagement with the world while avoiding the opposite pitfalls of destructive assimilation or defensive cloister. This paper explores Lovelace's vision of disenculturation as an illuminating rubric under which to re-examine the complex and extensive writings of Benjamin B. Warfield. Alternatively hailed and maligned for his "Old School" orthodoxy, and especially his "rigid" views on inspiration, Warfield was amazingly well-read on the latest developments and ideas of his time. In the pivotal decades between the American Civil War and the First World War, when modern progress and development were bursting seams with new possibilities, and the Modernist-Fundamentalist controversy was shaping up for its post-War rupture, Warfield was engaged in many modernist concerns. He was avidly reading Charles Darwin, attending lectures by leading German Scholars, and promoting the *art* of textual criticism, while at the same time affirming fundamental foundations of the faith—contributing to the first volume of *The Fundamentals*, arguing for the integrity of the Westminster Confession, and developing his apologetic for the inexcusability of unbelief. According to Mark Noll's assessment, however, he did not fit into either camp. Beyond an over-simplified caricature, therefore, B. B. Warfield's pursuit of a theologically integrated life offers valuable resources for a 21st century "disenculturation" of the global church.

Introduction

In the evening of February 19, 1921, following the funeral service of Benjamin B. Warfield in the Presbyterian Church of Princeton New Jersey, J. Gresham Machen wrote, "It seemed to me that the old Princeton—a great institution it was—died when Dr. Warfield was carried out."[1] Momentous changes certainly ensued. Within a few years, Princeton Seminary had been restructured. Machen, and a handful of colleagues, had resigned to establish Westminster Seminary. A conservative splinter group had left the Presbyterian Church (USA) to establish what would become known as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. But these particular changes were only representative of a much broader crisis. The deep divide that had been growing within Protestant Christianity in North America had permanently ruptured into its modernist and fundamentalist extremes. At issue was a profound difference of opinion concerning the relationship of the Christian church to its surrounding culture. While both sides were deeply committed to the message of the gospel and felt the weight of the world's needs, the wedge that drove them apart was an inverse conception of those needs, and the best stewardship of the church's resources. Delving beyond the standard interpretations of liberal-conservative tensions in general and the persistent stereotypes of Benjamin Warfield's naive adherence to an outdated worldview in particular, it is clear that Old Princeton's "most well-informed proponent" considered both sides of the deep divide to be in error. While the church exists within a particular culture, and so must understand and speak in the idioms of its culture, it exists to bear witness to the kingdom that transcends all cultures. It does not, strictly speaking, exist to serve its world; but to serve its Lord who is, in himself, both the true savior and the final judge of the world.   More recently, in an extensive historical and theological study of church renewal, Richard Lovelace has coined the term *disenculturation* to express a very similar distinction. Viewing Warfield's theological integration of Christian existence in the world through the perspective of Lovelace's terminology provides an opportunity to reframe the question of the Christian church's relationship to its surrounding culture. This paper will, first, examine Lovelace's vision of the spiritually renewing church in order to locate his conception of the church's *disenculturation*. It will, secondly, appropriate Lovelace's diagnosis toward a fuller understanding of Benjamin Warfield's concerns for the church in the decisive decades leading up to the modernist-fundamentalist divide. Thirdly, it will suggest some implications for the contemporary church in a globally diverse context.

Locating the Evangelical Vision of Culture-transcending Renewal

Wherever the ideal of a reformed church that is always reforming—*ecclesia*

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1   Ned B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 310.

reformata semper reformanda—is taken seriously, a dynamic tension is recognized between a stable core of received grace and the dynamic processes of its lived reality. The "reformed" church is constituted by the Holy Spirit's incorporation of its individual members into the death of Jesus Christ. It is, therefore, the community of faith whose claim upon the world has been crucified with it in its identification with Christ (Gal 6:14). The "reforming" church is recognized in its "putting on the *new* [self] that *is being renewed* in knowledge according to the image of its creator" (Col 3:10). This new-that-is-being-renewed forms a worldview capable of transcending social-cultural categories ("Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and is in all" [Col 3:11 TNIV]). The "ever reforming" church is, therefore, the community of faith to whom the world's claims upon it have also been crucified in its identification with Christ. This reciprocal separation between the believer (thus the church) and the world occurs within the love that God bears for the world, and so is in no way an evasion of the needs of the world. It is, rather, the manner in which the "reformed and ever reforming" church sustains an existence in the world that is differentiated from that of the world.[2] Thomas Adam, reflecting on the topic of faith in Christ's atonement, captures this vision when he cites an aphorism of Martin Luther, "faith gives me Christ, and love from faith gives me to my neighbor."[3] Trouble comes when the dynamic correlation between the stable core of living in Christ and the liquid shape of living in love is either severed or inverted.

In a definitive, but relatively underutilized, study entitled *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal*, Richard Lovelace constructs a diagnostic model for understanding the renewed and continuously renewing

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2   The psychological construct, *differentiation of self*, postulates that a mature human identity structure enables the individual to function either with others or in isolation without experiencing undue anxiety. Fruitful parallels suggest themselves between this concept and the spiritually renewed church envisioned in this paper. See, Brian D. Majerus and Steven J. Sandage, "Differentiation of Self and Christian Spiritual Maturity: Social Science and Theological Integration," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 38, no. 1 (2010): 41–51. For a theologically-driven parallel, see the pair of essays by John Webster, "The Church and the Perfection of God," and "The Visible Attests the Invisible," in Mark Husbands and Daniel J. Treier, *The Community of the Word: Toward an Evangelical Ecclesiology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2005), 75–95; 96–113. For a closely related meditation by B. B. Warfield on the church and the world, see Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Faith and Life: 'Conferences' in the Oratory of Princeton Seminary* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1916), 128–34.

3   Thomas Adam was an obscure eighteenth-century Anglican preacher ("Rector of Wintringham"), whose *Private Thoughts on Religion and Other Subjects Connected with It* (Edinburgh: William Whyte and Co., 1821) was first published, posthumously, by James Stillingfleet, in 1785. Benjamin Warfield considered him to be a particularly valuable source of devotional reading. For an example of Warfield's appreciation and extended use of Adam, see Benjamin B. Warfield, *Perfectionism Part 1*, reprint, 1932, Works of Benjamin B. Warfield, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 126–30. For This citation, see *Private Thoughts on Religion*, 158.

church.[4] The challenge, as he identifies it, is to be fully present within one's particular cultural system, and yet remain sufficiently independent of that system to maintain the spiritual vitality of Communion with Christ. Because the visible communion of the saints occurs within fallen flesh, in a fallen world, under the apparent domain of fallen angels, the perennially conflicted nature of this calling is not to be resolved. It is maintained by divine intent (John 17:18), and holds potential for the greater glory of God (Eph 3:10). When the church falls into discord between its allegiance to the domain of Christ and its existence within the domain of other masters, *reform* is needed to disentangle its duplicitous actions. When alternative allegiances are allowed to penetrate to the depth of impeding the internal vitality of spiritual communion; where the voice of the good shepherd is neglected or compromised, and spiritual insensitivity ensues, *revival* is needed to restore spiritual urgency. In Lovelace's analysis both the practical conduct and the spiritual vitality of the renewed and renewing church are interdependent. In his words, "concentration on reformation without revival leads to skins without wine; concentration on revival without reformation soon loses the wine for want of skins."[5] Revival with reform constitutes the dynamic state of continuous *renewal*.

In order to appreciate the complexity of such an existence in the world, Lovelace surveys the history of revivals in the evangelical church. Beginning with Jonathan Edwards and the First Great Awakening, he works through the Second Great Awakening, to D. L. Moody, the Welsh revivals and the Jesus Movement of the 1970s.[6] The laicization of the church and relief from external structures of power and authority are among the advancements made in these years. While the evangelical "wine skins" were being made increasingly pliable, however, secularism was becoming increasingly more sophisticated. A noticeable trend emerged "to a progressively shallower spirituality among evangelicals," accompanied by "a loss of intellectual command."[7] The river-bed of evangelical identity began to experience what Lovelace refers to as "the delta effect."[8] As its in-depth command of the contemporary culture and the "instruments needed to destroy its idols and subdue its innovations" deteriorated, it began to be overrun with the accrued sediments of its secularizing context. At the same time, the "spiritual urgency" to distinguish between the genuine work of the Spirit and that of alternative spirits declined. A critical balance shifted toward valuing tangible manifestations of effectiveness over depth-level engagement with the persons of God. Revivalism

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4   Richard F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1979).
5   Ibid., 16.
6   Ibid., 25–52.
7   Ibid., 50.
8   For a quick overview see Figure 2: "Classical Evangelicalism and the Delta Effect," Ibid., 321.

(revival according to plan) continued to expand the church both numerically and geographically, but a cumulative lack of depth forced the evangelical church to overflow its banks. As it grew shallower and spread wider, it began to break up into isolated streams. Some, determined to be ever reforming lost themselves in the service of the world, while others, determined to hold the stable line of re-formed identity, lost themselves in hostility to the world.

In search of diagnostic tools, Lovelace contrasts the Old Testament precedent of episodic cycles with the New Testament's account of continuous expansion in the book of Acts. The Book of Judges establishes a clear pattern. God's provision of a covenant relationship had set his people apart from the broader human family. A "protective enculturation" had been provided for them through the stipulations of the Sinaitic code. Willing obedience ensured God's presence at the core of their society. Disobedience and indifference, however, would lead to divine interven-tion in the form of external opposition. When this tangible "curse" of the law is recognized as the disciplinary mode of God's covenant faithfulness, repentance, prayer, and reconciliation ensue. God's mercy is thereby incited. Responsive leadership is, graciously, raised up and empowered to remove the spiritual ob-stacles to blessing and eliminate the opposing forces that have been used of God to incite revival. As the cycles continue, however, the internal obstacles to God's covenant blessing (the primary cause) are increasingly neglected, and the foreign presence of God's disciplinary agents (the secondary effect) become—in them-selves—the obstacles of importance. These cycles do not end with the desperate vignettes of the closing chapters of Judges, however. God consents to provide perpetual leadership in the dynasty of David but this does not resolve the estab-lished pattern. The spiritual urgency and the in-depth sensitivity to the presence of idolatry becomes increasingly rare. Each generation seems forgetful of the les-sons learned by their fathers and remain either unwilling or unable to achieve a sustained state of renewal. The way is finally narrowed to a desperate need for the Prophet-Priest-King capable of restoring both spiritual vitality and temporal fidelity.

The New Testament book of Acts is the high-point and center-piece of the history of God's people. It is also a radically new beginning. Under the perpetual spiritual presence of its resurrected Lord, a continuously expanding process of spiritual revival and structural reform is described. Internal obstacles to spiritual vitality are dealt with swiftly and decisively (illustrated in Acts 5) by conformity to the cross of Christ. External forms and structures are flexible and kept respon-sive to the counsel of the indwelling Spirit and contextual challenges.

The church's subsequent struggle to sustain the conditions of its inaugurated kingdom becomes the real burden of Lovelace's study. He tabulates the critical elements that are unique to the New Testament church. Lovelace identifies two

"preconditions" for continuous renewal (awareness of the holiness of God, aware-ness of the depth of sin), four "primary elements" (justification, sanctification, the indwelling Holy Spirit, authority in spiritual conflict), and five "secondary ele-ments" (orientation to mission, dependent prayer, faith-based community, theo-logical integration, disenculturation).[9] While Lovelace does not make the connec-tion explicit, his "primary elements"—which focus on the atoning work of Christ—admirably furnish the stable side of the reformed and reforming slogan. Similarly, his "secondary" elements provide a solid working conception of its dynamic side. The vitality of the church in Acts is thus attributable to its harmoni-ous development of both spiritual (*reformata*) and temporal (*semper reforman-dum*) elements of constant renewal in the fallen world. Within this matrix of grace the spiritual life of the church can sustain prophetic and priestly engagement with the world while avoiding the opposite pitfalls of destructive assimilation or defen-sive cloister.

The Disenculturation of the Church and the Modernist-Fundamentalist Divide

It is the fifth of his five "secondary elements of continuous renewal" (the most publicly visible ring of its concentric circles) that most interests us here. *Disencul-turation* represents the ideal mode of existence for the continuously renewing—be-cause spiritually healthy—church. Inversely, it also functions as the most visible mechanism for alerting the church to internal disease.[10] Lovelace locates the con-cept in the cycles of the book of Judges, but traces its development to the book of Acts.[11] With the conversion and apostolic commission of Paul (Acts 9–23) Luke introduces an emerging codification of the church's understanding of the gospel. Lovelace labels this underlying (fourth-level) element *theological integration*. In the apostolic teaching of the first generation, the New Testament people of God are provided with a stable record of "the mind of Christ" as it was made known through the filling of the Spirit. Sustained spiritual vitality exists within the stable core of this in-depth understanding. It does not replace, but corresponds to, the on-going spiritual presence of Christ. It also does not constitute a static or independent deposit of information. Its understanding proves perennially tied to the internaliz-

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9   Lovelace discusses the preconditions of continuous renewal in ch. 3, the "Primary Elements of Continuous Renewal," in ch. 4, and the "Secondary Elements of Continuous Renewal," in ch. 5 of *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*.

10 By way of example, the failure of disenculturation is referred to by Lovelace as "a kind of rust which forms on the surface of the church's witness and clouds the glory which ought to shine out from it to illuminate the nations. At its worst, it destroys the church's life. At best, it freezes the form of the church and produces a sanctified out-of-dateness which the world can easily learn to ignore" (Ibid., 197).

11 Specifically, in the tendency toward focusing on the external (cultural) effects of God's coven-ant-curse rather than addressing its primary (spiritual) cause.

ation of the spiritual vitality of which it speaks. This *theological integration* is the external articulation of internalized truth. It addresses the need, which Lovelace had observed in both Old Testament and Evangelical contexts, for spiritual depth in the processes of engaging with other domains. As Paul (representative of the other apostles) works out the intellectual meaning of the church-formative events, Lovelace identifies a fifth-level issue of practical consequence. Particularly focused in Acts 10–15, Luke narrates the fledgling church's transcendence of its Jewish cultural roots. Lovelace coins his term *disenculturation* to encapsulate this development.[12]

In his most concise summary, Lovelace connects the concept to the determinations of the Jerusalem council in Acts 15. The real dilemma of the first century believers was caused by the recognition that the same God who had enacted the atoning work of Christ had instituted the traditions and practices of Judaism.[13] Must they not both be upheld? As they begin to grow in their understanding of the death and resurrection of Christ, however, they are led to understand (in the vision of Peter in Acts 10) that the Old Testament food laws have been nullified (transcended), and this, in turn, eliminates the need to maintain strict separation in household fellowship with gentiles. More to the point, Peter is also informed that gentiles themselves can be made acceptable to God when the Holy Spirit incorporates them into Christ.[14] As a result of this new orientation to the Holy Spirit's initiative, the church is "freed from cultural binds."[15] Immediate spiritual communion trumps socially mediated spiritual signs.

Disenculturation conveys this profound relativizing of external categories on the basis of a spirit-birthed change of identity and character. The New Testament immediately begins to designate those who put their faith in the person and work of Christ by the term "saints"; set apart, or belonging to God. *Culture*, as the social mode of interpersonal engagement, is still necessary and potentially good. Certain foods, and codes of conduct, which are obviously laden with destructive social significance should still be avoided—albeit for reasons of human-to-human, rather than of divine-to-human relationship. *Encultured* saints will live wisely. They will strive to become fully conversant with the ideals, customs, and

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12 For his extended description of "disenculturation," see Ibid,, 184–200.

13 The biblical concept of "tradition," practices that have been "passed on," or "passed down," may be the closest parallel to our word "culture." For an important passage in which Jesus confronts the Jewish leaders for their failure of discernment concerning the infringement of "human traditions" into the domain of God's word, see Matt 15:1–20 (Mark 7:1–23). In Lovelace's terms, Jesus was advocating "disenculturation."

14 The sign of tongues, in this light, points to the unity-in-diversity of depth level communion with Christ. The church is constituted as the community that both transcends and dignifies social-cultural differences.

15 This compact definition occurs in "Figure 1: Dynamics of Spiritual Life," Ibid., 75.

practices of their surrounding social context, but they will be guided by an appropriate measure of theological awareness and intelligent dissonance.

Despite his strong words of rebuke to those who sought to make circumcision *mandatory* for Christian believers, Paul felt that Timothy's circumcision was *permissible* for reasons not related to spiritual communion through Christ.[16] Lovelace concludes, "Paul could even live comfortably with Jewish Christians being circumcised and observing their traditions so long as their soteriology was straight."[17] In fact, Lovelace continues, "the gospel is free to become *encultured*—to wear many forms of cultural expression, with perfect freedom to change these expressions like clothing when the need arises—only when it has been *disenculturated*."[18]

Lovelace further contrasts *dis*enculturation with two opposite forms of *enculturation*. The usual form of *enculturation* is unconscious conformity to the ideals, customs, and practices of the people among whom one lives. This is ultimately *destructive* because a biblical understanding of evil recognizes that unregenerate personal capacities (the *flesh*), within self-serving collective structures and systems (the *world*), under the sinister intelligence of destructive spiritual powers and authorities (the *devil*), combine to create a complex "force-field" of obstacles to communion with God.[19] A properly *encultured* life will deteriorate into a destructively encultur*ated* life, unless it maintains constant dependence on, and communion with, Christ.[20] Lovelace designates this inevitable assimilation, *destructive enculturation*.

There is an opposite form of *enculturation* which is also destructive, but which is distinguished for its apparent refusal of the regnant culture. The prototype of this *protective enculturation* is that of the Sinaitic covenant. This provisional arrangement was originally made, according to Lovelace, "since the full benefits of union with Christ were not available under the Old Covenant."[21] While it provided necessary counter-incentives to the force-field of evil, it was not capable of generating spiritual vitality from the inside-out. It clearly identified the need for wisdom and discernment in the conduct of *encultured* human existence, but it served (according to Paul's assessment in 1 Cor 10) a pedagogical and prepara-

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16 On Paul's attitude toward circumcision, see, for example, Gal 5:1 –2; Phil 3:1–3. On Timothy's circumcision, see Acts 16:3.

17 Ibid., 188.

18 Ibid., 188–89.

19 Lovelace deals with all three aspects of a biblical doctrine of sin, see Ibid., 86–94, 68–72.

20 Paul's theological integration indicates that the beachhead of *dis*enculturation is "the renewing" of the "mind" (Rom 12:2; cf., e.g., Eph 4:17–24 Phil 2:5; Col 2:18–19). Without intelligent orientation to the revealed truth of God, experience will be interpreted according to constructs provided within the culture. (An un-interpreted or "mindless" experience can have no bearing on the soul.)

21 Ibid., 184.

tory, rather than transformative, function. With the unveiling of the "full benefits" of Christ, the ultimate inadequacy of *protective enculturation* and the subtlety of *destructive enculturation* are exposed. Rooted in the spiritual vitality that comes from depth-level appropriation of Christ's atonement, the critical issues of discernment suspend the quality of a particular church's disenculturation within that of its theological integration.

A thorough analysis of Lovelace's theology of culture is beyond the scope of this study. Adopting his basic categories nevertheless provides a valuable frame of reference with which to reconsider the modernist-fundamentalist crisis of North American Protestantism.[22] According to popular chronologies, the day on which the State of Tennessee found John Scopes guilty of teaching evolution in his public school classes—July 21, 1925—was the day on which Evangelicalism in North America was irreparably fractured into its "liberal," or "modernist" and "conservative," or "fundamentalist" tributaries.[23] In Lovelace's own words,

> The genetic pool of American Christianity was split in half: the "liberals" retained . . . [many of the qualities which had distinguished the original evangelicals: breadth of learning, theological depth, social concern and striving for ecumenical unity], but often lost the evangelical center of faith. The Fundamentalists retained the power and the message to do evangelism, but lost the breadth and wholeness of the evangelical tradition.[24]

In the broader terms of church renewal, the *reformed* church and the *ever reforming* church went their separate ways. In the more specific terms of *disenculturation*, a highly sophisticated form of *destructive enculturation* competed alongside a particularly strident form of *protective enculturation*. The prize to be won was the Christianization of America.

According to Ernest R. Sandeen, the fundamentalist movement was the populist result of using Princeton Seminary's doctrinal innovation of inerrancy to authenticate J. N. Darby's socially pessimistic dispensationalism.[25] George Marsden's subsequent study endorses Sandeen's thesis as an explanation of the contemporary fundamentalist movement, but finds a number of additional dynamics at work in the earlier decades of the 20th century. Beyond its innovative

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22 For a concise introduction, from a slightly-broader-than-North-American perspective, see David W. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2005), 184–214; Geoff Treloar, *The Disruption of Evangelicalism: The Age of Mott, Machen and McPherson* (Downers Grove: IVP, forthcoming).

23 Another commonly recognized flash-point was the delivery of Harry Emerson Fosdick's famous sermon, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?," on May 21, 1922.

24 Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 315.

25 Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

re-conception of the millennial kingdom, it spawned a variety of popular approaches to practical holiness, it re-structured the *loci* for defense of the faith, and it fostered a diversity of opinions on the relationship between Christianity and culture. Claude Welch views the decisive issue as an all-or-nothing approach to the question of accommodation to modern culture.[26] Despite the fact that none of these theorists ultimately escape the enculturated modern assumption that an imperative of cultural progress bares *final* authority, this cursory assessment is enough to recognize that the fundamentalist movement took its biblical and theological roots seriously, but grew militant in an effort to promote its vision of a "Christian America." Its adherents tended to *separate themselves from* the majority culture, in order to establish a more fully *Christianized culture*, rather than *separate themselves into* the self-emptying worldview of Christ (Phil 2:1–18), in order to represent an *encultured* gospel witness. Lovelace's category of *protective enculturation* therefore provides an apt—and less enculturated—description.

In the first volume of his "monumental" and "definitive" treatment of American Liberal theology, Gary Dorrien introduces the central definition of his massive three-volume history. "In essence," he states concisely, Liberal American theology "is the idea that Christian theology can be genuinely Christian without being based upon external authority."[27] Rather, he clarifies in the introduction to his second volume that the meaningfulness of truth claims can be assessed on the basis of reason and experience.[28] The driving force behind this shift away from external authority was the imperative of modernization; the need to keep in step with social progress. The Christian faith could prove its significance most effectively by demonstrating its capacity to *mediate* between "authority-based Christian orthodoxies," and "a rising tide of rationalistic deism and atheism."[29] Liberal theology, according to Dorrien, created a "third way," by adhering to five guiding principles: (1) openness to the verdicts of modern intellectual inquiry, (2) commitment to the authority of individual reason and experience, (3) conception of Christianity as an ethical way of life, (4) favoring moral concepts of atonement, and (5) a commitment to make Christianity credible and socially relevant to contemporary people.[30]

There can be no doubt, given the collective impact of the men and women represented, that a compelling vision of human flourishing lies at the heart of the

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26 Claud Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century: Volume 2 1870–1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 224–25.
27 Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion 1805–1900* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), xiii.
28 Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Idealism, Realism, & Modernity, 1900–1950* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 1.
29 Ibid., 3.
30 Ibid.

Liberal theological movement. If Lovelace's diagnostic categories hold, however, and the difference between an *encultured* theology and an *enculturated* theology is determined by the question of harmony and sequence between the primary elements of communion with God (provided on God's terms), and the secondary elements of stewarding the resources of God's gospel and his world for the glory of Christ, then not only does American Liberal theology evidence an over-emphasis on the secondary elements to the neglect (if not rejection) of the primary elements, but it suspends the administration of Christ's authority on the self-interpreted experience of its adherents. American Liberal theology is a clear case in point of a highly sophisticated, deeply compelling, but ultimately *destructive enculturation*.

Benjamin B. Warfield's Pursuit of Theological Integration and the Discernment of Enculturation

If, as has been argued so far, the enculturation of the church is a warning signal of growing obstacles to spiritual vitality at a much deeper level, and if the Modernist-Fundamentalist crisis was a particularly potent case of enculturation, the question begs to be asked: where were the early 20th century voices that were trying to give warning and what were they saying?

Given the fact that both Ernest Sandeen, and George Marsden identify Benjamin Warfield's doctrine of inerrancy as one of the key planks in the fundamentalist platform, it may appear counterintuitive to appeal to Warfield as a resource for the *disenculturation* of the evangelical church. But, as more recent scholarship on Warfield has begun to show, the popular image of both Warfield in particular, and "Old Princeton" in general, is in need of substantive revision.[31] Fred G. Zaspel, in an effort to contribute to that process, recently published a "systematic summary" of Warfield's theology.[32] Noting the frequency with which Warfield's textual and exegetical observations are cited—almost as much today as in his own day—Zaspel observes, "but one familiar with Warfield is often left with the impression that he is more quoted than read. That is, he is consulted and referenced, but his whole thought on a given subject often seems not well in hand."[33] The significance of this suggestion is compounded in Warfield's case. His deep commitment to the unity of truth meant that his "whole thought on any given subject" was deeply integrated with the whole of his thinking on every other subject. Warfield,

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31 For example, Stanley W. Bamberg, "Our Image of Warfield Must Go," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34, no. 2 (June 1991): 229–41; David P. Smith, *B. B. Warfield's Scientifically Constructive Theological Scholarship* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011); Paul Kjoss Helseth, *"Right Reason" and the Princeton Mind: An Unorthodox Proposal* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2010).

32 Fred G. Zaspel, *The Theology of B.B. Warfield: A Systematic Summary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

33 Ibid., 571.

read piecemeal, can be subjected to a surprisingly diverse range of over-simplified interpretations.[34]

Warfield was unusually well-read on the latest developments and ideas of his time. In the pivotal decades between the American Civil War and the First World War, when modern progress and development were bursting seams with new possibilities, and the Modernist-Fundamentalist controversy was shaping up for its post-War rupture, Benjamin B. Warfield (1851–1921) was avidly reading Charles Darwin, attending lectures by leading German Scholars, and promoting the *art* of textual criticism, while also contributing to the first volume of *The Fundamentals*, arguing for the integrity of the Westminster Confession, and re-conceiving apologetics as fundamental theology in order to affirm the inexcusability of unbelief.[35]

Mark Noll, who is one of the historians who have begun to recognize a surprising depth of theological integration in Warfield's writing, contributed the entry on Warfield in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology.* Toward the conclusion of this brief article, Noll observes, "Warfield found himself increasingly isolated in his later years. He shared with the modernists a commitment to learned theological inquiry but rejected their conclusions. He shared with the fundamentalists a commitment to supernatural faith yet questioned their methods."[36] If Claude Welch's assessment is accurate, and a stark either-or answer to the question of cultural accommodation was characteristic of the times, then Mark Noll's comment would seem to corroborate the interpretation that Warfield managed to steer beyond the Scylla of destructive assimilation and the Charybdis of defensive cloister, only to earn the legacy of being selectively cited but generally ignored.

Benjamin Warfield graduated with top honors from the College of New Jersey in 1871. Unsure of his future directions, but anticipating a career in some field of scientific research, he studied for a semester each in Edinburgh and Heidelberg. On his return to America, however, he enrolled at Princeton Seminary in 1873. Following graduation and a brief pastorate, Warfield married and returned to Germany to study theology at the University of Leipzig with Christoph Luthardt and Franz Delitzsch. In 1878 he became an Instructor in New Testament Language

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34 Apparently, it depends on which "pieces" are being read; some, for example, have labelled him an "obscurantist fundamentalist," (see comments by Fred G. Zaspel, Ibid., 571), others an "intellectualist who neglects the noetic effects of sin" (John C. Vander Stelt, *Philosophy and Scripture: A Study in Old Princeton and Westminster Theology* [Malton, NJ: Mack, 1978], 172), and still others a surreptitious modernist (See Theodore Letis, "B. B. Warfield, Common-Sense Philosophy and Biblical Criticism," *American Presbyterians* 69, no. 3 [Fall 1991]: 175–90, who argues that Warfield's optimistic endorsement of textual criticism to pursue greater accuracy in the original manuscripts—breaking with reformed scholasticism—contributed to the dissolution of Old Princeton just eight years after his death).

35 Owen Anderson, *Benjamin B. Warfield and Right Reason: The Clarity of General Revelation and Function of Apologetics* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005).

36 Walter A. Elwell, ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 1258.

and Literature at Western Theological Seminary in Allegheny, New York (Presbyterian Church, USA). In 1881, at the invitation of Archibald Alexander Hodge, he co-authored the essay entitled, "Inspiration," with which he is most often associated. In 1887, following the sudden death of A. A. Hodge, he was invited to take up the Charles Hodge Chair of Didactic and Polemic Theology at Princeton Seminary. For the remaining 34 years of his life he taught theology, edited the Princeton Journals, and wrote an astonishing volume of articles, book reviews, and monographs.[37]

The Warfield home, according to Benjamin's younger brother, was characterized by an "atmosphere . . . of vital piety,"[38] This meant, among other things, that the Westminster Shorter Catechism was memorized at age six, the scripture proofs and the Longer Catechism by age ten. Warfield's life-long affection for the Westminster Standards testify that this had come to mean much more to him than the mandatory discipline of a strict childhood. It provided the skeletal system for his life-long pursuit of truth. The real core of his thinking, therefore, was the belief that all truth is derived from the personal mind of God and is, consequently, both indivisible and infinitely complex. Because the God of all truth is eminently personal, moreover, the whole human soul—intended to be a unity within the diversity of its mind, affections, and will, analogous to that of God within his three persons—must be harmoniously engaged in the understanding and enjoyment of truth. The key to Warfield's theological thinking, therefore, is his understanding of salvation. Regeneration (*palingenesis*), made both possible and actual in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit, recreates the human soul into its unified (whole-soul) state of dependence on God and fruitful engagement with God's world.

Warfield's presupposition of the complete unity and infinite complexity of truth is demonstrated in his understanding of the task of systematic theology. In an 1896 article, entitled "The Idea of Systematic Theology," Warfield articulates his vision for the cumulative process of theological development.[39] As the students of various fields of theology attend to the areas of their particular emphasis (apologetical, exegetical, biblical, historical, systematic, and practical theology), they each draw their materials from the outcomes of the others, and submit their

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37 In 1932 Oxford Press published a ten-volume collection of Warfield's works (reprinted as *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000]). According to many estimates, this collection represents about half of his published writings. Although the inspiration and authority of Scripture remained an important topic throughout his career, only one of these ten volumes contains related studies. He firmly maintained that its significance was interdependent with all other areas of doctrine.

38 Ethelbert D. Warfield, in Benjamin B. Warfield, *Revelation and Inspiration*, reprint, 1932, Works of Benjamin B. Warfield, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), vi.

39 Benjamin B. Warfield, *Studies in Theology*, reprint, 1932, Works of Benjamin B. Warfield, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 49–87.

own findings to mutual cross-examination.[40] In this painstaking manner, they both deepen and extend the capacity of theology—defined comprehensively as the science (or philosophy) of God and his relations to all of his creation—to engage with every other sphere of human knowledge. He compares the task of theology to the construction of the great medieval cathedrals. The magnitude of the project was so massive that no single generation of craftsmen would be able to complete it. Each successive generation was required to pick up where others had left off. The original design and its detailed plans needed to be maintained throughout the process. Details and elaborations could be added, but not to the point of obvious discontinuity. Craftsmen had to accommodate their preferred techniques and particular areas of expertise to the qualities of the work that had already been completed. Occasionally, sub-standard work would need to be torn out and replaced, but such decisions were made with great caution and wide-spread consultation. Extensive progress was premised upon intensive excellence. In the history of the church, Warfield concludes—changing his metaphor to the more organic image of a tree—doctrine develops by growing simultaneously more deeply at its roots and more broadly at its limbs. Either form of growth without the other would eventually prove counter-productive.

Working with this diversity-in-unity conception of God's world, under the comprehensive vision statement of the Westminster Catechism's first question, Warfield believed that the chief end of human existence—"to glorify God and enjoy him forever"—entailed the collective human pursuit of truth. Right thinking, however, was itself only one third of what he termed, "the triangle of truth."[41] "There are three media or channels through which the truth of God is brought to man and made his possession . . . these three . . . may be enumerated briefly as *authority,* the *intellect*, and the *heart*."[42] For Warfield, *authority* referred to the recognition that human understanding was ultimately dependent on God's trustworthiness. "We know only what and as God tells us." The *intellect* referred to the recognition that our knowledge was entirely dependent on our ability to process

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40 Samuel G. Craig, (a founding board member of Westminster Theological Seminary in 1929, co-founder of Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing in 1930, and a Presbyterian Minister who elected to remain in the PCUSA when the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was founded in 1936) in his introduction to the P&R reprint of Warfield articles, entitled *Biblical and Theological Studies*, observed "to a degree that has rarely if ever been equalled, at least in America, Warfield made the whole field of theology—exegetical, historical, doctrinal, polemical and apologetical—the object of thorough-going study. It is safe to say the he was qualified to occupy with rare distinction any of the principal chairs of theological instruction, so that he was one of few professors who, no matter what the question put to him might be, rarely if ever needed to side-step it by saying that it did not belong to his department" (Benjamin B. Warfield, *Biblical and Theological Studies* [Philadelphia, PA: P&R, 1968], xviii).

41 Benjamin B. Warfield, "Authority, Intellect, Heart," *The Presbyterian Messenger*, (Jan. 30, 1896) 7–10, reprinted in Benjamin B. Warfield, *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield–2*, John E. Meeter, ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1970), 668–71.

42 Warfield, *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield–2*, 668–69; emphasis original.

the implications of our experiences. "We know only what our intellect grasps and formulates for us." The *heart* referred to the recognition that our experiences exceed our ability to interpret them through logical reason. We know only as our "upward strivings," and "feelings of dependence and responsibility," lead us beyond the sources of merely empirical data.[43] While each of these three media may be used to dominate the other two, harmonious interdependence is the only sustainable strategy.

To illustrate this contention, Warfield explains that "the exaggeration of the principle of authority to the discrediting of the others would cast us into *traditionalism*, and would ultimately deliver us bound hand and foot to the irresponsible dogmatism of a privileged caste." Similarly, he contends, "the exaggeration of the principle of intellect to the discrediting of the others would bring us to *rationalism*, and leave us helplessly in the grasp of the merely logical understanding." And, finally, he rounds out his polemic for an equilateral triangle by noting that "the exaggeration of the principle of the heart to the discrediting of the others would throw us into *mysticism*, and deliver us over to the deceitfulness of the currents of feeling which flow up and down in our souls."[44] In order to maintain equilibrium, Warfield concludes, the authoritative self-revealed truths of God must be "experienced in a *holy* heart and formulated by a s*anctified* intellect," if they are to issue into "a true system" of *right thinking*. At the same time, those same self-revealed truths must be "apprehended by a *sound* intellect and experienced in an *instructed* heart," if they are to issue into a "*living religion*." Right thinking and living religion are not two distinct aspects of human existence, therefore, but merely the same truth grasped by the one soul in its different modes of function.

Warfield worked out the extensive aspect of his intensive theological integration through the issues of his day. In the 1890s this meant (among other things) addressing the question that was deeply disturbing the Presbyterian Church of which he was a member: should the Westminster confessional standards be revised?[45] That Warfield felt strongly opposed to the suggestion is generally taken as proof of his excessive reliance on an outdated source. More careful attention to the reasons for his stance, however, reveals a consistent appropriation of his broader principles. In summary, Warfield opposed revision for at least two main reasons. The first was a recognition that the intention of the proposal was to produce a more simplified and less detailed statement of the doctrinal standards of

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43 Ibid., 669.
44 Ibid., 670.
45 Warfield devoted considerable attention to this question. The entire four-hundred pages of volume six in the Oxford collection of his works was allocated to these studies (Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*, reprint, 1932, Works of Benjamin B. Warfield, vol. 6 [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000]).

the church. This was, according to Warfield's understanding of the progress of doctrine, a retrogressive step. Greater depth and more extensive integration represented progress. If improvement was not intended, then the church was better to hold on to the greatest depth of understanding that it had thus far articulated. Secondly, Warfield opposed revision because he believed that the tenor of the times was overwhelmingly skeptical toward the authority of God's self-revelation. This crisis of authority created a cultural context in which the leading thinkers of the church were highly susceptible to its subtle influences. Working toward a time when more constructive impulses prevailed within the Church would produce a better context for revision. Efforts should be focused on further clarifying issues of constructive criticism rather than merely eliminating statements that rankled the sensibilities of the day.

The culmination of Warfield's life-long pursuit of theological integration, however, came in the final years of his life. Beginning in 1918, but culminating in 1920–1922, Warfield rapidly printed a series of book-length studies on various contemporary forms of perfectionist Christian teaching.[46] Strangely, what was obviously a project of great urgency in its original context, has received almost no scholarly attention. George Marsden appears to dismiss the massive undertaking as a personal vendetta on Warfield's part against Princeton Seminary for hosting Keswick holiness conferences from 1916 to 1918.[47] Recognizing his soteriologically-grounded commitment to theological integration, however, places these studies in an important line of continuity with the rest of his life's work. In the emerging self-confidence of modern culture's rapid progress, Warfield recognized a turn away from dependence on the authority of God. Naturalism was dissolving the spiritual core of Christian experience. The tell-tale symptom of this growing imbalance—as Warfield's triangle of truth predicted—was an emerging polarization between the other two modes of truth: the head and the heart. Pried free of harmonious interdependence, they were leveraged to sponsor disproportioned conceptions of the Christian faith. The culture's philosophical antithesis between Rationalism and Romanticism was being mirrored in the church. Warfield's somewhat idiosyncratic terminology may obscure the full significance of his warnings, but his categories of "rationalistic perfectionism" and "mystical perfectionism," align remarkably well with Lovelace's alternative forms of enculturation. In these tightly argued historical-theological case-studies, Warfield was calling the evan-

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46 Benjamin B. Warfield, *Perfectionism Part 1*, reprint, 1932, Works of Benjamin B. Warfield, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000); Benjamin B. Warfield, *Perfectionism Part 2*, reprint, 1932, Works of Benjamin B. Warfield, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000). Some of these were published posthumously.

47 George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 98.

gelical church of his day to recognize and refuse the polarizing consequences of modernism's theological *dis*integration of life.

On first sight, these varied articles showcase Warfield's interest in the minute details of contemporary church history. His historical facts and biographical details are carefully documented and cross-referenced. To the alert reader of the time, familiar with Warfield's broader corpus, however, the crisp clarity of Warfield's implicit analyses takes shape within the narratives. While paying careful attention to the providential details surrounding the founding of Oberlin College in 1832, for example, we are exposed to the eccentricities and short-sightedness that seemed also to dog its early stages of development.[48] Warfield has located a fertile seedbed for his underlying thesis. In these claims to special divine providence, a subtle re-working of ultimate authority is brought to light. Central to the founding Oberlin vision, moreover, are intentions to develop the means to a superior form of Christian experience. This impatience with the naturally slow processes of spiritual formation, which is central to Warfield's choice of the word "perfectionism," strongly indicates the powerful presence of the modern spirit. Evidence of a relative disdain for the normal disciplines and methodologies of careful thinking, planning and administrative procedures, therefore, provides the corroborative link for a real-life case study in the dangers of an over-emphasis on the experiential side of the triangle of truth. Despite the obvious disproportions, helpful insights can be identified. Real history, for Warfield, is never perfectly bright or completely bleak. God's grace persists through imperfect processes. On the level of its over-all trajectory, however, Warfield's point is confirmed; failure to maintain a harmonious interdependence between the authority of God's self-revelation, a reverent commitment to practical piety, and the disciplined pursuit of theologically-centered thinking leads to "mischief." Short-lived gains often give way to long-term divisions. Blocks are laid in the temple of God's truth that will need to be substantially re-tooled, or removed.

From the most malignant case of John Humphrey Noyes and the promotion of "free love" at the Oneida community, to what he considers its most benign form in the Keswick movement, Warfield analyzes the complexities of assimilating a supernatural experience of salvation with naturalism's emphases on immediacy, demonstrability, and willful agency.[49] Over-emphasizing experiential piety, and neglecting a well-informed theology, enculturated Christians become susceptible to subtle forms of spiritual pride. Left unchecked, this feeds a growing attitude of exclusivism. Subtle over-simplifications to its doctrines of God and his holiness combine with a gradual attenuation of its doctrine of sin to endorse the culture's

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48 Warfield, *Perfectionism Part 2*, 3–215.
49 Ibid., 219–611. See, for example, Warfield's use of these categories in the concluding pages of his study on "The Higher Life Movement," (550–58).

idolization of human ability. In the process, some surrogate standard is often raised up, out of proportion to its proper place within a well-integrated theological system, and used to assert an exaggerated sense of confidence in the capacity of one's faith community to maintain God's favor. A *protective* perfectionist movement (to combine Lovelace's terms with Warfield's) ensues.

Albrecht Ritschl, and the German rationalism with which he constructed his Liberal Protestantism, similarly furnishes Warfield with a comprehensive case study in the over-emphasis of reason to the neglect of God's authority and the human heart.[50] In Ritschl's case, the critical move was to dissolve the experience of reconciliation with God into that of reconciliation among human beings. The former amounts to a psychological experience rooted in the realization that sin and guilt are misplaced projections of relational alienation. Christ came to teach us how to accept God's acceptance of our lives as they are, and how to move forward with the construction of God's intended kingdom on earth. While all humans are born essentially innocent, they are immediately enculturated into the destructive patterns of relational alienation with which we are so familiar. The kingdom of God, according to Ritschl, will therefore be established through re-enculturation. Of course, the methods and mechanisms of such a comprehensive reformation of culture are complex and multi-dimensional. In the end, according to Gary Dorrien, the social gospel (Ritschlian) form of theological Liberalism collapsed because even it was too simplistic.[51] Both in its original conception, and in its eventual demise, therefore, Ritschl's theology further ratifies Warfield's thesis.

According to Warfield's cumulative analysis, dependence on the authority of God as conveyed through his self-revelation was the most neglected side in the triangle of truth during the so-called Progressive Era of American history. The horrors of the First World War, however, had a galvanizing effect on Protestant Christians. The boundless confidence in Human capacities was re-subordinated—among conservatives—to God's authoritative diagnosis of the human condition. The fundamentalist movement, which emerged after his death, elevated the authority of the Bible (statically conceived), to the neglect of a theologically integrated system of thought. While Warfield remained committed to his definitive defense of inerrancy throughout his career, he had consistently maintained that inerrancy was a secondary doctrine. It was not a prerequisite to Christian faith, but the *a posteriori* conclusion of a careful and extensive engagement with all the texts and doctrines of Scripture. It was not to be "wielded" as a means of bringing others into submission, but was rather to be joyfully received and integrated with-

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50 Warfield, *Perfectionism Part 1*, 3–301.
51 Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Idealism, Realism, & Modernity, 1900–1950*.

in the harmonious pursuit of right thinking and living religion. Fundamentalism radically simplified its system of doctrine and, in the process, made inerrancy one of its minimalist prerequisites. Warfield would have objected. Over-dependence on the "objective" authority of God's self-revelation would lead to the imbalance of *authoritarianism* where it was not held in harmonious union with the sanctified mind and the theologically informed heart.

Some Implications for the Disenculturated and Globally Diverse Church

Warfield's pursuit of theological integration suggests at least four implications for the disenculturation of the globally diverse church. The first is essentially methodological. Warfield, like all of us, was a child of his times. He thought in the terms and conceptions of the Scottish Common Sense Realism with which he had been trained. The popular misconception in this regard, however, has been to assume that this philosophical system was ultimately *determinative* of his entire system of thought. More careful scholarship has shown, however, that there were many contributing sources to the Princeton Theological perspective. In Warfield's case, especially, his disciplined engagement with the leading French, Dutch, German, and English theologians of his time, combined with his extensive reading of both fiction and nonfiction literature beyond the disciplines of theology, enabled him to engage his own presuppositions with intentional awareness.[52] In addition to this breadth of contemporary thinking, however, Warfield also maintained a disciplined commitment to historical studies. Some, for example have accused Old Princeton of being overly dependent on the Reformed Scholasticism of Francis Turretin. In Warfield's case, again, his familiarity with Turretin is surpassed by his working knowledge of important theological thinkers throughout the church's history.[53] The point is not to suggest that only such rarely gifted thinkers can cultivate the disciplines necessary to remain alert to the sophisticated theological idols of their time; it is rather to emphasize that it does require discipline. And it requires the interdependence of insights gleaned across the full spectrum of disciplines. The encultured, but not enculturated, church will develop extensive networks of intensive thinking by which it will be able to "test everything, hold on to the good," and also, "reject every form of evil" (1 Thess 5:21–22). Warfield's guiding principle in this regard was a striking emphasis on balance. In answer to the many critics who suggested that an over-emphasis on education produced clergy who

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52 Book reviews were a central part of Warfield's strategy for remaining critically engaged with the developments of his day. For a brief sampling of Warfield's over Seven hundred published book reviews, see Benjamin B. Warfield, *Critical Reviews*, reprint, 1932, Works of Benjamin B. Warfield, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000).

53 In addition to his studies of the "Westminster Divines" and their work, his collected works include a volume of studies on Tertullian and Augustine (vol. 4) and Calvin (vol. 5).

lacked spiritual heart, Warfield insisted that the problem was not one of "a too muchness" in regard to education, but of "a too-littleness" in regard to spiritual formation.[54] Every inch of extension in the branches of a tree must be matched by equal progress in the depth of its roots. Devotional reading, prayer, and first-hand engagement with the texts of the Bible constitute the intensive disciplines that must correspond with the extensive engagements of a culture's cutting edge. To translate Warfield's concern into Lovelace's terms, the primary elements of renewal must never be neglected in favor of emphasizing the secondary elements.

Secondly, Warfield's interest in Charles Darwin and the powerful emergence of Evolution in his time suggests the importance of wise discernment between explanatory theories and spiritual idolatry. As the son of an experimental cattle breeder, Warfield was deeply interested in Darwin's study of natural selection. He drew a firm line, however, when speculative theories began to undermine the biblical doctrines of God's creation and providence. Interpretations may need to be revised on either side of the harmonious relationship between theology and science. The mechanisms by which God's providence works will prove to be more complex than earlier generations could conceive. The latest scientific theories, on the other hand, will prove, in time, to have been inadequate. The authority of God's self-revelation, however, remains unquestionably more reliable than that of any learned interpretation of empirical data. An encultured, but not enculturated, Christian faith must always take its ultimate bearings from its transcultural engagements with the personal source of all truth.[55] Or, as Lovelace would argue, the secondary elements of renewal enable the encultured church to enact the deeper witness of its disenculturation.

Thirdly, Warfield lived and thought his Christian faith in the terms of a centered-set, rather than those of a bounded-set. He worked from the core doctrines toward the peripheral doctrines. He worked from the more certain textual variants toward the less certain. He worked from the freedom of engagement with Christ toward the disciplines of spiritual formation. This did not mean, however, that he was content with a minimalist definition of "core doctrines." The communion with God that is established in the work of Jesus Christ was the core of his thought system. Even this core, however, was incomplete if the whole of its system was not maintained around it. As a result, Warfield would strive to pick up a peripheral thread and trace it back to its roots in Christ. An encultured, but not enculturated, Christian faith may think of Christ in unexpected ways, but it will ultimately think of him more highly and more often because of its receptivity to a culture's particu-

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54 Warfield, *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield–2*, 470.
55 For an analysis of the Princeton response to evolution, including Warfield's particular interests in it see, Bradley J. Gundlach, *Process and Providence: The Evolution Question at Princeton, 1845* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013).

lar perspectives. Neither the primary nor secondary elements of renewal are op-tional or independent. A fully integrated spiritual-physical existence is the in-tended outcome of the redemption that has been accomplished by the incarnate Son.

Fourthly, Warfield was well known for his polemical engagements. Although a naturally soft-spoken and retiring man, when it came to "contending for the faith," he would not hesitate to identify what he perceived to be faulty reasoning, or misplaced emphases. As Bradley Gundlach has observed of him, however, "he always fought with gloves on."[56] He was not interested in winning the debate as much as he was in clarifying the truth. Therefore, he treated his interlocutors with equal respect and represented their positions with careful accuracy. This was the guiding principle behind his many book reviews. Invariably, Warfield gleaned some new insight from his engagements with conflicting ideas, and he would not hesitate to pay due tribute to its source. The encultured Christian will be a person who seeks truth because truth speaks of proximity to Christ. At the same time, of course, untruth cannot be ignored because it speaks of distance from Christ. To the encultured, but not enculturated, Christian, distance from Christ is the one unbearable thought, and the one unthinkable experience. Neither primary nor sec-ondary elements of renewal can function on any other foundation than that of a deep "relish" for God's holiness and a profound (and growing awareness) of per-sonal sinfulness.

Conclusion

In a 1913 book review, Warfield responded to a collection of essays on the topic of Christian faith and modern thought. Noting its tendency to reject external author-ity in religious conceptions and its separation of religion (the experience of God) from theology (wrongly conceived as the intellectual interpretation of *religion*), he detects the emergence of an alternative authority based on a "broad minded mediation" of liberal and conservative extremes. In a summary sentence, Warfield sharpens his understanding of the relationship between the church and its host culture to a fine point:

> No one will doubt that Christians to-day must state their Christian belief in terms of modern thought. Every age has a language of its own and can speak no other. Mischief comes only when, instead of stating Christian belief in terms of modern thought, an effort is

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56 Bradley J. Gundlach, "'B' is for Breckinridge," Gary L. W. Johnson, ed. *B. B. Warfield: Essays on His Life and Thought* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2007), 48.

made, rather, to state modern thought in terms of Christian belief. The writers of this volume seem not to have escaped this danger.[57]

In the light of Richard Lovelace's diagnostic model, the disenculturated church will recognize that the "mischief" in question can occur in at least three forms. In the first case, its understanding of the primary elements of Christian soteriology can be isolated and stylized to the point that they no longer have an ever-reforming effect on its encultured actions and practices. In a second form, the priority of its practical actions can be emphasized to the point that it has begun to devalue the re-generating source of its evangelical vitality. In a third form, it can genuinely strive to balance its gospel message with its social action and yet still lose touch with its profound sense of God's personal character and the travesty of human autonomy. With remarkable clarity, Warfield identified these forms of enculturation emerging around him at the turn of the last century and called for a re-integration of perceptive thinking and responsive living under faith's surrender to the authority of God's self-revelation. Although his warnings appear to have gone substantially unheeded at the time, his intensive and extensive commitment to the disciplines of a theologically integrated life makes him a valuable resource for the globally diverse church of the 21st century.

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57   Warfield, *Critical Reviews*, 322.

BOOK REVIEWS

The *Canadian 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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The Non-Israelite Nations in the Book of the Twelve: Thematic Coherence and the Diachronic-Synchronic Relationship in the Minor Prophets. Daniel C. Timmer. Biblical Interpretation Series 135. Boston: Brill, 2015. ISBN 9789004235816. Pp 301. $163.00 (USD).

The Non-Israelite Nations in the Book of the Twelve is divided into fourteen chapters, including an introductory chapter, twelve chapters analyzing the twelve books in the Minor Prophets, and a concluding chapter, which provides a summary and synthesis of the study and an examination of the coherence of the theme of the nations in the Twelve as a whole.

In the introductory chapter, Timmer outlines the goal, method, and significance of his study and provides brief critical remarks on the divisiveness of the diachronic and synchronic approaches—a divisiveness his study seeks to overcome through integration. This chapter provides a good foundation for the remainder of the volume, but it is difficult to follow and fully grasp on a first read-through, so additional close readings are necessary. However, the remainder of the volume is easier to understand, and after reading the book in its entirety, the introductory chapter becomes clearer.

The analysis of the nations in each of the twelve chapters is structured uniform-

ly and contains three main sections: 1) the terminology which includes proper nouns such as Edom and Egypt, language and related terms such as עַם ("people") and גּוֹי ("nation," or "people"), and generic terms such as "northerner" or "all flesh"; 2) the characteristics of the nations such as their portrayal and role in the book along with divine judgment and possible restoration in the future; and 3) an analysis which seeks to determine if the lexical data from the first section indicates any overlap or distinction between God's people and the nations. In this analytical stage, Timmer also examines the data from the second section to determine if any overlap or distinction exists between God's people and the nations on a semantic level.

The following observations pertain to the core of the volume, which analyzes each of the books of the Twelve. First, in some of the introductions to the chapters, Timmer places the given book's treatment of the theme of the nations within the context of adjacent books and others within the Twelve, such as in his analysis of Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, and Jonah. However, in the chapters which address Micah and Nahum-Malachi, connections between either adjacent books or others in the Twelve are not provided. Second, though the chapters are uniformly structured, the terminology sections reveal a minor inconsistency, in that the chapters on Hosea-Jonah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Malachi begin by identifying the proper nouns in each of the books, followed by specific and generic terms related to the nations. However, the terminology sections in the chapters relating to Micah, Habakkuk, and Zechariah begin with specific and generic language related to the nations, followed by the proper nouns. Third, while the conclusions to the twelve core chapters consistently address the thematic coherence of the nations, and place their respective books in the context of the Twelve as a whole, these observations may have been better suited for the summary of the study's findings in the concluding chapter: in some cases, observations are offered about books in the Twelve which have yet to be analyzed in the volume. Fourth, the various observations concerning the interrelationships of the books in the Twelve which have been highlighted in the conclusions of the core chapters have not been summarized in the concluding chapter, which leaves the reader struggling to piece together this information. Since the concluding chapter provides a summary of each of the twelve books' treatment of the nations, it is logical and helpful to likewise provide the same for the interrelationships between and among the books. Lastly, Timmer does not address the use of the term גֵּר ("sojourner," "foreigner," "alien"), which occurs in Zech 7:10 and Mal 3:5 in relation to the oppression and denial of justice to the alien living among God's people. Though it is not strictly relevant to the study on the non-Israelite nations, it would have been helpful for the reader if Timmer had addressed this point in the introductory chapter.

In the last chapter of the book, entitled "The Nations and the Twelve," Timmer

begins with a helpful summary of the theme of the nations and the extent to which it is coherent in each of the books of the Twelve. For example, in Hosea, the nations are consistently portrayed negatively, regardless of whether the timeframe is past, present, or future, as the nations draw the Israelites away from God; while in Joel, the nations are portrayed negatively in the present time period, but those that repent and turn to God in the future are portrayed positively.

In the second section of this concluding chapter, Timmer establishes the following five classes to categorize the various perspectives on the nations which occur throughout the Twelve: 1) the first class only includes Obadiah, which presents the nations in all timeframes as receiving divine judgment, with no hope for restoration; 2) the second class only includes Habakkuk, which portrays Babylon negatively and other nations neutrally in the foreseeable future, but in the distant future, Babylon is absent and the other nations are portrayed negatively and will experience divine judgment; 3) the third class only includes Hosea, which demonstrates that the nations are harmful to Israel's relationship with God but does not address issues of divine judgment or deliverance for them; 4) the fourth class only includes Nahum, which pronounces judgment upon Assyria and liberation for its victims, the nations, but does not deem the other nations guilty or innocent; and 5) the fifth class, including Joel, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, all of which indicate that some people from the nations will enter into a relationship with God and his people in the future and thus not experience judgment but deliverance. Though these five classes and their descriptions are beneficial in understanding the nations across the Twelve, this part of the analysis only spans a few pages in the concluding chapter. Given that each of the books of the Twelve was analyzed in detail and separately in chapters 2–13, the synthesis provided here seems disappointingly short for an in-depth thematic study of this magnitude.

The reminder of this concluding chapter focuses much more on the coherence of the theme, given that its analysis across the twelve books reveals one both diversity and discontinuity. Timmer argues that the theme of the nations, though diverse, is coherent as represented in each of the books when different time periods are taken into consideration. He then examines thematic coherence across the Twelve as a whole to demonstrate that the characterization and fate of the nations is dependent upon their relationship with God. The author is careful to advise that though thematic coherence exists in each of the books and in the collection as a whole, it does not necessarily provide evidence for the literary unity of the Twelve. Timmer also notes that the relationship between thematic coherence and literal unity requires a separate examination, outside the scope of his study.

The Non-Israelite Nations in the Book of the Twelve is an informative and

comprehensive study of the nations, thoroughly researched with extensive foot-notes and a 33-page bibliography. Each of the chapters in this volume is a man-ageable read, though varying in length from approximately 10–25 pages. While some parts of the introductory chapter are challenging to understand, the remain-der of the volume is a straightforward read. This volume is geared toward those involved in biblical scholarship and may not engage readers such as pastors or lay leaders due to its academic focus, the absence of translations for German texts (e.g., 77, 82), and perhaps the restrictive price. Despite some of the criticisms noted here, overall, Timmer's thematic study of the nations offers an important contribution and is a worthwhile read for those seeking to further understand the book(s) of the Twelve.

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Of Seeds and the People of God: Preaching as Parable, Crucifixion, and Testimony. Michael P. Knowles. Eugene: Cascade, 2015. ISBN: 9781625648204. Pp. xxiv + 263. $32.00 (USD).

Michael Knowles' latest book is an important corrective to the results-based, tech-nique-driven culture which pervades much of today's church. When research indi-cates that little is retained by passively listening to long monologues,[1] it is easy to question whether preaching is worth the effort. One might expect a professor of preaching to suggest ways that preachers could improve their sermons in order to better effect change in people. Instead, Knowles demonstrates that preaching, in itself, is powerless to bring about the kinds of change in people that the Gospel promises. And it is that very powerlessness which is the strength of true Christian preaching, because it bears witness to the only power that *can* effect change. So preaching is effective (and, therefore, worth the effort) insofar as it points to the true power at work and does not claim that power for itself.

Knowles' main argument, then, "concerns theology and spirituality rather than structure or form: it is that Christian preaching at its most potent simply bears wit-ness to the life-giving power of God" (xx). This argument is developed along three intersecting lines: preaching as parable, preaching shaped by the cross, and preach-ing as witness to a power other than itself. These themes are each dealt with in turn in the three parts into which the book is divided.

Part One, "God's Field," explores Jesus' use of parables, particularly agricultural parables, to point to God as the "sole source of life" (xxii). Knowles shows how

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1   For example: Jane Vella, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach: The Power of Dialogue in Educating Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994).

Jesus' parables could (and can) only be understood by paying attention, on the one hand, to their many resonances with Hebrew Scripture and, on the other, to the present but still not fully revealed reality of God's Kingdom. Introducing a play on words which he maintains throughout the book, Knowles describes Jesus' teaching as "parabolic" not only "in the sense that he tells parables, but also because . . . his teaching functions like a parabola, capturing light and sound and energy from a more distant yet powerful source, then focusing it to a point of intense concentration, accessibility, even revelation. That more distant source is, of course, God" (xxi). God, not the parables themselves, is the power source.

By applying this double hermeneutic (Hebrew Scripture and the presence of God) to each of Jesus' agricultural parables, Knowles demonstrates how Jesus' teaching takes the material of everyday life in first-century Palestine, like seed and soil, and uses it to point to something extraordinary, like a thirty-, sixty-, or hundredfold harvest, which can only be explained by God's active presence. It is beyond what can happen with seed and soil, regardless of how skillful the farmer is or how hard he works. The process whereby a seed germinates and sprouts into a new, exponentially abundant existence then becomes a powerful metaphor for the experience of God's transforming work. This work is not accomplished by the skill and sweat of either the farmer or the preacher. Their role is to experience it, and bear witness to it.

Part Two, "God's Body, God's Building," explores how preaching can, and must, be shaped by a theology of the cross. This does not mean that Knowles suggests that the cross be the explicit theme of every sermon. Rather, for preaching to be transformative, the ministry of preaching and, indeed, the preacher as well, must go through the process of being crucified with Christ and then raised into the reality of God's new creation. "The call to die with Christ belongs as much to ministry as to conversion" (102, summarizing earlier work by Andrew Purves). What this means for Knowles in practice is that just as Jesus could do nothing apart from the Father, so the ministry of preaching must rely on the power of God and not on the preacher: "Ministry will rely for its success less on aptitude, proper training, or personal ability than on willing inability and loving reliance" (97).

This is not to say, however, that there is no place for honing rhetorical skill and technique. It's more a question of putting those efforts in their proper place, which is in bearing witness to the transforming power of God. This is the theme of part three, "God's Word." These final two chapters compare and contrast the perspectives of Augustine, Karl Barth, Walter Brueggemann, and Paul Ricoeur on the nature of Christian witness, and then conclude with a more thorough development of Knowles' concept of parabolic preaching. Ministry which descends into the death of the cross and then re-ascends through the power of the resurrection, follows a parabolic curve and "depend[s] for its effectiveness on a power well beyond anything words alone can achieve" (89). Knowles concludes: "Proclaiming this defeat and victory, Chris-

tian preachers are captured by the one and liberated by the other. . . . As categories of human speech, parable and testimony together indicate the limits of our own role in proclaiming this gospel, thereby leaving room for Christ to accomplish what we cannot. This is to claim neither too little nor too much for preaching" (210).

The book also has two extremely helpful appendixes which root its concepts in the soil of practical application. Appendix A offers a list of seven questions that "can help to orient the various components of sermon preparation so that they reflect this same movement from death to life in the presence of God" (213). In Appendix B, Knowles shares the text of three of his own sermons to illustrate how such preparation can result in parabolically shaped preaching.

By submitting preaching to a theology of the cross, Knowles has offered a valuable corrective to our understanding of both its purpose and posture. There are some themes, however, which would be worth pursuing further. First, while being "crucified with Christ" certainly corresponds to a shift from dependence on human effort and skill to a reliance on the power of God (cf. Knowles' discussion of how Paul's afflictions, lack of eloquence, and reversal of social prominence all "correspond to crucifixion," 111), it also entails a transformation which is profoundly ontological. More theological work on how that applies to the ministry of preaching would be extremely valuable. Second, Knowles describes the Spirit as bearing witness to the validity of the church's preaching (162–67). But is this the full picture? Is the out-pouring and indwelling of the Spirit not only a corroboration of the Gospel, but also the means whereby the ontological transformation of death and resurrection is accomplished? Is it not at least a component of the new reality to which preaching must bear witness? Third, Knowles focuses his study primarily on the formal ministry of preaching in today's church. But how much of the proclamation described in Scripture corresponds closely to today's model of sermon preparation and delivery? It would be fascinating to apply this study to the full range of how God's people attempt to bear witness to the active, transforming power of God.

Of Seeds and the People of God is a vital and timely book. We live in an age when much church culture idolizes self-reliance and success through technique and power, as if the Sovereign of the Cosmos were merely a "god of the gaps," working only around the edges of our performance. Faced with the temptations of that mindset, it is not only the ministry of preaching which needs to take the parabolic journey through crucifixion and resurrection. *Every* mode of ministry, both formal and informal, needs to die and be raised with Christ so we can speak and act as effective witnesses to the only Power that can bring true transformation.

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> *The Psalms as Christian Lament: A Historical Commentary*. Bruce K.
> Waltke, James M. Houston, and Erika Moore. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,
> 2014. Pp. xv + 312. ISBN 9780802868091. $28.00 (USD).

The Psalms as Christian Lament is primarily an annotated commentary that also
contains brief accounts of historical interpretation for select psalms of lament from
the Hebrew Psalter; it is a complementary or companion volume to *The Psalms as
Christian Worship*, by the same authors (Eerdmans, 2010). Bruce Waltke, James
Houston, and Erika Moore provide verse-by-verse commentary and discuss the his-
torical development of biblical interpretation, moving from the apostolic era to the
present state of Psalmic research. They consider Pss 5, 6, 7, 32, 38, 39, 44, 102, 130,
and 143—six of these being part of the seven traditionally identified penitential
psalms. With some other added features, the authors also supply, first, a new trans-
lation for each of the ten psalms, and, second, a glossary of terms at the end of the
volume—both creative and useful.

As a historical commentary, Waltke, Houston, and Moore preface each psalm's
commentary with a brief overview of several historical interpreters or relevant
Christian faith traditions. For example, Ps 5 summarizes the life and thought of
Jerome, while in Ps 102, a comparison between Roman Catholic and Reformed or
Evangelical thought is presented, with attention given to John Fisher (ca. 1469–
1535), Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1450–1536), and Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–
1562), among others. While the historical commentary summarizes the lives and
thoughts of particularly significant figures to the development of Christian biblical
interpretation, the brief discussion targets the chapter's respective psalm of lament.

Waltke, Houston, and Moore do an excellent job emphasizing the use of a specif-
ic psalm by a certain historical scholar. In my observations, I noticed particular
attention was given to the theological lineage of the Reformed tradition—from
Augustine to Luther to Calvin and forward. While their historical commentary ac-
complishes its primary task, to provide the reader with an introductory understand-
ing of the academic lineage of the interpretation of lament poetry, there was a lack
of emphasis given to twentieth-century theological interpretation. When I received
The Psalms as Christian Lament, I was expecting extensive engagement with the
works of Sigmund Mowinckel, Claus Westermann, Walter Brueggemann, and H. J.
Kraus, for example, and not the Reformed tradition. There was what I deem min-
imal interaction with these scholars, which was unfortunate, considering the signifi-
cance of lament theology only really began to receive emphasis and recognition as
vital to the Christian faith tradition during this era of scholarship. However, it seems
that Waltke, Houston, and Moore hold a different opinion and would argue that la-

ment theology was already recognized as such earlier in history and should be dated back to the apostolic era.

In their analysis of these select psalms of lament, Waltke, Houston, and Moore apply two distinct methodologies, rhetorical criticism and form criticism, for the purpose of exegesis and commentary. A foundational knowledge of these two methods is important for the reader to understand before exploring this volume if he or she desires a fuller appreciation of how the volume's commentary is structured. The authors present their verse-by-verse exegesis according to the form structure they determine appropriate. Their argument for the form structure of any given psalm is typically placed in the third part of each chapter and is relatively easy to follow.

Concerning the verse-by-verse commentary and new translation, it is quite noticeable that the authors make the interpretive decision to translate the divine name YHWH, which is typically translated "the LORD," as "I Am" in all instances. While I find no reason to criticize their creativity, I was unable to find a convincing rationale behind this translation within the volume's introductory section. Furthermore, it seemed that the commentaries supplied were particularly meant to aid those involved in pastoral ministry, or for the personal interest and spiritual growth of the layperson, as can be seen through their references to current events and persons as illustrations (e.g., Saddam Hussein, 194) and their use of colloquial abbreviations (e.g., "AWOL," 199); again, not that I disagreed with the authors' decision to write in such a way, only that some form of rationale would have brought some clarity concerning their intended audience. Furthermore, the authors also reference a considerable amount of popular writers of pastoral and practical theology—Charles Haddon Spurgeon, C. S. Lewis, and Eugene Peterson, for example. Waltke, Houston, and Moore are clear in their attempt to bridge the gap between historical Christian exegetes and modern readers. They were successful in their argument that lament poetry was important for those in pastoral ministry historically and should remain as significant, if not more so, in the present.

Regarding their commentary on the lament psalms, there was little emphasis given to the placement and function of these psalms within the greater structure of the Psalter. With Gerald H. Wilson's significant publication in 1985, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, a significant portion of Psalmic scholarship moved toward the conclusion of an intentional structuring of the five books of the psalms. I believe it would have been helpful for the reader if the authors provided a fuller engagement with this concept of intentional editing and placement of lament psalms within the megastructure of the Psalter.

In conclusion, I recommend this volume to any person who is interested in gaining an introductory knowledge of the biblical interpretation of lament Psalms in the Christian faith tradition. More specifically, I highly suggest that anyone who is in pastoral ministry and is considering the topic of lament poetry as a teaching series

purchase a copy of *The Psalms as Christian Lament*. This volume provides ample information that can be applied to the preparation of biblical teaching in a congregational setting. It is not necessary that one read *The Psalms as Christian Worship* to understand the arguments presented in this volume; however, I recommend that both be purchased together for the purpose of more fully understanding the significance of the Psalms to the Christian faith tradition.

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A World Transformed: Exploring the Spirituality of Medieval Maps. Lisa Deam. Eugene: Cascade, 2015. ISBN: 9781625642837. Pp. xv + 142. $19.00 (USD).

I'm sure the observation has been made before, but I've grown accustomed to seeing the word "accessible" employed in comments of advance praise on the back covers of academic volumes, only to find inside that "accessible" means only "moderately more readable" than other offerings in the same field. Thankfully, Lisa Deam's book is really and truly accessible: it's a genuine pleasure to read, a skillfully laid path that engages our minds and our spirits with each inviting step. From the outset, Deam is winsomely honest about her own surprising journey, initially inspired by undergraduate encounters with medieval art. "I loved the way that medieval artists saw their world: with creativity and in intimate connection with the creator. It became the way I see my own world, or the way I try to see it"; in particular, the seven-hundred-year-old Hereford Map "transformed not only the course of my scholarly career but also my journey with God" (1). As the book unfolds, the challenge Deam faces is that of persuading us that this and other medieval maps can offer us similar guidance on our own journeys.

Following an introduction that addresses the admittedly "foreign world" of these maps by arguing that we "need the vision of history shown on medieval maps to deepen our sense of belonging in God's world," such that we can interact with the Hereford Map "as an app for our time . . . a spiritual GPS for our journey with God" (2, 5), Deam devotes her next three chapters to "finding Christ." Chapter two, "Finding Christ at the Center," uses the medieval tendency of placing Christ in Jerusalem at the centre of world maps to prompt questions about where Christ fits in our lives today. "Begin with the cross," Deam says of the Hereford design. "Let Jerusalem shape the contours of the earth. The map's making contains an echo of what God did in the beginning, creating the world and ordering it around his son" (12). By contrast, the noisy clutter of today's world means "that Jesus sometimes gets crowded out. We forget the place that he once occupied in our lives, the passion that we

once had for him. Our world may no longer be recognizable to us" (13). Engaging with Col 1:15–17, Deam finds in the map's cruciform centre (complemented by the Ebstorf Map, emphasizing Christ's resurrection) a reminder to return to a truly Christ-centered worldview. The following chapter finds Christ in history: the maps' relation of biblical history includes monstrous races, liminally placed, while the crucifixion, the "cure for monsters—the very remedy for sin," reshapes that history from the centre outward, allowing us to "embrace our place," small but important, in response (37, 43). Chapter four ("Finding Christ at the Edge") returns to the monsters, observing how medieval Europeans illustrated the fears, dangers, and unknowns of their existence by placing them along the boundaries of maps—and how we often do the same.

As themes of "finding Christ" linked chapters two through four, so a "journeying" motif connects the next triad. Chapter five journeys to Jerusalem, introducing pilgrimage: the Hereford Map's illustrations of major pilgrimage routes invite reflection on the cost of discipleship, whether undertaken on a physical path or an interior, metaphorical one. In chapter six, "Journeying through Life," pilgrimage encompasses life itself—especially life in Christ. From the Exodus route as represented on the Hereford Map, to the "foreigners and strangers" motif in Heb 11 (included here in English and Latin, to emphasize pilgrims as *peregrini*, though the Greek wording is curiously absent), to lessons on perseverance drawn from the map's inclusion of Odysseus, Deam guides us toward greater attentiveness in prayer, commending in this regard the practice of the daily examen. The book's seventh and perhaps most demanding chapter, "Journeying through the Day," considers the Psalter Map (ca. 1265), where "geography can teach us to tell spiritual time" (85). Having earlier helped readers to reorient themselves toward maps where east (and thus Asia) is at the top, Europe at the lower left, and Africa to the lower right, Deam now adds the Divine Office of fixed-hour prayer that psalters were meant to facilitate. She has us consider the daily life of an imagined, young, medieval housewife, moving through the "spiritual territories" pictured in each continent, before transposing the same exercise into our own lives: Europe as "the land of the familiar—our everyday work and responsibilities"; Africa, "with its monsters, is the fearsome land"; and Asia and the Holy Land, "our landscape of faith" (93). I would have appreciated seeing some admission of the postcolonial (or, given the Psalter Map's antiquity, *pre*colonial!) problems such an exercise might reinscribe, but I admired the chapter nonetheless—in part for its continued development of the book's Christology, emphasizing Christ's roles as creator, sustainer, and monster-defeater.

The final two chapters and the conclusion focus on "Being," as Deam suggests spiritual practices to inculcate the preceding material into our lives. Delving once more into Scripture and the words of medieval writers, chapter eight ("Being Reborn") gathers together images of Christ as mother: "In birthing the world, Jesus

gave a great gift to all who live therein. . . . Perhaps, in being surprised by the idea of Jesus giving birth, we are shocked out of our complacency and are able to reach new heights of compassion for what our savior went through on the cross" (104). Chapter nine, "Being Centered," studies the Hereford Map's depiction of Alexander the Great—whose conquests are notably confined to the map's edges—as an example to be learned from when we find ourselves imitating it. Even in acts of service, Deam admits, "I want no less than to change the world. I scurry around the edges of the earth, building my empire of achievements" (120). In such moments, only the deliberate practice of resting in, and submitting to, God's presence will help: "Restored by the center, I am ready to face the edge again" (121). The conclusion, "Toward a Practice of Centering on Christ," cleverly offers a review—a "Map Full of Practices" (124)—that also serves as a call to begin practicing any of the exercises suggested earlier, any combination of which will help readers to reorder their lives around Christ.

Throughout the book, readers will benefit from illustrations taken from the maps in question, as well as from sets of "Reflections and Practices" at the conclusion of each chapter. These exercises are well-chosen, pushing us just enough into new territory, as it were, to challenge us to grow. The reflections for "Being Reborn," for example, ask which names we are comfortable with using when addressing Jesus in prayer, and which ones we "shy away from," nudging us toward bringing "whatever growing pains you are experiencing" to Jesus as mother, for instance (107–108). The book's accessibility leaves some questions in want of nuance: Deam's directions to meditate on Jer 29:11 and to "[r]ejoice that God has made you part of his plans for the world" neglects that passage's imperial background, which may inadvertently reinforce its frequently decontextualized use in popular Christian media. That said, the book as a whole remains a marvellously reorienting read, supplying insights for mind and soul on nearly every page. As Deam says, in dialogue with Augustine, "No person lies beyond [God's] reach. God redeems the edge, making it a place of miracles as well as monsters" (55).

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Recovering the Evangelical Sacrament: Baptisma Semper Reformandum.
Anthony R. Cross. Eugene: Pickwick, 2013. ISBN: 9781620328095. Pp. xvi + 403. $46.00 (USD).

In *Recovering the Evangelical Sacrament,* Anthony Cross issues a call for the church "to restore baptism to its New Testament place in conversion and in the gospel we proclaim" (91). Drawing upon contemporary discussions of conversion

as a process that includes faith, baptism, and the work of the Spirit, Cross puts forward a biblically grounded argument that baptism neither precedes conversion (as in *paedobaptism*) nor follows it (as in *credobaptism*), but that baptism in water and Spirit is an essential part of conversion itself.

Cross begins with an overview of the state of contemporary baptismal debate, identifying a lack of progress in discussion between paedobaptists and credobaptists, and a worrying tendency among evangelicals to neglect the importance of baptism altogether. In chapter two he articulates his understanding of baptism as "conversion-baptism," and responds to concerns that such an understanding poses a threat to the Reformation principle of *sola fide.* Drawing on the work of George Beasley-Murray, Cross identifies biblical texts which show that the gifts of salvation given to faith are also given to baptism, and argues that in the New Testament baptism and faith are inseparably connected, being the "outside and inside of the same thing" (56). He suggests that the tendency among evangelicals to separate faith and baptism, and to minimize the importance of baptism, reflects a gnostic dualism that is rooted in Zwinglian thought and Enlightenment empiricism rather than in the biblical witness.

The next two chapters are devoted to detailed exegetical discussions, focused on Eph 4:5 and 1 Cor 12:13 respectively. The concept of synecdoche is crucial in both discussions, with Cross arguing that, because of the inseparability of the elements of conversion/initiation, any of these elements may be a synecdoche for the whole. Thus, faith and the gift of the Spirit are implicitly included in the "one baptism" of Ephesians, and being "baptized in one Spirit" in 1 Cor 12 takes place in conjunction with the event of water-baptism.

Subsequent chapters build on these exegetical discussions. Noting that many evangelicals tend to resist a close connection between baptism and the gift of the Spirit, Cross argues for a biblically based sacramentalism which places priority on divine activity while also making room for human responsiveness. Cross criticizes Barth's departure from Calvin's sacramental understanding of baptism, and draws on the work of Pinnock to broaden the definition of sacrament to include all the ways that God might use created reality to reach out to his creatures. The following chapter appeals to Scripture, the early church, as well as Calvin and the Reformed tradition in order to "rehabilitate baptismal regeneration within Evangelical theology" (208). A chapter on the corporate dimension of baptism argues that baptism amounts to entry into both the gathered community as well as the universal body of Christ, exhorts evangelicals to ecumenical involvement, and responds to covenantal arguments for infant baptism. The penultimate chapter considers the ethical and liturgical aspects of baptism, arguing, against Barth, that it is unnecessary to reject sacramentalism in order to maintain the ethical aspects of baptism, and encouraging evangelicals to give greater attention to the liturgical

celebration of the relationship between baptism and the Christian life. A final chapter offers concrete suggestions for the reform of baptism in the life of the Church.

One of the strengths of the book is that a number of key exegetical issues are explored at length, such as the meaning of "one baptism" in Eph 4, as well as Cross' argument, *pace* Dunn, that "baptized in one Spirit" in 1 Cor 12:13 should be understood as a synecdoche rather than as a metaphor. However, while some texts such as 1 Cor 12 receive close exegetical engagement, other significant texts, such as 1 Cor 6:11 and Titus 3:5, receive much more cursory treatment (see 106–107). Cross' argument would have been more convincing if more attention were given to engaging substantively with non-baptismal and non-sacramental readings of the baptismal texts most crucial to his argument (e.g., Philip Towner on Titus 3, or Robert Jewett on Rom 6). While there is some engagement with broader ecumenical voices, Cross seems to be primarily aiming at the Reformed end of the evangelical spectrum. He does not engage substantively with Pentecostal biblical scholarship, simply noting that arguments for a post-conversion baptism of the Spirit have been answered by Dunn, Fee, Turner, and Thistleton.

I also noted that when he draws on the work of John Colwell, Cross' criticism of Barth reflects a common mis-reading of Barth that has been corrected in recent work by Travis McMaken and others. I suggest that the difference between Cross and Barth is arguably not so much whether baptism is an event of conversion involving both divine and human activity, as whether conversion is a one-time process in which the Christian life begins (Cross) or an essential characteristic of the whole of the Christian life (Barth).

The majority of the material in *Recovering the Evangelical Sacrament* has been previously published in other contexts, and this book would have benefited from more careful editing to streamline the argument and to reduce excessive supporting quotations, overly long footnotes, and verbatim repetition (e.g., 53 and 183; 109 and 171; 165 and 179). There are times when the voices of others threaten to crowd out that of Cross himself (e.g., 81, where Stein's view of the temporal nature of conversion is included in the text, while Cross places his own perspective in the footnotes). That said, in this book, the culmination of over twenty years of engagement with the question of baptism, Cross has amassed a wealth of evidence. He clearly demonstrates that his significant interpretive moves are supported by many scholars with solid evangelical credentials, thereby opening up a space for reluctant evangelicals to consider issues such as sacrament and baptismal regeneration, and contributing to the growing body of literature advocating a baptist sacramentalism.

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CANADIAN EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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