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Διδασκαλια

DIDASKALIA

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DIDASKALIA — 1. act., the act of *teaching, instruction*; Romans 12:7. Of Timothy, 1 Tim 4:13, 16. 2. pass., of that which is taught, *teaching*; Eph. 4:14. Freq. of the teachings of eccl. Christianity: 2 Tim. 4:3 — From Bauer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the* NT.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching (Διδασκαλια)..."
— 2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV)

About the Journal
Didaskalia is Providence's peer-reviewed academic journal, published annually by ProvPress, a division of Providence Theological Seminary. Guided by the principle of interdisciplinary theological reflection for the church, Didaskalia features articles and book reviews of significance for an ecclesial and academic audience.

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Submission Instructions
Didaskalia is open to all submissions of original research, articles, and academic book reviews. Articles should run approximately 8000 words in length, be written according to style guidelines set forth in Turabian / Chicago Manual of Style, and use footnotes rather than endnotes. Book reviews should be approximately 1000-1200 words in length and should include both summary of and critical engagement with the book being reviewed.

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Teaching and Scholarship "in" Christ

Patrick S. Franklin, Editor

Jesus Christ is the perfect image of God the Father. All things were created in him, for him, and through him; and in Christ *all things* hold together. These affirmations from Colossians 1:15-17 have been central to discussions at Providence about "Christ centred education." They allow us to believe with confidence that faith and higher learning are not opposed. In fact, both are made possible and accessible because of Christ, who as the *Logos* is the ontological ground of all knowledge, and because of the Spirit, who enlightens human hearts and minds, inviting and drawing all to pursue the Way, the Truth, and the Life. So we need not fear learning and knowledge, even when these challenge our preconceptions, received traditions, and present understanding.

Of course, we can and should be appropriately cautious, critical, and inquisitive about new ideas, especially when they have not yet gained consensus affirmation amongst those that study and test them most closely and skillfully. Yet, because all truth points ultimately to the One who *IS* the Truth, we can be open and confident that pursuing knowledge is a legitimate good, even more – a divine calling to use well the minds that God has given us. Christians teaching and serving in higher education often find that their scholarly work leads them into deeper worship of and reverence for God. Sometimes what they discover through scholarship disrupts and troubles them; this too can faithfully reflect biblical faith, occasioning lament, intercessory prayer, or words of exhortation and even confrontation for the church.

What does it mean to be a Christian scholar and teacher? How should Christian scholars pursue "Christ centred education"? What challenges do Christians scholars uniquely face as they "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness/justice" in the world of higher education? How do they balance faithfulness to Scripture

and their received ecclesial traditions with a commitment to engage their scholarly fields with excellence and full integrity? What unique opportunities do Christian scholars have to bear witness to Christ and to influence the direction of our culture?

This volume of *Didaskalia* is devoted to these questions. The vision for the issue was to gather Christians who teach and do research in the world of higher education—across diverse academic disciplines, representing different types of institutions, and serving in various capacities—and invite them to reflect on the meaning of "Christ centred education" from the perspective of their own contexts, fields of study, and/or roles and responsibilities. The collection of essays that follows captures that vision nicely. Though it is not intended to be comprehensive, saying all that can be said about Christ centred education, it does provide a representative sampling of insightful perspectives and experiences. Contributors to the volume include specialists in education, theologians, biblical scholars, ethicists, philosophers, university administrators, a physician and research scientist, two PhD students, and a Canada Research Chair holding two PhDs (in comparative literature and philosophy) and publishing widely on a variety of scholarly subjects.

We begin with the feature article, written by Jens Zimmermann, which provides a helpful overarching framework for the entire volume. Zimmerman seeks to demonstrate the enduring significance of the Christian humanist tradition for the integrity and health of higher education. If Christian education is to adequately address the challenges of the present, it must reclaim its roots and re-appropriate the collected wisdom of its past.

Next, Nadia Delicata explores Christ centred education as it developed in the early church (particularly Origen) and culminated in the medieval period. David Johnson then contributes "A President's Perspective" on Christ centred education, exploring the opportunities and challenges that administrators of Christian universities face today.

Two theological contributions follow, a concise "Theology of Confessional Teaching" by David Gurezski and a theological proposal for relating faith practice to academic practice by Amanda MacInnis-Hackney. After this, Stephen Kenyon and Mark S. Mc-

Leod-Harrison reflect philosophically on the potential for analytic thought in philosophy and theology to contribute to the formation of Christian wisdom.

The next two articles address the relationship between science and Christian faith. The first, by Brent Rempel, examines the writings of Benjamin B. Warfield (1851-1921), as an example of a Christian biblical scholar who thought deeply about Scripture and its interpretation in light of modern scientific developments of his day, particularly evolutionary theory. The second article makes a unique contribution to this volume; in it, Joshua Swamidass narrates his own personal journey as a scientist and a Christian, sharing both his struggles and growth experiences on the way to cultivating "proper confidence" in Jesus. He helps us to ponder the beauty of Jesus and the reality of his Resurrection, neither of which science can prove or disprove—yet both of which can be transformative for *scientists* as persons loved by God.

The final two articles specifically address the *practice* of education from a Christian perspective. Elfrieda Lepp-Kaethler writes about the importance of hospitality for an effective and holistic learning environment. Drawing on the work of Christine Pohl, Henri Nouwen, and Waldemar Janzen, she connects hospitality in education with God's own hospitality as divine Host. In the concluding article of the issue, Ken Badley and Kris Molitor discuss "Talking Straight in Education: Letting our Yes Mean Yes." They alert us to the ways in which educational ideals tend to become slogans, with both positive and negative results for teaching and learning. They encourage Christian educators to use educational language carefully and to be sure that their actual practices align with their stated intentions.

Taken together, this collection of essays offers much food for thought to provoke the imagination, stimulate critical thought, and encourage ongoing conversation about what it means to practice teaching and scholarship "in" Christ. It is my hope that readers catch a glimpse of the passion these writers have both for Christ and for their scholarly fields, as well as attain a deeper appreciation for the importance of their work for the church and for society.

Christian Humanism: Christ-Centred Education by Another Name

Jens Zimmermann*

Abstract

Christian humanism is the best descriptor for Christ-centred higher education; that, at least, is the argument advanced in this article based on historical grounds. The first section defines Christian humanism based on biblical and patristic theology. The second section shows how this theology continued to inform the major cultural periods of medieval and Renaissance humanism. In the final section, the concept of Christian humanism is brought to bear on the contemporary crisis of higher education in order to argue that Christian universities could be in a unique place to address the current situation, but they must do so by means of a creative reappropriation of the Christian humanist tradition.

Introduction

'Humanism' is probably not the first term many Christians would chose to describe Christ-centred education. In fact, the very idea of admitting 'humanism' into educational theory will likely appear to most evangelical Christians as blasphemy in the biblical sense of the word: does not humanism pretend to godhood by replacing our dependence on God with human autonomy, thus representing the very opposite of Christ-centred education? Indeed, it would, if we meant 'secular humanism.' Yet secular humanism is neither the first

* Jens Zimmermann is Canada Research Chair of Interpretation, Religion, and Culture at Trinity Western University, and current visiting research fellow at Trinity Hall, Cambridge University. He has published widely on hermeneutic philosophy, theology, and literary theory. His recent publications include *Incarnational Humanism* (InterVarsity Press, 2012), *Humanism and Religion* (Oxford University Press, 2012), *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2015) and *Re-Envisioning Christian Humanism: Education and the Restoration of Humanity* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

humanism nor the most authentic one. My contention in this article is that Christian humanism is indeed an appropriate, perhaps even the best, label for Christ-centred higher education. Why? Because on account of the incarnation, Christianity essentially is humanism. One can argue on solid biblical and theological grounds that Christianity is all about the formation of full humanity. To anticipate our fuller account of the theological justification below: in Christ, God became human in order to establish true (or complete) humanity, and, through our union with Christ, provide a way for all who embrace His renewing gift of grace to become transformed into Christlike beings, that is, into perfect humanity. This humanistic interpretation of Christianity was dominant in the early church and was known as an educational process, or *paideia,* with the goal of *deification*. For nearly a thousand years or more, Christians pursued *paideia,* or education, as Christ-formation. If this transformation into Christ's likeness is indeed the purpose of human life, then Christian education in general, including post-secondary education, must somehow reflect and be directed towards this goal.

There are many arenas for Christian education: families, churches, schools, seminaries, and universities are the most obvious, but, according to Luther at least, learning our civic responsibilities in politics, trade, and other professions are also means of Christian character formation. Our focus, however, will be on Christian humanism and post-secondary education in part because that is the area of my own professional experience, but also because the much publicized crisis of higher education is emblematic for the general loss of a unifying vision in Western cultures concerning the ultimate goal of human existence. Some such *telos* is required to endow education with purpose and to direct educational institutions and politics. Given the still pervasive view among Christians and non-Christians that the default definition of humanism is atheism (or secular humanism), I will first explain the theological tradition of Christian humanism predominant in the early Church and then discuss the idea of Christian higher education and the Christian university in light of this tradition. I will conclude with some central, current issues that Christian institutions of higher education would benefit from approaching with a Christian humanist perspective.

1. What is Christian Humanism?

The defining features of Christian humanism were established as Christians began to unfold the full meaning of the incarnation, the astounding mystery that God revealed himself most fully to us in the god-humanity of Jesus. Indeed, one of the striking differences between patristic and current evangelical theology is the former's emphasis on the incarnation. The church fathers seem not to get over the marvel that God demonstrated His love for human beings, his *philanthropy* (Tit. 3:4), by becoming human flesh in order to "refashion humanity as it was in the beginning," restoring true life to human beings so that "the power of the resurrection might come upon the whole human race."[1] The church father Irenaeus famously spoke of humanity's "recapitulation" in Christ. In Christ, humanity was collectively taken up and perfected into the originally intended final form.[2] Participating in true life through our union with Christ, our entire human nature, soul and body, becomes transformed by the power of God into a new human being.[3] For Irenaeus, whose teaching is representative of the early tradition, the Christian life is our transformation into *homus verus* (true human being),[4] *homo vivens* (living human being),[5] or *novus homo* (new human being).[6] In short,

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1 Cyril, Saint, of Alexandria, *On the Unity of Christ*, trans. John Anthony McGuckin, ed. John Behr Crestwood, Popular Patristics (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 115.

2 See, for example, Irenaeus: "*Sed quoniam unus et idem est qui ab initio plasmavit nos et in fine Filium suum misit, praeceptum eius perfecit Dominus, 'factus est ex muliere' et destruens adversasium nostrum et perficiens hominem secundum imaginem et similtudinem dei*." Irenaeus, of Lyon. *Adversus Haereses V*. Greek or Latin text with German translation; *Fontes Christiani*, ed. Norbert Brox, Wilhelm Geerlings, Gisbet Greshake, Rainer Ilgner and Rudolph Schieffer, 5 vols. vol. 5 (Freiburg; New York: Herder, 1993), 21.2, p. 165.

3 Clearly, for Irenaeus, "salvation" (salutis) encompasses the whole human being, soul and body. The church tradition holds to "the same salvation for the whole human being (*salute totius hominis*), that means of soul *and* body (*hoc est animae and corporis*)." Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, Book V, 157.

4 Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, V, 24.

5 Cyril of Alexandria also uses this term, "the revitalization of human bodies which is achieved by participation in [Christ's] holy flesh and blood." Cyril, *On the Unity of Christ*, 58.

6 Cyril, *On the Unity of Christ*, 270.

for the early Christian tradition, the good news and the whole point of being a Christian was that through participating in the life of God, we become fully human by being refashioned in the image of Christ.[7]

The result of this teaching was that for roughly the first six hundred years of early Christian theology, salvation was defined as *deification* (or *theosis*). Early theologians, from Ignatius of Antioch to Justin Martyr, from the great Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria to the influential Cappadocian fathers, and extending from Athanasius all the way to Jerome, Augustine, Hilary of Poitiers, and Aquinas, declared that God became a human being so that human beings could become deified. Evangelical Christians often misunderstand deification as the Promethean aspiration to godhood. Within Eastern Orthodox theology, another helpful term for deification is "Christification," the putting on of Christ. Deification, in short, defines the goal of the Christian life as becoming god*like* by being shaped into Christ-likeness. So when Athanasius wrote in his treatise on the incarnation that "God was made human so that we could become gods," he did not mean in any way that our human essence changes into a divine nature.[8] For the church fathers, deification refers to becoming like God not in nature but in *character*.[9] Here is, for an example, how the church father Basil defines god-likeness:

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7 For example, in Cyril of Alexandria, for whom God "came in the likeness of those who were in danger, so that in him first of all the human race might be refashioned to what it was in the beginning. In him all things became new." Cyril, *On the Unity of Christ*, 88.

8 We find warnings against this mistake in many patristic writers, including Basil, Nyssa, Naziansus, and Augustine. To take just one example, Irenaeus recognizes in seeking equality with God the false promise of the snake in Genesis 3:5; for Irenaeus, partaking of the divine nature makes us sons of God in the sense of adoption: "After all, for this reason did the Word of God become human and the son of God the son of man so that the human being can become the son of God by sharing in the Word of God and being adopted as son" (*uti filiorum adoptionem*). Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, Book III, 247.

9 This emphasis on Christ-like character is indebted to the patristic distinction between image (referring to body, dignity, freedom, and capacity for communion possessed by all as created in God's image) and likeness (referring to Christ-like qualities as described by Basil that were lost in the fall). Emphasizing character should not make us overlook that deification includes the body and its transformation into the "incorruptible" matter of the new creation as evidenced by Christ's post-resurrection body.

> if you become a hater of evil, free of rancor, not remembering yesterday's enmity; if you become brother-loving and compassionate, you are like God. If you forgive your enemy from your heart, you are like God. If as God is toward you, the sinner, you become the same toward the brother who has wronged you, by your good will from your heart toward your neighbor, you are like God. [10]

Given Basil's explanation of deification, we should translate this formula for human transformation, while preserving its essential teaching, into language more familiar to modern Christians ears: "God became human so that by being transformed into Christ-likeness, human beings can attain their true humanity."

I suspect that not a few readers whose thinking has been shaped by the likes of John Piper, R. C. Sproul, and John McArthur, worry that we are here opening the door to theological liberalism or perhaps works-oriented Catholicism. Is not Christianity, after all, about God's holiness, righteousness, and glory? Certainly it is, but how is God glorified? According to Jesus' prayer in John's gospel, we glorify God by being like Him:

> May they all be one, just as, Father, you are in me and I am in you, so that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me. I have given them the glory you gave to me, that they may be one as we are one. With me in them and you in me, may they be so perfected in unity that the world will recognize that it was you who sent me and that you have loved them as you have loved me.[11]

The biblical text indicates that Christians should become like God by participating in Christ. Through communion with God we are to reflect the glory of God's own trinitarian love, to become like

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10 Basil, Saint, the Great, *On the Human Condition*, trans. Nonna Verna Harrison (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005), 44.

11 Jn. 17:21-23 (New Jerusalem Bible).

Him so that the world may see God. The apostle Paul expressed this transformation in terms of God's image and new creation. For Paul, Christianity was about "being molded to the image (*eikonos*) of his son that he may become the eldest of many brothers" (Rom. 8:29). The final goal of the Christian life is our transformation to "the image or likeness (*eikona*) of the heavenly one" (1 Cor. 15:49). This "heavenly one" in whom "all things were made new" (2 Cor. 5:17) created in himself a "new human being" beyond any racial, national, or even gender divisions, and Paul urges Christians to "put on this new human being" (*kainos anthropos;* Eph. 4:24). For Paul, salvation is transformation into Christlikeness, that is, our metamorphosis into the image of God glorifies God by *reflecting* his glory. Paul concludes that **"**all of us, with our unveiled faces like mirrors reflecting the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the image that we reflect in brighter and brighter glory; this is the working of the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18). Thus it would seem that for Paul, along with many theologians in the early church, Christians did not have to choose between the glory of God and a proper interest in what it means to be human. Seeking the one would naturally entail the other, since the incarnation of God in Christ was an act of *philanthropy* by which God perfected humanity and invited his creation to share in this perfection through communion with himself. Salvation is nothing less than becoming fully Christlike. The church father Irenaeus summarized the early church's understanding of salvation in his famous phrase "the glory of God is a human being fully alive and human beings live by the vision of God."[12]

In short, Christianity is the archetypal humanism because the central mystery of our faith, the incarnation, purposed the divinization of our humanity. The whole point of being a Christian is becoming fully human by becoming refashioned in the image of Christ. As Emil Brunner explains,

> Behind Christian humanism stands, as its basic foundation, the faith in that Man in whom both the mystery of God and the secret of man have been

12 "*Gloria enim vivens homo; vita autem hominis visio Dei*." Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, 4, 34, 5-7.

> revealed in one; the belief that the Creator of the Universe attaches Himself to man; that He, in whose creative word the whole structure of the universe has its foundation, has made known as His world purpose the restoration and perfection of His image in man; that therefore not only the history of humanity but the history of the whole Cosmos shall be consummated in God-humanity.[13]

Our supernatural destiny has always been, as the church father Gregory of Nyssa liked to put it, "friendship with God," the kind of intimate filial relation Jesus had with the Father that is characterized by love of God, love of neighbour, and even love of enemies, because our basic relation to reality is no longer one of fear but one of love.

The Trappist monk and Christian humanist Thomas Merton pointed out that without this starting point from love, what you get is secularists, atheists, fundamentalists, and religious legalists. The common mistake of these diverse groups is to assume that God begrudges us acceptance and freedom. For example, the secularist opposes Christianity to human autonomy and freedom, while the religious legalist seeks to earn God's favour through obedience. Fundamentalism is another manifestation of deeply rooted fear, namely the fear of impurity, of messiness, complexity, and interpretive ambiguity: all must be regulated, controlled, and clear-cut. Consequently, these manifestations of fear as philosophy seek to steal the heavenly fire in some way, not seeing that God is eager to give freedom and abundant life as a gift, that in Christ He wants to bestow his very self on us. As Merton rightly concludes, "the center of Christian humanism is the idea that God is love, not infinite power."[14]

With love as the centre of an intelligible universe, Christian humanism developed two distinct features, the one epistemic, the other ethical. First, conscious of living once again in union with the creator of the cosmos, Christian humanists have traditionally es-

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13 Emil Brunner, *Christianity and Civilization. First Part: Foundations*, Gifford Lectures (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1948), 89.

14 "Christian Humanism," in Merton, Thomas*, Love and Living*, 135-51 (*S*an Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 149.

poused the unity of faith and reason and, therefore, acknowledged truth from all sources. The kind of enmity between knowledge and faith that characterizes our modern culture wars between science and religion, for example, is foreign to Christian humanism. This cosmic dimension of the incarnation profoundly shaped the church fathers' understanding of reality. Their perception of reality was essentially Christ-centred: the creative word of God, through and for whom all things were made and are sustained, had become human to reconcile the world to God. That existing things derived from and somehow participated in the divine was a common metaphysical assumption in the ancient world. We need only think of ancient Stoic philosophy with its idea of a universal rationality (*Logos*) that pervaded the universe and to which the human reason and moral life should conform. Early Christian theologians familiar with philosophical currents of their day recognized in such insights premonitions of God's revelation in Christ, even while recognizing the decisive differences with their own faith. With God's eternal *Logos* becoming human, the unified centre of reality was now revealed in the person of Jesus as God's love for mankind, so that whatever was true and noble in the world became subservient to attaining the true humanity God had accomplished in Christ.

The incarnation thus embedded an important truth in early church theology: God's self-revelation is mediated through the material world and social realities, therefore, faith, reason, culture, and learning from others go together. As Athanasius points out, in Jesus, God became "himself an object for the senses," with the result that "all things have been filled with the knowledge of God."[15] This view laid the foundations for the Christian ideal of education as character formation. What the Greeks had called *paideia*, and what the Romans had adopted as humanistic studies or the liberal arts for the elite, was transformed by Christians into a liberal arts tradition centred on the Bible. In this tradition, all learning was taken into account and put to use for the acquisition of wisdom. Knowledge, however, was not merely taken from books but from life itself. Following the

15 Athanasius, *On the Incarnation: Greek Original and English Translation* [in English & Greek.], trans. John Behr (Yonkers, N.Y.: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 15.

crucified savior, the Christian curriculum of *paideia* included suffering and self-denial as means for shaping our true humanity.

The second distinct feature of Christian humanism is ethical. Its christological foundation endows Christian humanism with a strong ethics of human solidarity. Aware of sharing the reconciliation of humanity to God and therefore to one another, Christian humanists have traditionally recognized the image of God in every human being, extending charity to all on account of their connection to Christ.

The German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer restated in modern language what earlier Christians had relentlessly preached, to help the poor and to demand social justice for the outcasts of their time. Bonhoeffer affirms the general solidarity with all human beings that we regain through Christ's work: "in the becoming human of Christ the entire humanity regains the dignity of being made in the image of God. Whoever from now on attacks the least of the people attacks Christ, who took on human form and who in himself has restored the image of God for all who bear a human countenance."[16] Bonhoeffer sounds just like Irenaeus, or Basil, or Augustine when he links Christian ethics to our participation in the life of God through Christ:

> Inasmuch as we participate in Christ, the incarnate one, we also have a part in all of humanity, which is borne by him. Since we know ourselves to be accepted and borne within the humanity of Jesus, our new humanity now also consists in bearing the troubles and the sins of all others. The incarnate one transforms his disciples into brothers and sisters of all human beings.[17]

For early Christians, the Eucharist was the central reminder of this philanthropic bond with humanity. In partaking of bread and wine, the Christian is nourished by the reality of the new creation, and thus drawn into unity with God, becoming one. Yet this communion was never sealed off from the rest of humanity. In Eucharistic homilies

16 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, eds. Geffrey B. Kelly and John D. Godsey, vol. 4 *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001), 285.

17 Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, 285.

of the early church, participants were always reminded that their "being-in-Christ," implies the "being-with" and "being-for" others.[18] Christianity thus introduced into ancient humanism a social, humanitarian aspect that differed from the earlier pagan emphasis on heroic, individual excellence.[19]

Let me try to sum up what one might best call the "incarnational humanism," of the early Christian tradition. The goal of the Christian life is becoming truly human by participation in Christ. True humanity is deification or Christification, the transformation into our full humanity that is characterized by unity and charity. How is this transformation accomplished? Through a synergy of asceticism (a term best translated as self-discipline) and divine grace. Many early Christians distinguished between the image and the likeness of God, believing that the former is every human being's natural endowment of reason, freedom, and capacity for relationality, while the likeness of God is regained through the development of Christian virtues with the aid of the Holy Spirit. This is why Basil can write, "what is Christianity? Likeness to God as far as is possible for human nature."[20]

2. Christian Humanism and Educational Ideals

The incarnational, Christian humanism established by the early church has deeply shaped Western ideals of human dignity, of what

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18 J. M. R. Tillard, *Flesh of the Church, Flesh of Christ: At the Source of the Ecclesiology of Communion*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 1-3 and 133 ff.

19 Irving Babbitt reminds us that "ancient humanism is as a whole intensely aristocratic in temper… It is naturally disdainful of the humble and lowly who have not been indoctrinated and disciplined." Yet Babbitt's warning not to confuse humanism with the "promiscuous philanthropy" of humanitarianism fails to appreciate the radical change of this attitude in Christian humanism. The incarnation ensures that humanism is inseparable from humanitarianism. See Irving Babbit, *Literature and the American College: Essays in Defense of the Humanities* (Chicago: Regnery, 1956), 4-7.

20 Basil, *On the Human Condition,* ed. John Behr, Popular Patristic Series (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005), 45. Compare this to Plato's statement of godlikeness as human destiny: *homoiosis theoi kata to dunaton* as the goal for philosophy quoted in George H. Van Kooten, *Paul's Anthropology in Context* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 126.

constitutes a good or healthy society, and above all ideals of education. Augustine's vision of Christian education as formation of Christ-likeness is captured in his influential work *De Doctrina Christiana*, a program that decisively shaped the medieval curriculum. A recent English translation renders the work's title aptly as *Teaching Christianity*, because the book is basically a guide for educators of the Christian faith on how to interpret scripture and communicate its truths. His own classical training in literature and rhetoric, along with his view that all valid reasoning is guided by the light of God's truth, prompted him to assert the usefulness of pagan and non-biblical sources for Christian education. Augustine's endorsement of secular wisdom reflects the earlier Christian consensus, Tertullian notwithstanding, that so-called pagan literature was an essential preparatory ground for understanding the scriptures.[21] Christian education was to make use of truth wherever it was found, albeit in service to a Bible-centred curriculum.

Early Christians found the Greco-Roman heritage of the liberal arts congenial to Christian education because of the Greek emphasis on learning as character formation. Werner Jaeger, in his classic treatment of the linkage between Greco-Roman and Christian education, explains that "as the Greek *paideia* consisted of the entire corpus of Greek literature, so the Christian *paideia* is the Bible. Literature is *paideia* insofar as it contains the highest norms of human life, which in it have taken on their lasting and most impressive form."[22] Through a sustained Christian effort, the pagan Greek *paideia*, and its Latin equivalent, the *studia humanitatis*, became Christian humanism. The best of Greek education had aimed at developing a most complete human being. Plato, for example, believed that assimilation to the divine was the goal of philosophical inquiry. Early Christians adopted this basic educational aspiration but filled it with the biblical goal of becoming Christ-like. Christian education meant

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21 See Basil, *Address to Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature*; online: http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/basil_litterature01.htm (Date accessed Dec. 15, 2016).

22 Werner Wilhelm Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), 92.

that Christ must take shape in the learner. This Christian takeover of ancient liberal arts education was deliberate and driven by the conviction that the Greek ambition to produce a highly cultured and complete human being had been completed, even superseded, in the humanity of God in Christ. At the same time, however, the truth about humanity that God had providentially revealed in non-Christian literature remained valid and therefore a crucial propaedeutic for Christian education.[23]

As the one true philosophy, that is, as the one true way of life, the goal of Christian education was formation in Christlikeness, the "becoming fit for the fellowship of Angels," as Augustine liked to put it.[24] Following Augustine's lead, the first universities that emerged from cathedral schools were dedicated to a Christianized version of liberal arts education. Even when Aristotle's writings became the most important philosophical and scientific source in the medieval curriculum (itself an astonishing fact that controverts the popular view that dogmatic conviction automatically prohibits learning), university education remained focused on assimilating the wisdom of ancient culture guided by the ideal of "ordering all wisdom and knowledge to the study of theology."[25]

Indeed, when we understand the inspiration behind medieval universities, we will not hesitate to call the much maligned scholastics 'Christian humanists,' who continued in the patristic belief that education contributes to the restoration of the divine image. For example, we know that medieval scholastics were consummate synthesizers and compilers of authoritative texts. Why did they do this? They believed that by this method they could repair the fragmentation of knowledge occasioned by Adam's fall from communion with God. According to the medievalist R. W. Southern, scholastics aimed at "restoring to fallen mankind, as far as was possible, that perfect system of knowledge which had been in possession or within the

23 Jaeger, *Early Christianity*, 61.

24 Augustine, *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans* (London: Penguin, 1984), 14.

25 Timothy B. Noone, "Scholasticism," in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, eds. Jorge J. E. Gracia and Timoth B. Noone, 55-65 (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 60.

reach of mankind at the moment of creation."[26] They did not believe that everything knowable could be known, but that "at least all reasonably obedient and well-disposed members of Christendom would have access to a body of knowledge sufficient for achieving order in this world and blessedness in the world to come."[27] Once again, the incarnation was central to the Christian humanism of the scholastics. The concept of the incarnation wove nature, humanity, reason, and religion into a meaningful tapestry accessible to human beings because they are made in God's image. Medieval humanism thus draws its scholarly energy from the same motivation as patristic humanism: assured of God's love, the intelligibility of creation and the trustworthiness of reason, scholastic humanists energetically pursued their 'repair job' of restoring the fullness of knowledge to humankind. The complexity of reality and their lack of experimental knowledge doomed the scholastic project to failure. Yet we should not forget that medieval Christian humanists gave us universities and that their trust in reason laid the foundations for modern science. Moreover, medieval theological debates prepared the ground for modern human rights by encoding in conceptual, legal language the patristic notion that freedom and personhood make up the dignity of human beings as made in God's image, wherefore human dignity issues in certain human rights.[28]

Christian humanism also shaped the Renaissance, our next major formative cultural period in Europe. We have to resist the view that Renaissance humanism is secularism waiting to come out of the closet. Few doubt that Renaissance humanists were Christians, but many evangelicals, Reformed worldview enthusiasts, and secularists show a rare agreement in the opinion that most humanists were more interested in paganism than in Christianity, and that their whole project was a Promethean attempt to enthrone man in the place of God.[29]

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26 R.W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe, Volume 1: Foundations* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1995), 5.

27 Southern, *Scholastic Humanism,* 5-6.

28 Theo Kobusch, *Die Entdeckung der Person* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997), 36.

29 For a corrective, see *Re-Envisioning Christian Humanism: Education and the Restoration of Humanity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), especially N.

It is true, of course, that Renaissance humanists emphasized the individual more than medieval theologians, and that they developed a stronger historical consciousness than preceding Christian cultures. Yet, on the whole, we have to consider Renaissance humanism as a Christian movement in continuation with the earlier Christian humanisms.[30]

Consider, for instance, that Renaissance humanists brought about a patristic revival, retrieving not only Aristotle and Plato, but also, and with great religious earnestness, patristic sources, such as Augustine (in the case of Petrarch) or Origen, Irenaeus, and Jerome (in the case of Erasmus). Consider also that the apparently blasphemous language of extolling the greatness and god-like stature of humanity will appear less radical when we understand it as a continuation of the patristic language of deification. When Pico della Mirandola (1463-94) goes on about the greatness of man and urges the subordination of our baser instincts to reason so that we may live to up to our divine image, he is really not that far away from Augustine's similar educational program. Pico celebrates humanity's God-given dignity, not secularist human autonomy. Pico may not have been your average church-going evangelical, but he is not, as is usually assumed, the Renaissance villain to Christians or hero to secularists, proclaiming the secularist sovereign self. The historical theologian Henri de Lubac hits nearer the mark when he claims that Pico's Renaissance manifesto, *Discourse on the Dignity of Man*, is not theologically opposed to traditional Christianity.[31] Like the church fathers and the medieval humanists, Renaissance thinkers regarded the ability and drive of man to cultivate and shape his world

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Wolterstorff's chapter on Calvin's Christian humanism.

30 Christopher Dawson is therefore correct to claim that "From the time of Petrarch to that of Milton, the Christian humanists represent the main tradition of Western culture, and their influence still dominated education and literature and art. The secularization of Western culture dates not from the Renaissance or the Reformation but from the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century." Christopher Dawson, *The Crisis of Western Culture* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 32.

31 Henri de Lubac, *Theology in History* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1996), 43.

as "an emulation of divinity, since it was in this respect that man was created in the image and likeness of God."[32]

As did patristic and scholastic Christian humanists, Renaissance humanists sought to harness and transform the best of human culture in light of the incarnation. Renaissance humanists knew well that the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus set Christianity apart from previous philosophies and religions. As Petrarch put it, only Christianity truly joins heaven and earth. For however close Platonic thought may have come to Christian truth, that the divine Word "became flesh, [and] how, joined to the earth, it dwelt in us, this the learned Plato did not know."[33] The Christian teaching of the Word become flesh allowed Renaissance humanists to adopt and infuse with deeper meaning the love of literature inherited from the Greco-Roman liberal arts curriculum. It is well known that Renaissance humanists were infatuated by philology, literature, rhetoric, and poetry. What few people realize, however, is that their love for the written and spoken word was consciously based on the incarnation of the eternal Word of God.

The humanist Giovanni Pontano (1426–1503), for example, drew two important insights from christology. The first concerned the creative power of words. Pontano held that since being exists by the power of God's Word, human beings, as those made in his image, participate in this appearing of being through the word. Thus art, poetry, and literature are not merely reflections of reality but actually help us imagine and thus in some sense create our reality. Secondly, Pontano believed that the incarnation demanded that, just as the eternal Word could truly show itself in time, so human universal truths can be adequately depicted in language, but never exhaustively so. The incarnation, in short, teaches that truth is interpretive and, like God, cannot ever be nailed down to a final meaning. But there is more: since human language shares in the divine *Logos*, Renaissance humanists believed that language possessed an infinite possibility of meaning. For them, Christian Word theology made language what

32 Charles Edward Trinkaus, *In Our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought*, 2 vols. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 1:xx-xxi.

33 Petrarch, De otio religioso, quoted in Trinkaus, *In Our Image,* 2:658.

Heidegger would later call "a clearing of being," that is, language allows us to see things in new constellations and discover new meanings.[34]

Renaissance humanism bequeathed to Western culture a deep love of learning, poetry, and literature for transformative education into Christlikeness.[35] Christian humanists' ultimate goal was Christian character formation, and its view of the arts is neatly summarized in the adage of Erasmus, prince of Christian humanists: "reading shapes moral character" (*lectio transit in mores*). Renaissance humanists believed that education shaped character in terms of knowledge and practical experience, both derived from the study of literature (which included scientific texts, though we must keep in mind that science then was less empirical than a philosophy of nature). Renaissance humanists would be astonished at the marginal role the humanities play in the modern university, for who could possibly question "the importance of the study of Philosophy, and of Letters […]? Literature is our guide to the true meaning of the past, to the right estimate of the present, to a sound forecast of the future."[36] Liberal arts education, in other words, immerses the student in *tradition*, in the best human insights on perennial human questions that are handed down to us, so that we can appropriate them for assessing the present and shaping the future.

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34 Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," in *Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) and to the Task of Thinking (1964)* (New York: Harper & Row, 1992), 113.

35 No doubt, some Renaissance humanists were more inclined to a nominal, general Christianity (calling it 'religion') than confessional, orthodox faith. The humanist Paolo Vergerio (1370-1444), for example, defined the liberal arts as "those [studies] through which virtue and wisdom are either practiced or sought and by which the body or mind is disposed towards all the best things . . . Just as profit and pleasure are laid down as ends for illiberal intellects, so virtue and glory, which for the wise man are the principle rewards of virtue." More orthodox humanists consciously replaced the pagan attainment of glory with the Christian end of displaying the virtues and humility of Christ. Paolo Vergerio, "The Character and Studies Befitting a Free-Born Youth," in *Humanist Educational Treatises*, ed. Craig Kallendorf (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 29.

36 Aeneas Sylvius, "Concerning True Wisdom" ("De Liberorum Educatione"), in *Vittorino Da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators*, ed. William Harrison, 134-58 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 141.

The same Christian humanism was still alive in the 17th century, when the Catholic university professor and Christian humanist Giambattista Vico told his students that the goal of learning was to mirror God's philanthropy: "We must learn, O youth of great hope, in order to know how best to be able to relate humanely to others."[37] After all, Vico concluded, "What goal is more honourable than to wish to help the greatest number of men and in so doing become more like Almighty God, whose very nature is to help all?"[38] Thus the legacy of Renaissance humanism to Western culture is that self-knowledge through studying the past and the schooling of our imagination through literature, poetry, and the arts must follow God's own love for humanity. Education must be subservient to the common good of society. For Renaissance humanists, higher education was for the elite, but there was no ivory tower; rather higher education was to produce a scholar citizen whose store of knowledge would allow him (indeed, mostly *him*) to make wise political choices in civic life. Higher education was meant to bear fruit in the actions of civic leaders. For this reason, the second, practical element of humanistic education consisted of learning classical languages, their grammar and rhetoric in order both to recognize truth and to express it most eloquently. This emphasis makes proper sense only when accompanied by a belief in a rationally and aesthetically ordered universe, in which truth and beauty are inseparable. On the basis of such a reality, the Christian humanist Giambattista Vico believed in the essential power of metaphor and of images for the discovery of truths inaccessible to the deductive method of the rising Cartesian philosophy in his day. To be sure, Vico knew that studying other languages, memorizing vocabulary, and sweating over translations inculcates a high degree of self-discipline and opens the mind to different perspectives embodied in languages. Yet there is a greater goal in the study of linguistic excellence and eloquence.

If indeed truth is allied with beauty, and beauty inspires love, then a good civic leader ought to know how to incite love for truth in peoples' hearts, in order to engage their willing participation. Most

37 Giambattista Vico, *On Humanistic Education: Six Inaugural Orations, 1699-1707* (Ithaca [N.Y.]: Cornell University Press, 1993), 88.

38 Vico, *On Humanistic Education*, 101.

of human truth, Vico believed, is not a matter of evidentiary logic, but of persuasion. Unless the speaker can appeal to the listener's imagination and thus incite his love for a truth and his willing assent, he will remain "powerless to convince."[39] Writing in the early 18th century, Vico already realized the importance of natural science, and sided with Francis Bacon on the importance of inductive reasoning based on empirical evidence in the sciences. Yet already here, Vico anticipates a modern trend, warning that "we pay an excessive amount of attention to the natural sciences and not enough to ethics."[40] The problem of this mistake is not only that politics begins to be driven by pragmatic concerns, but, the greater danger is that we fall into instrumental reasoning, making decisions without questioning the humane end towards which they ought to be directed. From whence can a critical, creative spirit arise against ossifying bureaucratic systems and calcified, inhuman ideologies if not from "The Freedom bestowed by the authority of wisdom"?[41] The kind of independent thinking that ensues from immersion in the best of tradition, both Christian and non-Christian, however, has never been popular with those who love conformity and the tyranny disguised as efficiency by the iron cages of administrative systems. Yet, as Renaissance educators knew well, true humanity lies neither in seeking security in certain scientific knowledge nor legalistic self-rule, but in the pursuit of truth for the sake of wisdom and virtue. It is truth that "brings man and God together," because God is truth whose light permeates the universe.[42] Yet, to return to the main goal of Christian humanistic education, for Vico, knowledge directed towards wisdom is in itself insufficient unless it issues in virtue. For "it is by virtue alone that God renders us like unto himself."[43]

The Christian idea that education serves our transformation into Christlikeness or true humanity, and the implicit hope of some Christians that human society itself would become more like God's

39 Giambattista Vico, *On the Study Methods of Our Time* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 38.

40 Vico, *On the Study Methods*, 33.

41 Giambattista Vico, *On Humanistic Education*, 69.

42 Vico, *On Humanistic Education*, 67

43 Vico, *On Humanistic Education*, 68.

kingdom through this transformation, has become so deeply embedded in Western consciousness that even secularized educational theories bear the stamp of this hope. Not least important for this influence was the patristic notion that God the divine educator had prepared mankind through pagan teachings, and through his education of Israel, for the true humanity shown in Christ. In addition, the Christian tradition also imparted to Western consciousness the notion that humanity is not discovered but achieved, wherefore a humane culture or society is also fragile, requiring constant preservation, adaptation, and innovation. We see this heritage living on in the German philosopher-theologian J. G. Herder, who regards education as central to human progress intended by divine providence but also dependent on human effort. Becoming human, for Herder, is a God-given desire but equally a responsibility: "Everywhere we thus find humanity in possession and use of the right to form themselves into some kind of humanity. . . God did not tie their hands in anything except through their own disposition, time, and place."[44] Herder believed that by means of human freedom and providentially guided organic development, God works out in humanity his own true image through historical progress.

The Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant, though more rationalist than Herder, nonetheless also held that education is essential to becoming human. According to Kant, "Man can only become man by education. He is merely what education makes of him." Through discipline and increase in knowledge, "it may be that education will be constantly improved, and that each succeeding generation will advance one step towards perfection mankind; for with education is involved the great secret of the perfection of human nature."[45] Kant also retains the humanist insistence on knowing tradition: "Education is an art which can only be perfected through the practice of many generations. Each generation, provided with the knowledge of the foregoing one, is able more and more to bring

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44 J. G. Herder, "Ideen zur Philosophie der Menschengeschichte," in *Johann Gottfried Herder: Werke in Zwei Bänden* (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1982, Band 2), 232.

45 Immanuel Kant, *On Education*, Dover Books on Western Philosophy (Mineola N.Y.: Dover, 2003), 10.

about an education which shall develop man's natural gifts . . . and thus advance the whole human race towards its destiny."[46] We find similar statements in Schleiermacher and Humboldt, the 19th century founders of the modern research university in Berlin. They still insist that all levels of education require tradition because "in order to construct, in a higher sense, the future based on the present, one has first to construct the present from the past." Moreover, sound political direction in public affairs requires that "one possesses a proper idea of the good and the true as such."[47] Until recently, even secular thinkers never disputed that the liberal arts tradition, or 'liberal learning,' involves students in the conversation with the best thinkers on envisioning a good society. Michael Oakeshott, an able defender of liberal learning, summarizes well a secular understanding of higher education:

> Education […] is the transaction between the generations in which newcomers on the scene are initiated into the world which they are to inhabit. This is a world of understandings, imaginings, meanings, moral and religious beliefs, relationships, practices—states of mind in which the human condition is to be discerned as recognitions of and responses to the ordeal of consciousness. These states of mind can be entered into only by being themselves understood, and they can be understood only by learning to do so. To be initiated into this world is learning to become human; and to move within it freely is being human, which is a 'historic,' and not 'natural,' condition.[48]

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46 Kant, *On Education*, 11.

47 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Texte Zur Pädagogik: Kommentierte Studienausgabe. Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft,* ed. Michael Winkler and Jens Brachmann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000), 2:349.

48 Michael Oakeshott and Timothy Fuller, *The Voice of Liberal Learning* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001), 103.

This insistence on a clear vision of education's end has largely disappeared from higher education in our day, leading to crises in a number of areas that affect both Christian and non-Christian universities.

3. Christian Universities and the Contemporary Crisis of Higher Education

Christian universities often worry about the 'dying of the light,' that is, they are governed by fear of secularization and the loss of their Christian identity. While that may be a valid concern, there are other, perhaps more important challenges that Christian scholars face together with their secular colleagues. The most urgent problem is the double loss of *telos* and *logos*, that is, of education's overall end goal and of a unifying rationale that encourages the integration of knowledge disciplines in the service of this ultimate goal. In the ancient world, the unity of knowledge and the purpose of education were grounded in the belief that humans were essentially spiritual beings whose reasoning participated in rational-moral reality to which truth and behaviour ought to conform. As strange as this sounds to us moderns, "in this ancient vision, man gains his reality solely through repetition of and participation in a divine reality."[49] Even while holding to different visions of the "divine," Pythagoreans, Platonists, Roman Stoics, Jews, and Christians all held to a cosmos in which all things somehow hang together. What set Christian education apart was the radical claim that all things hang together in Christ whose redemption of creation entailed his return, thus introducing the idea of linear and moral progress into Western culture. The whole enterprise of the liberal arts, from its pagan origins to its Christian transformation that founded the universities, depended on this connection between mind and world well into the 19th century. Without some such connection, without all things somehow 'hanging together' in a meaningful way, the true purpose of the humanities as the vehicle for guarding and creatively appropriating the past for the present to shape our future is lost.

The gradual breaking apart of the onto-theological synthesis that linked mind and world through participation in a rational-moral

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49 George Grant, *Philosophy in the Mass Age* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 19.

cosmos resulted in the compartmentalization of reality into nature (to be observed by scientists) and morality on the one hand, and into aesthetics or other subjective values pursued by art, philosophy, and religion on the other. The rupture between mind and world also initiated the age of epistemology, with philosophers like Descartes, Hume, Kant, and Locke wondering how our mind could correspond to the world.[50] Moreover, as Vico had feared, in the ensuing anxiety for certain, indubitable knowledge, the mechanistic and mathematical world pictures won out. To this day, even while science has long since abandoned these simplistic pictures of reality, the notion that real truth must be quantifiable and measurable continues to exert a strong influence, not least on university administrators obsessed with 'metrics' supposedly needed to demonstrate managerial efficiency. Christian administrators would do well to recall that it was trust in such simplistic world pictures that caused our current educational crisis. Instrumental reasoning encouraged secularization, which first dethroned theology as the 'queen of the sciences' and also resulted in demoting theology's successor, philosophy, as the meta-physical discipline that could integrate various fields into a meaningful whole. The German philosopher Edmund Husserl claimed, in 1936, that the modern reduction of knowledge to empirically verifiable facts, and the exclusion of the human subject from the process of knowing, have rendered the sciences irrelevant to the perennial human question of meaning and purpose that drive all our cultural activity.[51]

The main problem with this development is not the ongoing inferiority complex of the humanities. It may well be true that many humanities teachers "do not have a buoyant, collective sense of the distinctiveness and worth of what they do," because "they lack today, as they have for the better part of the past half-century, the relaxed and easygoing confidence in the value of their work that scientists of all sorts have."[52] What really matters, however, is that by cutting out

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50 Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity: An Essay in the Hermeneutics of Nature and Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 3.

51 Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis Der Europäischen Wissenschaften Und Die Transzendentale Phänomenologie*, ed. Elisabeth Ströker (Hamburg: Meiner, 1996), 4-5.

52 Anthony T. Kronman, *Education's End: Why Our Colleges and Universities*

the subjective, human dimension of knowledge, as Husserl argued, scientific positivism has "decapitated" critical thinking and deprived us of the metaphysical questions that transcend the world of facts towards matters of universal, lasting importance in an ever changing world.[53] As a result, the centre of university education shifted imperceptibly but, as far as one can see, enduringly, from questions concerning the meaning of life to pragmatism and materialism. Especially the latter, usually in the form of scientific naturalism, increasingly shows an interest in claiming the abandoned "throne" of the metaphysical disciplines, by reducing spirit, consciousness, or mind to the material brain and thus integrating every component of human life into a bio-chemical framework. John Sommerville, in his astute account of the contemporary university crisis, aptly summarizes our main problem: university programs teach how to make money and how to contribute to the economy or produce the next technological innovation, but they no longer concern themselves with *how* or *on what* we are to spend money.[54]

How is a Christian university, a Christ-centred university, to respond and flourish under the present cultural conditions? The only realistic hope lies in recapturing the incarnational vision of Christian humanism. The guiding image of this vision is that human beings are made in God's image, which is most perfectly shown in Christ, God's Word through whom all was created and all is being redeemed. If God is Lord over creation, who created and continues to create a comprehensive and richly diverse reality, then we should expect humans made in his image to reflect this creativity, diversity, and universality in some way.[55] Christian universities must recover and articulate intelligently for themselves and non-Christians the idea that in Christ all knowledge disciplines are unified, wherefore the

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Have Given up on the Meaning of Life (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 206-7.

53 Husserl, *Die Krisis Der Europäischen Wissenschaften*, 8.

54 John Sommerville, *The Decline of the Secular University* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 8.

55 Bernhard Welte, *Gesammelte Schriften I: Grundfragen Des Menschseins* (Breisgau: Herder, 2009), 119.

pursuit of knowledge is its own reward but also ought to serve the common good of society.

Evangelical Christian institutions in particular too often channel their praiseworthy love for Christ into narrow, dualistic theologies that prevent them from addressing the real wounds of our current culture, wounds that fester in the midst of Christian institutions too. Christian universities, because they are Christ-centred, must move beyond their narrow denominational and confessional tunnel vision to share God's vision for a new *humanity*. Christian humanists believed that Christ became human, died, and rose again, so that we could attain our true humanity. Christ-centredness thus remains inseparable from a concern for human existence. If God is most glorified by human beings truly alive in psychosomatic fullness, transformed body and transformed mind, through trinitarian communion, then Christ-centred education must promote research in pursuit of this vision and critique dehumanizing cultural trends, religious or not. Moreover, since in Christ *all* of humanity was summed up, Christian universities *must* speak to humanity as a whole. Christ-centred education *cannot* mean withdrawal from the world into a sectarian bubble of illusionary separation from culture. This approach invites automatic failure, since inevitably the worst of cultural trends flourish undetected within such supposedly pure spheres of distinct Christian thinking. Withdrawal from the world into Christian jargon and an ossified particular Christian culture is not only impossible, it is also unbiblical, if indeed Christ died for the life of the world. Christian universities should avoid at all costs adopting a defensive stance as their basic ethos, defining themselves negatively against the rest of humanity. Instead, Christian scholars and administrators should think, speak, and act out of their conscious sharing in the reality of God's accomplished new humanity in Christ.

How then does Christ-centred, higher education fulfill its mandate of promoting full humanity? There is no easy way of doing this, not least because the equation for true humanity is somewhat indefinite at both ends. On the one end, the full biblical picture of humanity continues to unfold as research, secular and Christian, adds to human self-understanding. On the other end, the very scientific, technological advances that enhance both our self-knowledge and

quality of life may turn out to threaten human worth and identity. For example, bio-genetic and reproduction technologies have changed dramatically our perception of humanity.

Unfolding a Christ-centred, humanistic vision in a modern university must be an interdisciplinary endeavor with the humanities as the crucial hub around which collaboration with the natural sciences and professional programs takes place. For as soon as physicists, economists, biologists, chemists and social scientists start thinking about the implications of their findings for the nature of reality and society, their musings begin to operate with philosophical and theological assumptions. This is inevitable, for despite the much lamented fragmentation and specialization of knowledge disciplines, we find at work in every research area the inherent desire of the human mind for the integration of knowledge into a meaningful whole.

This meaningful whole is not a predetermined totality, but consists in a field of questions and probable answers defined by one's respective cultural pressure points concerning our identity and purpose as human beings. For example, the Western Christian university could emphasize three research foci responding to three crucial areas in which our humanity is currently threatened: theological anthropology, epistemology, and technology.

A Christian theological anthropology would seek to unfold what it means to be made in God's image in light of the incarnation. An ecumenical and historical approach to this topic would take us much beyond the cliché of the *imago Dei* as merely our rational capacity and help us retrieve a richer tradition that extends our god-likeness to stewardship of creation, freedom, self-transcendence, relationality, sociality, charity, and the importance of the body. The greatest enemy of Christian anthropology based on the *imago Dei* is not secularism but naturalism, or secularism insofar as it assumes naturalism with its reduction of mind, spirit, or consciousness to the material brain.[56] Issues of sexuality, gender, human dignity, and rights should also be discussed within this anthropological framework and viewed in light of Christ's humanity and its eschatological promise of taking us beyond gender to an intimacy with God and one another beyond

56 See Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

our wildest dreams. In pursuing these questions, Christian scholars from all disciplines need to interact with theologians to maintain the crucial balance of the Pauline "as if" structure of living in the world and affirming enduring creational dynamics while recognizing their potential transformation in the eschaton.

Another important area for determining our humanity is epistemology. Who we are and how we know things is obviously closely connected. Christian scholars ought to recognize and promote a fundamentally hermeneutic theory of knowledge. For Christian humanism, at least, human access to truth follows the pattern of the incarnation. Space does not permit the delineation of an incarnational hermeneutic for the disciplines, so the following pointers must suffice: scientist and sociologist of knowledge Michael Polanyi has convincingly demonstrated the personal nature of knowledge as rooted in a basic interpretive movement of understanding common to all intelligent forms of life.[57] According to Polanyi, all insight and discovery come about through the personal indwelling of an inherited framework of meaning from which we probe into, discover, and articulate unknown phenomena. Knowledge thus comes about through an expanding movement that integrates details into an interpretive framework. Polanyi thus debunked once and for all the myth that scientists operate without tacit assumptions or reliance on tradition. In a sense, even the scientist believes in order to know. A similar hermeneutic spiral has been suggested by philosophical hermeneutics in the tradition of Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricoeur. Their work, taken up by many others, has opened up a way of recovering the participatory sense of the ancient world. We may no longer have a cosmology that connects world and mind through a world soul and Platonic forms, but hermeneutic thinkers insist that mind and world are linked through a certain disclosive way of being in the world that is expressed in linguistic traditions. Charles Taylor has recently affirmed the constitutive role of language for human perception, arguing that scientific positivism and its penchant for mathematical

57 See Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958). For an abbreviated version of his argument see Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (New York: Doubleday, 1967).

verification provides an inadequate account of our human perception of the world.[58]

The upshot of these conceptual developments is the demise of the truth model of scientific objectivism, which works for a limited application in the experimental sciences, but is wholly inadequate for most other aspects of human reality. Understanding the fundamental interpretive nature of truth dissolves the hackneyed opposition of reason and belief. We all reason on the basis of assumptions that we do not—because we cannot—question in the process of acquiring knowledge. The interpretive nature of human knowing also spells the end of any fundamentalism whether it be secular or religious. Christians should have no problem with this idea, least of all as regards divine revelation. Knowledge of God, too, follows the incarnational pattern. In Dietrich Bonhoeffer's memorable phrase, "Just as the reality of God has entered the reality of the world in Christ, what is Christian cannot be had otherwise than in what is worldly, the 'supernatural' only in the natural, the holy only in the profane, the revelational only in the rational."[59] This is not to say that non-scientific truth claims lack evidence, but that their evidence is more complex. The kind of existential truths that really matter to human beings, society, and its institutions require a kind of evidence Paul Ricoeur called "attestation," based on a convincing narrative tapestry, backed up by personal credibility that makes the most sense of all details at hand.

Finally, if these anthropological and epistemological considerations reflect truly human being and knowing, then Christ-centred education should engage critically any dehumanizing cultural trends—not just in the name of Christianity, as a sectarian enterprise, but in the name of the full humanity God promised in Christ. Technology and technological enhancement of communication and other human abilities currently changes most profoundly the way we interact with one another and with the world. Christians should be at

58 See Charles Taylor, *The Language Animal: The Full Shape of the Human Linguistic Capacity* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016).

59 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2005), 59.

the forefront of analyzing these changes and their effect on how we define human nature.

Conclusion

I have tried to argue the case that Christ-centred (higher) education should be a Christian humanism because education should be grounded in the central Christian mystery of the incarnation. God became human in Christ to restore us to the full humanity for which we were originally created. Christianity is essentially about our restoration to God's true image. This divine gift includes the pursuit of knowledge for the common good and thus also entails the Christian's essential solidarity with all of humanity. All are made in God's image, and all have to accomplish their humanity. Even if Christians do so in conscious reliance on God's grace, they still share with all human beings the educational task of becoming human. As the philosopher Jacque Maritain once put it, "the chief task of education is above all to shape man, or to guide the evolving dynamism through which man forms himself as man."[60] Our cultural climate has changed in important respects since Maritain wrote this sentence in 1949. Yet the basic task of becoming human remains the same, centred around the focal areas of anthropology, epistemology, and technology. How we engage social justice issues, political or economic problems will depend on how we respond to these three areas of inquiry. Moreover, Christian humanist scholarship requires a recognition of the humanities' central importance for preserving and creatively appropriating for our time the greatest insights and questions that constitute the horizon of understanding from which we proceed to respond to current issues. In other words, tradition is crucial for our continual working out what it means to be human. The transmission and conscious indwelling of our collective human experience as sedimented in science, literature, and the arts are essential for our intellectual and moral judgments on current problems. In the modern university, however, the humanities must collaborate with and learn from the other disciplines, in working out concrete answers

60 Jacques Maritain, *Education at the Crossroads* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), 1.

to concrete questions arising for each generation based on technological and scientific advancement.

If the term 'Christ-centred education' is not to become another sectarian Christian label it must be based on an incarnational, Christian humanism. Christian universities must resist the current trends in higher education towards vocational training to the diminishment of liberal arts education. They must oppose with clear vision Christian reiterations of educational job factories covered with a veneer of Christian phrases and clichés. Instead, Christian scholars must respond to the real dehumanizing cultural pressure points of our time, and they must be motivated to do so out of the very depth of biblical tradition and dogma. If Christ died so that humanity may be renewed, Christ-centred universities should be at the heart of cultural activity and renewal. Precisely because of their Christ-centred mission, they should be seen to work for the public good.

Paideia tou Kyriou: From Origen to Medieval Exegesis

Nadia Delicata*

Abstract

This article ponders the heart of paideia tou kyriou*, a "Christ-centered culture and education," as developed in the early church and culminating in medieval Christendom. The father of this tradition, grounded in scriptural exegesis, is Origen (185-254), a catechist at the famous School of Alexandria, who was the first to apply the techniques of Hellenistic* grammatica *to the books of the Scriptures extensively and systematically. The influence of his catechetical method formed Christians through the centuries and was crystallized in the medieval tradition of the "four senses of Scripture." The essay studies the organic development that binds these two phases of Christ-centered catechetical instruction and argues for the retrieval of this exegetical tradition of* paideia tou kyriou *as a method of formation for our digital times. If theological education today is to be a Christ-centered discipleship, then a spiritual, moral, and allegorical scriptural exegesis can be rediscovered as its beating heart.*

Introduction

> And perhaps, just as in the temple there were certain steps by which one might enter the Holy of Holies, so the Only-Begotten of God is the whole of our steps. And, just as the first step is the lowest, and the next higher, and so on in order up to the highest, so our Saviour is the whole of the steps. His humanity is the first lower step, as it were. When we set foot on it we proceed the whole way on the steps in accordance with those aspects that

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> follow after his humanity, so that we go up by means of him who is at the same time angel and the other powers. And, in accordance with his aspects, since a way differs from a door, one must first have gone forth on the way so that later he may thus arrive at the door (cf. John 10:7, 9); and one must experience his rule insofar as he is shepherd (cf. John 10:11), so that he may also enjoy him as king. And we must first profit from him as lamb (cf. John 1:29), so that he may first remove our sin, and later, when we have been cleansed, we may eat of his flesh, the true food (cf. John 6:55). And after one has carefully examined and received the terms similar to these, he will hear the words, "If you know me, you also know my Father," (cf. John 8:19) and, "Since you know me, you also know my Father."
>
> Origen, Commentary on the Gospel According to John, Book 19.38-39.

This excerpt from Origen's *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*[1] offers a clear example of how early Christian scriptural exegesis served as the foundation of the Christian life, as the source for ethical and spiritual formation, as the cornerstone of a distinct *paideia tou kyriou*. In the Greek mindset, *paideia* implied education, tradition, culture and civilization as emerging from the deposit of revered literature.[2] The birth of the Christian tradition was in this "literate" milieu, and in turn, Christians appropriated and interpreted allegorically their own revered texts—most notably the Hebrew Scriptures, but eventually also texts of their own tradition—to tease out the distinctiveness of a Christ-centered way of life. This made their own third way of life—to be distinguished from that of the Jews and the Greeks—a quintessential lifelong education or "discipleship" to a Christ-like existence. To fulfill the Christian ideal as an embod-

1 Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, *The Fathers of the Church*, vols. 80 and 89 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989, 1993).

2 Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, vols. I-III (New York: Oxford University Press, 1943-1945), vol. I, v.

iment of Christ's spirit—as the Apostle eloquently puts it, "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20)—the process of discipleship was a *paideia* rooted in the Gospels as the first fruits of the Scriptures;[3] and among the Gospels, the fourth Gospel held a privileged position as "the first fruits of the Gospels,"[4] the drama par excellence of the discipleship of Christ.

Theological Education Today: Is it Still a Christ-Centered *Paideia*?

I teach Christian ethics in a Catholic Faculty of Theology that, as a founding member of a medieval state university, has a long tradition of offering canonical degrees. Central to the centuries' long mission of the Faculty is the formation of candidates to the priesthood, that is, of shaping men to ministry *in persona Christi*. But since the Second Vatican Council, we increasingly form lay men and women in pastoral and academic work, or even for Christian witness in daily life, through a wide variety of specialized programs in ministry, ethics, and others. The foundational assumption behind all our programs of study, as specialized as they might be, is a personal and holistic formation to lifelong discipleship in ecclesial ministry.

This commonly-held expectation among our students and faculty, that a theological education—whether for those on ordination track, pastoral track, or simply for those who desire to be better formed—is first and foremost a *formation*, can perhaps be better understood theologically as adult catechesis. Yet, precisely as formative, catechetical work, it gives me not only passion and zeal for my work, but it also puzzles me. On one hand, the theologian as catechist can identify herself more closely, not only with her academic responsibility, but more so with the pastoral mission of the church. A theologian—at least, as I understand the vocation—always has a triple responsibility: to academic integrity, to social service, but also to the *ecclesia* through which the vocation reaches its full theological meaning. Understanding theological education as a crucial, albeit more advanced or particular aspect of the catechetical function of the church, binds the theologian more closely to his or her ecclesial community.

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3 Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, 1.13.

4 Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, 1.37.

Yet my puzzlement and frustration emerges precisely when I reflect on the methods that we employ as teachers in the academy, and, directly or not, also for the church. A fragmentary approach to theological education (mimicking the course-based pedagogical model in the modern university), as well as a utilitarian approach to theological formation (as evident in specialized programs of studies, like "Youth Ministry," "Family Ministry," "Spiritual Direction," and the like), indeed, even the wide diversity of specializations in *sacra doctrina* itself that often fail to create a cohesive experience of discipleship in the mind of the student, expose a mindset where theology seems to have lost its center and organic unity of form and purpose. Today we have much more theological material and information to share with our students, but are we truly offering them a holistic formation, an authentic experience of discipleship centered on Christ as revealed in his words?

In my own discipline of fundamental moral theology, and where my specific academic and theological interest focuses on the mutual self-mediation of Christianity and culture (an academic cannot but be specialized), this need for integration among all theological disciplines is felt even more acutely. Moreover, because my own theological formation was steeped in the church's Patristic heritage, the limitations of our own fragmentary method in contrast to the Fathers' integral and ecclesial approach to theologizing strikes me even more. Until relatively recently in the long history of theologizing, there were no specialized programs or independent fields in theology demarcated by their specific *content*. In the minds of the giants of the tradition, the likes of Thomas Aquinas, Augustine, or the Cappadocians, theology was *sacra doctrina*: a sacred catechetical mission that effects what it intends, that is, the transformation to sanctity of the disciple and the *ecclesia* as a whole. In fact, a classic like the *Summa Theologiae* that was intended for beginners, was structured to be a holistic program of formation and not simply the teaching of pastoral skills for preaching or hearing confession.

It is also the *sine qua non* of patristic and medieval theologizing that the heart of such teaching was not mere academic questioning, but a reverential pondering of the very words uttered by God to humanity—*sacra scriptura est verbum Dei*—for the pastoral care

and growth to virtue of the flock. It goes without saying that the words that are interpreted and re-contextualized for the holiness of the church at all times are also always based on the wisdom accumulated in the tradition of Christian exegesis. Scripture and tradition mutually enriched each other, the latter guiding the interpretation of the former and the former always opening tradition to move beyond itself to greater enrichment. This exegetical principle was the heart of all catechesis, serving the grandest mission of the church, namely education to a Christ-like existence. Indeed, in men like Clement of Alexandria, the centrality of the words uttered by the Logos (that is, reason manifest in creation) that conformed to those uttered by the incarnate Logos (that is, revelation in scripture) were united to the pedagogical purpose of the Christian life, since Christ is the *Paedagogus*, the Instructor, par excellence.

In my ongoing reflection on the meaning of the Christian life today, I have come to believe that the retrieval of this early tradition of Christian education as the pondering of divine words through the "two books" of creation and sacred writ, is particularly relevant, since it not only challenges the late medieval Nominalism that led to today's doubt about God and intelligibility itself,[5] but also recalls how these words transformed human life, and not just personally, but culturally—indeed birthing a Christ-centered civilization. Christian education, centered on the study of classical literature in preparation for that most noble of arts, the exegesis of scripture, remained the cornerstone of Christendom as cultural heir of a Greco-Roman civilization. As Aubrey Gwynn notes:

> The type of education which Quintilian describes in his *Instiutio Oratoria* remained for centuries the sole education known to the Graeco-Roman world. Poor men continued to send their children to the elementary schools of the *ludi magister* and the *calculator*; but the rich, the well-to-do, and the professional classes sent their sons to the schools of literature and rhetoric, and were content with the "liberal arts" of the *egkuklios paideia* … From

5 Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics* (CUA, 1995), 240-53.

> the days of Isocrates to the fall of the Roman Empire no other form of education was known to Europe; and when the Church became the inheritor of the Graeco-Roman civilization, she used the *artes liberals* as a convenient framework for the new Christian education taught in her schools.[6]

In our day, as we live not only in a post-Christian culture, but in a post-literate, digital culture, we are re-experiencing a rise in the hermeneutical arts (the so-called 'digital humanities') as well as an increased interest in virtue ethics and character education, not only in schools but in culture at large. The Ancients' Hellenic culture saw the two—the interpretation of literature and the nurturing of civilization—as inexorably bound to each other. Christians purposefully followed their example by creating their own Christian *paideia* centered on the study of a vast repertoire of humanistic literature (the traditional sub-divisions of philosophy), but ultimately culminating in the exegesis of sacred texts (the listening to God's words). In our own times, in a context rich in information but still impoverished in wisdom, the same exegetical methodology for an *egkuklios paideia* (all-round education) cannot just revitalize Christian catechesis and theological education, but form the Christian character that embodies the Gospel for an authentic evangelization as witness.

Thus, a quintessentially 'literate' *paideia tou kyriou*, as developed in the early church and reaching its culmination in a medieval Christian civilization, can be just as relevant for a Christ-centred education in a digital age. Our post-Christian culture is not unlike the Greco-Roman empire in which the first seeds of the Gospel took root. Like the earliest witnesses of Christ, Christians today are also faced with the challenge of enculturating the Gospel, or of translating it into new cultural categories to establish a new art of Christian education that speaks to the times. Unlike early Christians, however, today's churches have a strong advantage. They can study exemplars

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6 Aubrey Gwynn, *Roman Education from Cicero to Quintilian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1926), 246 as quoted in Marshall McLuhan, *The Classical Trivium: The Place of Thomas Nashe in the Learning of his Time* (Corte Madera, CA: Gingko, 2006), 30.

from the tradition who have accomplished this same task of translation with much success—indeed, chiseling not only a long tradition of catechesis, but indeed a "Christian culture."

The father of this tradition of Christ-centered exegetical education is Origen (185-254 CE). The "man of steel"[7]—as remembered by the wisest of the Christian tradition, from Eusebius to Jerome, the Cappadocians, Ambrose, up until Erasmus and the theologians of the *ressourcement* in our own times—was the first to apply extensively and systematically the techniques of Hellenistic *grammatica* to the books of the Scriptures. He is not only the most celebrated catechist of the ancient School of Alexandria, but also the father of the catechetical method that was to remain central to the tradition until the Middle Ages and beyond. His method of exegesis reached its culmination in the medieval tradition of the "four senses of Scripture." If Origen marks the decisive turning point between Christianity as a novel, obscure Semitic sect and a philosophy of life that a century after his martyrdom birthed and spun a culture and civilization to last more than a thousand years, the High Middle Ages are like "the Owl of Minerva that flies at dusk." Christendom collapses under the pressure of secularity and the rise of the modern age, to face the challenge of reinventing itself, and in particular in our digital times, its task of formation. Thus, the essay will study the organic development that binds the two phases of this Scripture-based catechetical instruction in order to retrieve a tradition of *paideia tou kyriou* that can inspire our efforts today.

First, I will present briefly the context of each of our two bookends—the origin of Christian scriptural exegesis and the medieval tradition of the "four senses of scripture"—and then, I will proceed to analyze the methodological continuity between them in two further sections dedicated to the work of Origen and the spirit and techniques of medieval exegesis.

The Origins of Christian Scriptural Exegesis

Origen, the Alexandrian catechist and teacher of the Hellenistic art of *grammatica*, the "art of interpreting not only literary texts, but

7 Hans Urs von Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire. A Thematic Anthology of his Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1984), 1.

all phenomena… [since] grammar entails a fully articulated *science of exegesis, or interpretation*,"[8] must be understood in the context of the rich philosophical, literary and properly scriptural heritage of his land. From the third to the first centuries BCE, the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, was composed in his city and became the sacred text of Jews in Diaspora, who even supplemented the writings with new *sophia* texts, like the Wisdom of Solomon, inspired by Greek literature. Jews had become citizens of the *oekumene*, and the mutual influence of the two traditions, Greek and Hebrew, was inevitable. The newly translated Scriptures were the perfect symbol and medium for the Alexandrian Jews' recent cultural identity as Hellenists. Indeed, a mere century later, Philo of Alexandria, the famous Hellenist exegete, was already emulating the Stoics' grammatical efforts at re-interpreting Homer, the teacher of Hellas, by offering the first allegorical interpretation of the Septuagint, thus becoming not only a worthy teacher for Jews in Diaspora, but the perfect model for Christians in their later exegetical efforts.

Contemporaneous with Philo, Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles who introduced the epistle as a Christian literary genre, offered the first Christian allegorical exegesis of the Hebrew Scriptures, interpreting the prophecies as fulfilled in Christ, and the Torah itself as being superseded by the "law of the spirit" (Rom 8:2).[9] Through Paul's and his disciples' efforts, the majority of *Christianoi* were now Hellenists and Gentiles, creating their own new literary genre, the *evangelium*, in the *lingua franca* of the times. In particular, the Gentile author of Luke-Acts edited and ordered the earlier Gospels (Lk. 1:1-4) producing the first polished narrative or *praxeis* of the teachings, deeds, and life of Christ and his disciples, to serve as exemplar of Christian *paideia*.[10]

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8 W. Terrence Gordon, "Introduction," in Marshall McLuhan, *The Classical Trivium: The Place of Thomas Nashe in the Learning of his Time* (Corte Madera, CA: Gingko, 2006), xi (emphasis added).

9 The Pauline distinction between the "letter" and the "spirit" of the law or the Scriptures (cf. 2 Cor. 3:2-8) became the foundational theological principle for Origen's exegesis. As de Lubac notes, Origen was fundamentally Pauline in his theology. Henri de Lubac, *History and Spirit: The Understanding of Scripture According to Origen* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2007), 77-86.

10 Werner Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge, Massachu-

By the turn of the second century, a system for the formation of catechumens and the baptized appears to have been widely established. The Pastoral Epistles, as well as writings from the apostolic period like the *Didache* in Antioch and *1 Clement* in Rome, attest how in early Christianity the homily imitated the diatribe of popular Greek philosophy.[11] Yet instead of Greek literature, the texts that inspired the Christian rule of faith and moral teachings were the Septuagint and the narratives about Christ. Sermons, and epistles in particular, were often protreptic and paraenetic, designed to persuade the listener to a way of life as well as delineating strict rules of orthopraxis.[12] Christianity was being presented not merely as another mystery cult with its own faith (*pistis*) and rituals, but as true knowledge (*gnosis*)[13]—a rational ethos that demanded conversion from the way of "death" to the way of "life,"[14] as the *Didache, The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, so famously presents it.

By the time of the Apologists the seeds of a distinct Christian philosophy, a Christian way of life acculturated to Hellenism, were firmly planted.[15] Christianity was being effectively translated from the Hebrew mindset of the Law and of messianic expectations to

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setts: Harvard University Press, 1961), 7.

11 Malherbe described this mode of exhortation as "the educational activity of teacher and student" characterized by "elements of the philosophical dialogue and satire" to make it "vivid and lively." Abraham J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 129.

12 Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 122-25.

13 Jaeger, *Early Christianity*, 53. Origen himself deems "those who walk by faith" as "inferior" to "those who walk by sight" or who have the "word of wisdom" and the "word of knowledge" (*Commentary*, 13.354).

14 Jaeger remarks how *metanoia* itself is a term inspired by Plato (*Early Christianity*, 10), while the teaching of the two ways was Pythagorean (8). The aim of philosophy in classical times was to change one's life in order to fulfill one's authentic *telos*, an ideal believed to be witnessed in *kalokagathia*, the ancient principle of goodness and beauty (and indeed, goodness *as* beauty) of the Athenian *polis*. See H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (London, U.K.: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 43-44.

15 This does not mean that all Christians were in favour of such translation. The lament of the African Tertullian is well-known, while the Assyrian Tatian was equally suspicious of Greek philosophy, even if he was well-versed in it. Jaeger, *Early Christianity*, 34.

Greek philosophical categories[16]—not merely to attract new Gentile followers, but also to defend its legitimacy and reasonableness in a Hellenic culture. The foundational task of the Apologists was to pave the way for the Greek reception of the Christian understanding of God by stressing its resemblance to the former's great philosophical traditions—in the second century epitomized by Middle Platonism, "a *mélange* of Platonism, Stoicism and popular philosophy."[17]

At the end of the second century and in a major hub of Greek civilization,[18] where a Christian Catechetical School was firmly established, as tradition recalls, from St. Mark the Evangelist himself,[19] Origen, raised in a Christian family and receiving a Hellenic education, was growing up under this "cultural system" that "dominated not only the philosophical schools of their time but also the traditional Hellenic *paideia*."[20] "Plato [had become] the guide who turned [Greek] eyes from material and sensual reality to the immaterial world in which the nobler-minded of the human race were to make their home."[21] For a fervent Christian like Origen, however, the "noble-minded" were those who followed Christ and the "home" they sought was his Father in heaven.[22] In Origen the man, Helle-

16 Jaeger, *Early Christianity*, 36.

17 Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Preface," in *Origen*, trans. Rowan E. Greer (New York: Paulist, 1979), xi. Jaeger writes: "The interpretation of Christianity as a philosophy should not surprise us, for when we stop to consider for a moment with what a Greek could compare the phenomenon of Jewish-Christian monotheism we find nothing but philosophy in Greek thought that corresponds to it" (*Early Christianity*, 29).

18 Marrou, 213, writes: "Within the Museum [of Alexandria], and all around it, teachers of every variety offered their services not only in philosophy and eloquence but in all the other branches of knowledge.… From this point of view Alexandria was even more illustrious than Athens itself … it is not such a mistake as some have thought to identify 'Hellenistic' with 'Alexandrian' in the matter of civilization."

19 Tadros Y. Malaty, *The School of Alexandria* (1995); online: http://www.coptic-church.net/topics/patrology/schoolofalex/index.html (Date accessed Dec. 15, 2016).

20 Jaeger, *Early Christianity*, 45.

21 Jaeger, *Early Christianity*, 46.

22 The stories about Origen's youth are well-known, especially through Eusebius' embellished account. His father taught him the Scriptures from an early age and was martyred when Origen was still eighteen. The infamous story of Origen castrating himself to become a eunuch for the Kingdom is perhaps harder to believe, though

nism and Christianity became one,[23] and through the influence of his illustrious teaching and exegesis, whose importance—in the words of Balthasar—cannot be "overestimated … for the history of Christian thought,"[24] "Christianity was Hellenized and Hellenic civilization became Christianized."[25] Together with the contribution of Origen's predecessors and prominent followers, Plato, the Stoics, and the best of the Greek tradition were "baptized," contributing to the birth of a new Christian *paideia*.

Scriptural Exegesis in the Middle Ages

The classic work to ponder in depth the medieval tradition of the four senses of Scripture is Henri de Lubac's four-volume *Exégèse médiévale*.[26] An integral part of the twentieth century theological return to the sources—the *ressourcement* of Catholic thought—this

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it was certainly a favourite among his monastic followers, and still inspires much curiosity in our own times. For biographical accounts of Origen see: René Cadiou, *Origen: His Life at Alexandria* (St. Louis, Missouri: Herder, 1944); Joseph Wilson Trigg, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-century Church* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1983); Trigg also wrote a shorter introductory biography of Origen for his anthology *Origen* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 3-66; and Henri Crouzel, *Origen* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 1-58.

23 Jaeger narrates how for Porphyry and other learned pagans of Origen's time, Origen was a curious enigma: "[Porphyry] formulates the paradox of Origen's double life in saying that Origen, though brought up as a Greek in Greek letters, nevertheless became a proponent of that barbarous enterprise, Christianity. But though he lived the life of a Christian, he held Hellenic views about all things, including God, and he gave all the foreign myths a Greek meaning. For he lived with Plato constantly and read the entire literature of the Platonists and Pythagoreans of the preceding generation. But then, Porphyry continues, he reads all the mysteries of the Greeks into the Jewish writings." (*Early Christianity*, 50) It is, of course, interesting to note that someone like de Lubac, who defends Origen's Christian commitment with much passion and zeal, presents exactly the contrary argument: "The boldness of [Origen's] genius should not hide from us the impulses of his piety. The deficiencies of his doctrine—deficiencies that were inevitable for a third-century thinker, the very first to construct a theology—should not make us fail to recognize the pure quality of his faith." (*History and Spirit*, 60)

24 Balthasar, *Spirit and Fire*, 1.

25 Jaeger, *Paideia*, vol. II, xi.

26 Available in English translation as Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998, 2000). Henceforth, *ME* followed by volume number.

work studies the historical development of the tradition of the four senses of Scripture, as well as the significance of each of the levels of interpretation. It also builds upon de Lubac's earlier masterpiece, *History and Spirit*, dedicated to Origen's scriptural exegesis, since the author recognizes the Alexandrian grammarian and catechist as the fulcrum between the Pauline distinction of the letter and spirit of the Torah and the birth of a Christian grammatical method as the foundation for a distinctly Christian *paideia*.[27] For this reason, the significance of Origen and of medieval scriptural exegesis will be presented side-by-side to represent the organic development of the grammarian theological tradition:

> Whereas I was earlier [in *History and Spirit*] concerned with a privileged moment in time that was characterized by a blossoming forth of genius, my considerations now [in *Medieval Exegesis*] lie more particularly with the typical representatives of a tradition that has already been established.… Indeed, the nomenclature of the four biblical senses does not bring us into the presence of a great, overflowing fountainhead of thought, but of a dry-as-dust collection of writings that are more or less late blooming and often replete with artificial distinctions. What is more, these writings are sometimes a showcase for all sorts of capricious oddness. Nonetheless, the more I delved into this project, the more I was compelled to recognize the following truth: even in the least of the texts that presented themselves for my analysis, a whole mental universe was contained.… Through the angle of approach offered by these four senses, I was thus introduced forcefully, as it were, into the heart of a current

27 For the tradition of exegesis before Origen, see: James L. Kugel and Rowan A. Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986); Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 1-52; and Manlio Simonetti, "La Sacra Scrittura nella Chiesa delle Origini (I-III secolo): Significato e interpretazioni," *Salesianum* 57 (1995): 63-74.

> of thought which, throughout the multiple phases of its history, showed itself to be singularly unified.[28]

The unity of this worldview is succinctly presented in this medieval *aides-mémoire*:

> The letter teaches events,
> Allegory what you should believe,
> Morality teaches what you should do,
> Anagogy what mark you should be aiming for.[29]

The axiom encapsulates how theological science—that is, the discipline of the Christian life in its doctrinal, moral, and ultimate eschatological dimensions—is summarized in the Scriptures, which are the fullness of divine revelation. The ecclesial depository of the interpretation of Scripture, that is, of all sacred teaching, is guarded by what the Council of Trent will systematically reflect upon as "tradition". Until the Middle Ages, tradition itself is assumed but not consciously reflected upon as a source of theology, simply because the very mode and spirit of passing on the faith through the study and liturgical celebration of the Scriptures remained consistent.[30] Moreover, it was simply assumed that as source of infinite wisdom, the sacred Scriptures could be pondered over and over again to divulge ever-deeper understanding and truth. "Scripture is like the world: 'undecipherable in its fullness and in the multiplicity of its meanings.'"[31] Thus, "the interpretation of Scripture is indefinite, being as it is in the image of the infinity of its Author. It is like a great poem, with a pedagogical intent, whose inextinguishable significance leads us to the pure heights of the summit of contemplation."[32]

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28 *ME* I, xiii-xiv.

29 "*Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria, Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia."* Nicholas of Lyra cites the distich around the year 1330 in his *Postilla* on the Letter to the Galatians. Quoted in de Lubac, *ME* I, 1.

30 *ME* I, 24-25.

31 *ME* I, 75, quoting M. Gandillac, in *Blaise Pascal, entretiens de Royaumont* (1956), 322.

32 *ME* I, 77.

This multiplicity of meanings can be attested through the four categories of interpretation as espoused by the tradition. However, even the fourfold hermeneutical strategy of the historical, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical senses ultimately rests upon the crucial distinction between the literal and the allegorical understanding of Scripture, where the latter assumes a veiled or deeper meaning within the overt or superficial reading. This dual intelligibility of the text echoed both the Pauline theological distinction between the "letter" of the old covenant and the "spirit" of the new (2 Cor. 3:6),[33] but also the task of classical grammarians, whose aim, in line with the Stoic re-appropriation of Homer as teacher of Hellas, was to extract the moral significance of myth for pedagogical purposes. In Christian exegesis, both the Pauline "spiritual" sense—which in itself could be variously construed—and a classical moral-pedagogical dimension were attentively pondered, leading to two specific formulas or strands of scriptural exegesis in the tradition, which differ precisely in the order, or seeming importance, that they give to spiritual and moral exegesis:

> Some following Origen and Jerome, maintain a trichotomy: history, morality or tropology, and mysticism or allegory; others make use of the quadruple distinction of Cassian and Augustine, which is taken up by Bede and Rabanus Maurus: history, allegory, tropology and anagogy.[34]

De Lubac pays particular attention to this historical variation—that ultimately seems to coalesce to the more prevalent strand of the four senses of Scripture—precisely because of the dual interpretation

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33 For this reason, "spiritual exegesis is the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament in light of Christ and the New Testament." See *ME* I, ix, xiv. See also *ME* II, 1-9 for the historical analysis of Paul's appropriation of *allegoria* as the "spiritual sense" from his own Greco-Roman cultural milieu. For a more detailed historical evolution of allegory, see Jon Whitman, *Allegory: The Dynamics of Ancient and Medieval Technique* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987). See in particular the development from Homer to Origen (pp. 14-77).

34 C. Spicq, *Esquisse d'une histoire de l'exégèse latine au moyen age* (Paris: 1944), 98-99, quoted in *ME* I, 90.

of morality that emerges in the tradition and ultimately leads to the Reformation separation between faith and works, and the even deeper modern disconnect between the two strands of formation that in post-Tridentine manualist theology come to be symbolized through "ascetical" and "moral" theology.[35] Is righteous living a pre-requisite for knowledge of the deeper mysteries? Or does the spiritual understanding actually prepare for the life of holiness? Is morality merely an interim state for the greater perfection of the spiritual life, or does it presuppose a journey of discipleship? This dialectic, however, is revealed to be false as de Lubac traces back the history of these two traditions to their Patristic roots in the same author, Origen. Thus, Origen's own theological exegesis needs to be pondered, since it reveals most clearly the integral understanding of Christian formation as grounded in the interpretation of Scripture, which collapses precisely when the properly "spiritual" and "moral" part company in the tradition.

Origen the Catechist as Exegete

Scholars who study Origen's exegetical method typically start with his famous passage from the *Peri Archon* where he describes a specific method for "correct" exegesis:

> The way which seems to us the correct one for the understanding of the Scriptures, and for the investigation of their meaning, we consider to be of the following kind: for we are instructed by Scripture itself in regard to the ideas which we ought to form of it. In the Proverbs of Solomon we find some such rule as the following laid down, respecting the consideration of holy Scripture: "And do," he says, "describe these things to yourself in a threefold manner, in counsel and knowledge, and that you may answer the words of truth to those who have proposed them to you" (cf. Prov 22:20, 21). Each one, then, ought to describe in his own mind, in a threefold

35 Interestingly, Protestant exegetes, most notably Melanchton, consistently appropriated the trichotomy, thus understanding morality as something that is more based on human effort and disconnected from divine grace. *ME* I, 96.

> manner, the understanding of the divine letters—that is, in order that all the more simple individuals may be edified, so to speak, by the very body of Scripture; for such we term that common and historical sense: while, if some have commenced to make considerable progress, and are able to see something more (than that), *they* may be edified by the very soul of Scripture. Those, again, who are perfect, and who resemble those of whom the apostle says, "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect, but not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, who will be brought to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God, hidden in a mystery, which God has decreed before the ages unto our glory" (1 Cor. 2.6-7)—all such as these may be edified by the spiritual law itself (which has a shadow of good things to come), as if by the Spirit. For as man is said to consist of body, and soul, and spirit, so also does sacred Scripture, which has been granted by the divine bounty for the salvation of man.[36]

This threefold understanding of Scripture, where the tropological sense is likened to the intermediary soul between the human's flesh and true spirit, is undoubtedly the source of the Medieval trichotomic formula of exegesis. De Lubac notes that its primary advantage was pedagogical, since it allowed preachers in liturgical settings to

> draw food for their hearers from the two breasts of Scripture. … The bulk of the faithful need a moral teaching rendered sharper and more expressive by a symbolic form and which is accessible to them prior to their being able to be introduced into the depths of doctrine. … Thus, morality and allegory seem to belong to the relation between the milk and solid nourishment mentioned by Saint Paul as follows: "Reasonable

36 Origen, *Peri Archon*, IV.1,11

> and guileless milk' is the moral tropos; and 'solid food', the mystical understanding."[37]

To quote Origen himself:

> *The food of milk in holy Scriptures is said to be the first moral instruction which is given to beginners, as to little children. For one ought not to hand over immediately to beginning students what pertains to the deep and more secret sacraments; rather to them are given correction of morals, improvement of discipline, and the first elements of religious converse and simple faith. That is the milk of the church: beginners get the first elements of little children.*[38]

However, notwithstanding this obvious pedagogical advantage, the scholar who ponders Origen's vast corpus of homilies and commentaries is baffled by a lack of consistency. Notwithstanding Origen's clear exposition of a threefold exegetical analogy, "in practice, Origen almost always neglects the intermediate (or psychic-moral) sense," with the result that "his trichotomy is reduced to two terms: letter and spirit."[39] As Erasmus noted, in practice, Origen often even reverses his method of exegesis:

> *This is the order that he [Origen] follows: he begins by explaining the history clearly and briefly, each time that the subject demands it. Then he stimulates his audience to discover the deepest meanings of the allegory. And immediately after that he deals with the moral aspects.*[40]

In his *History and Spirit*, de Lubac concluded that Origen seems to suggest that there are two distinct senses of morality, one of which

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37 *ME* II, 28

38 *Homiliae In Jud.,* h. 5, n. 6 (496). Quoted in *ME* II, 29.

39 Ferdinand Prat, "Origene," in F. Vigouroux *Dictionnaire de la Bible* 5 (1876), quoted in *ME* I, 144.

40 Erasmus, *Preface to the Works of Origen,* vol. 1 (Basel, 1545), quoted in ME I, 145.

can be interpreted as a natural "moral anatomy and physiology" or, in the words of Philo, "a physics of the soul,"[41] while the other is properly ecclesial. Morality as the psychic sense of Scripture "was a question of the soul in general, of the soul in itself, so to speak, of its nature, of its faculties, of its vices and virtues, independent of Christian realities." Morality in the second sense "is a question of the 'faithful' soul, of the soul 'seeking God,' of the soul 'turned toward God' and 'adhering to the Logos,' of the 'perfect soul' or at least the soul 'tending toward perfection.'"[42]

> [T]he moral sense which prolongs and presupposes the allegorical or mystical sense is properly speaking 'spiritual.' […] In this second case, he [Origen] expounds asceticism and a mysticism that has a Christological, ecclesial and sacramental complexion. Founded as it is on dogma, it is a veritable history of the spiritual life. In this second case, Origen's exegesis, connected in its entirety to "the soul of the believer," to "the soul of the one who is faithful," and to "the ecclesiastical soul" or "the soul that is in the church," is thus wholly Christian, in its content no less than in its form, in its end results no less than in its deeply rooted foundations.[43]

Thus, Origen is undoubtedly also at the source of the fourfold formula of scriptural exegesis, which presupposes a spiritual posture for expounding the tropological sense that is now properly Christian and not merely grounded in human nature. Yet, the question remains: why does Origen seemingly differentiate between a natural "psychic" sense of morality (or a natural law accessible to reason alone) and one specifically informed by Christian revelation—a "spiritual" morality?

According to the patristic scholar Karen Jo Torjeson, the distinction is Origen's way of differentiating between distinct spiritual

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41 *ME* I, 147.

42 *History and Spirit*, 163-64. De Lubac is quoting from Origen's *Commentary on the Song of Songs.*

43 *ME* I, 146-47, quoting from Origen's *Commentary on the Song of Songs*.

skopos or formative intents of biblical texts and the preparation or receptivity of those hearing them. While Origen's *skopos*, or "threefold usefulness" of Scriptural passages are traditionally appropriated as the four senses of Scripture (with the allegorical, tropological, and anagogical senses being three sub-divisions of the overall "spirit" of the text), his emphasis on the catechumens' or the faithful's understanding of Scripture, through their being at different stages of spiritual formation, is reflected in the famous tripartite understanding of Scripture presented in the *Peri Archon*,[44] and therefore in the pedagogical analogy of drinking from the two breasts of Scripture, the naturally moral and spiritual. Accordingly, scriptural exegesis in practice is revealed to be a grammar *and* rhetoric—a method of interpretation and of presenting persuasively the teaching of the Scriptures—consistent with Augustine's distillation of Christian *paideia* articulated more than a century later in *De Doctrina Christiana*. Thus, Torjeson argues that Origen's exegesis should be understood both pedagogically and theologically, since it encapsulates a sophisticated understanding of revelation in the context of ecclesial pastoral praxis. Put simply, Origen's scriptural exegesis reflects a theology of Christian formation, where catechumens or disciples, through their different stages of growth, are moulded by the word/Word[45] as medi-

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44 Karen Jo Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Method in Origen's Exegesis* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 39-43. Torjesen notes that in the *Peri archon*, Origen is addressing exegetes and teachers, and his emphasis is pedagogical, to make them aware of how the "body" of Scripture is its proclamation, its "psychic" sense urges conversion and is primarily received by those who have still not advanced enough in their journey to receive the mysteries (presumably the catechumens) and the higher "spiritual" understanding is received by the faithful or initiated (40). She also notes that it is for this reason that Origen rarely (if ever) uses the "psychic" level of Scripture as a category of exegesis in his homilies and commentaries. Instead he relies on the key Pauline distinction of letter and spirit, where the "spirit" of Scripture includes three *skopos* (or a "threefold usefulness"): teaching the mysteries, purification, and eschatological enlightenment (41). These three *skopos* in themselves reflect stages of formation in the Christian life, echoing the Johannine stances of belief, discipleship and eschatological abiding in friendship.

45 Pondering the written "word" of God, or the Scriptures, becomes thus a true encounter with the "Word" (Christ) who conforms the disciple to himself. This encounter is mediated by the church, the true body of Christ. In this article, I will use the lower case "word" to indicate the Scriptures and the upper case "Word" to indicate Christ.

ated by the church.

This theological presupposition is evident in the *Peri Archon*, which reveals Origen's understanding of his role as catechist, preparing Christians for martyrdom in the church of Alexandria. While it is undeniable that as a teacher of the classics, and therefore a *grammatikos* by training, Origen applied the pedagogical techniques of classical grammar and the rules of rhetorical *paraenesis* to his catechesis, as a devout Christian, Origen recognized that since the Scriptures are the living word of God, the stakes are much higher, and that Scriptural exegesis requires something beyond mere grammatical skill:

> For if our books induced men to believe because they were composed either by rhetorical arts or by the wisdom of philosophy, then undoubtedly our faith would be considered to be based on the art of words, and on human wisdom, and not upon the power of God; whereas it is now known to all that the word of this preaching has been so accepted by numbers throughout almost the whole world, because they understood their belief to rest not on the persuasive words of human wisdom, but on the manifestation of the Spirit and of power. On which account, being led by a heavenly, nay, by a more than heavenly power, to faith and acceptance, that we may worship the sole Creator of all things as our God, let us also do our utmost endeavour, by abandoning the language of the elements of Christ, which are but the first beginnings of wisdom, to go on to perfection, in order that that wisdom which is given to them who are perfect, may be given to us also.[46]

Origen understood the exegesis of Scripture as a divine act beyond the talent of mortals, however, in receiving the grace of the wisdom of the Spirit, exegetes become holy, their eyes opened to perceive the divine mysteries. Only like knows like: ultimately, to exegete or allegorize well in the Christian tradition is to discern the

46 Origen, *Peri Archon*, IV.1,7.

divine voice, and as one listens to the Word (Christ) one is conformed to his image.[47] In the passage quoted above, Origen clearly suggests that to be enriched by the deeper spiritual meaning of the word of God is to be transformed as a spiritual being in imitation of the Spirit who speaks to the initiated. Even more essentially, the transformation is not for one's self-edification alone. Rather it has an ecclesial or communal purpose, for the Christian is also a minister of the Word, serving the people of God as model and teacher. "God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers" (1 Cor. 12:28). To communicate the gift of understanding well, to share the divine knowledge, is to wash the disciples' feet just as Christ had washed those of his own.[48]

This is the pastoral context of authentic ecclesial exegesis: it emphasizes that the Scriptures are books of the church, words addressed to the people of God for their growth in holiness. This growth is, first and foremost, a personal conversion to divinization, as described by Paul, from the existence in the flesh to life in the Spirit (cf. Rom 8:5-9). But Origen's emphasis on right spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures is primarily directed to the catechist and homilist in their pedagogical role as mediator of a specifically Christian *paideia*. In this regard, it is important to recall the Greek assumptions about education, that is, the foundational personal relationship between teacher and student, where the former was responsible to be a worthy guide to form the desirous disciple. From a Christian pastoral perspective, the responsibility of the exegete is critical, but paradoxically it is also liberating. This is because, while the teacher is Christ's disciple serving the Lord through ministry, the *didaskolos* also trusts that God's self-revelation will directly reach

47 *Imitatio Dei* is thus properly an *imitatio Christi*, a Christ-like existence.

48 In his *Commentary* (32.122), Origen says: "Before the disciples became as their teacher and Lord, therefore, they need to have their feet washed because they are deficient disciples and still possess the spirit of bondage to fear. But whenever anyone of them becomes as his teacher and Lord, in accordance with the statement, 'It is sufficient for the disciple that he be as his teacher, and the servant as his Lord,' (Mt. 10.25) he can then imitate the one who washed the disciples' feet, and wash the disciples' feet as the teacher, whom God appointed in the church after the apostles, who received the first place in the church, and the prophets, who received the second place."

and embrace the student; the teacher's work is simply to show the way, since Christ alone is *the* Way, the Medium to the Father. In this sense, while the human remains a mere teacher, Christ is an authentic *paedagogos*, "responsible not just for revelation, but for its moral and spiritual results in each individual as well. Here the pedagogical skills come into play—persuading, teaching, training, correcting and disciplining."[49]

This pedagogical perspective is the key to interpreting the structure of Origen's homilies and commentaries, which function as catechetical exegesis. The catechist assists the work of the true pedagogue, the Logos, as the Christian is formed to perfection. Torjesen describes this process as "pedagogical soteriology," [50] and Origen himself illustrates the path of the Christian life as inherently trinitarian:

> God the Father bestows upon all, existence; and participation in Christ, in respect of His being the word of reason, renders them rational beings. From which it follows that they are deserving either of praise or blame, because capable of virtue and vice. On this account, therefore, is the grace of the Holy Ghost present, that those beings which are not holy in their essence may be rendered holy by participating in it. […] Seeing it is by partaking of the Holy Spirit that any one is made purer and holier, he obtains, when he is made worthy, the grace of wisdom and knowledge, in order that, after all stains of pollution and ignorance are cleansed and taken away, he may make so great an advance in holiness and purity, that the nature which he received from God may become such as is worthy of Him who gave it to be pure and perfect, so

49 Karen Jo Torjesen, "Pedagogical Soteriology from Clement to Origen," *Origeniana Quarta* (1985): 371.

50 Torjesen goes so far as to argue that "there is in the *Peri Archon* a predominantly soteriological interest, alongside the philosophical interest that has been assumed in the past." In addition, "the *Peri Archon* is best understood in relation to Origen's exegetical works as a philosophical handbook on the interpretation of Scripture." Torjesen, "Hermeneutics and Soteriology in Origen's *Peri Archon*," *Studia Patristica* 21 (1989): 333-34.

> that the being which exists may be as worthy as He who called it into existence. For, in this way, he who is such as his Creator wished him to be, will receive from God power always to exist, and to abide forever.[51]

In Origen, the Christian life is a restoration to the primordial perfection of God's creation. If we receive creation, reason and holiness—in that order—from the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit respectively, our path of ascent must be its reverse: in the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father, a process of ongoing repentance, growth in wisdom, to abide in eternal life. The Scriptures are the Logos/Teacher himself, wearing the written words as a second flesh: "For just as he is cloaked by the flesh, so also he is clothed with the garment of these words, so the words are that which is seen, just as the flesh is seen; but hidden with [the words] the spiritual sense is perceived, just as the flesh is seen and the divinity is perceived."[52] This hidden spiritual sense is the presence of the Spirit who inspires the composition of the Scriptures, just as it is in the Spirit that the Son takes flesh. Accordingly, since it is in the Spirit that we recognize the divinity of the Christ, it is likewise in the Spirit what we must interpret the Scriptures. Spiritual exegesis is nothing but the stance of holiness—possible only in receiving the Holy *Pneuma*—that opens one's mind to partake of the wisdom of the Logos. This process of formation is inherently ecclesial, for the Holy Spirit breathes in the church, the new body of Christ.

Pedagogically, however, this process of "uncloaking" the text translates to the different grammatical techniques that Origen employs in order to discern the truth and proclaim the Word to contemporary Christians. The difference is based on the theological presupposition that while the Logos speaks personally in the Incarnation, and hence the New Testament is the Logos' direct self-communication, he speaks indirectly in the Hebrew Scriptures, since they are the record of the Speech of God uttered to the chosen saints of old. The word spoken to the patriarchs and prophets must first become a

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51 Origen, *Peri Archon*, I.3,8

52 Origen, *Homily on Leviticus* I.1, quoted in Torjesen, "Pedagogical Soteriology," 374.

personal word, spoken to disciples or catechumens. Before they can truly hear and listen to the voice of God's Wisdom, they must imitate the holy ones who listened to the Logos first. This entails that the catechist helps the student to discern through allegorical exegesis that spiritual word being spoken, often under many layers of literal meaning, so that they can then receive in the Spirit the teaching of the Logos with unobstructed clarity. Consequently, in each individual step of the exegesis, Origen helps students to place themselves in the text, to appropriate the word personally. The teacher's role is to enable communication between the true Pedagogue and the Christian disciple, for it is in that moment of prayer that the teaching and transformation can take place.

In the Gospel, however (and for Origen the entire New Testament is "good news"), Christ speaks directly to the disciple, revealing himself as to a friend, as one being transformed in the Spirit through being in his presence and listening attentively. The teacher's role, therefore, becomes one of facilitating that contemplation, of pointing to the truth that is evident in the words, without the need to place the hearer in the text. This is the reason why most of Origen's New Testament exegesis appears to be quite literal. It would be more precise to say, however, that the text itself is already spiritual, in the sense that its message, the Logos, is unveiled and hence directly self-evident for those trained to perceive it.

Similarly, as the Logos speaks through the Scriptures to the church today, different texts have distinct spiritual *skopos* or "usefulness," which Origen outlines for his students as the theme of the pericope or book. Torjesen explains:

> In Origen's understanding the usefulness of a text, its spiritual application, is an original part of its inherent meaning. It is in fact the original meaning of the text, its origin in the moment of inspiration, which constitutes its usefulness. This original meaning of the text is its spiritual application to us, a pedagogy of the Logos. This is the subject matter of Scripture. When Origen seeks to identify the theme of a text, he seeks to discover its

> *skopos* or *boulêma*—its educational intention, and this *skopos* (theme) of the text defines its pedagogical value to us.[53]

Now, educational intent in fact can be only of three kinds: the three levels of ascent of the Christian life, each the particular gift of a person of the Holy Trinity. The Logos can teach about himself, divine revelation embraced by the church as dogmas and doctrines; He can teach redemption, or the purgation of sins for an ethical and holy life in the Spirit; and He can teach about our return to the Father, the eschatological hope for life everlasting. Thus, together with the literal meaning of the text, these three *skopos* of Scripture and the Christian life, form the traditional medieval schema of the four senses of Scripture: literal (or historical), and a three-fold spiritual reading of allegory (or doctrine), tropology (or morality), and anagogy (or eschatology).[54] Moreover, following the pedagogical logic of the catechumenate and mystagogy,[55] while Origen's Old Testament homilies and commentaries primarily appear to have a repentance *skopos*,[56] New Testament ones are for the most part, though not exclusively, doctrinal or eschatological. As the path that leads to the gospel and the Logos-made-flesh, the Old Testament teaches purgation of sins and a new birth to holiness, essential to the catechumen before he or she receives the sacrament of baptism. Only the person who has received the Spirit, and thus belongs to the church and partakes of her sacraments, can learn the knowledge/Logos of God who reveals himself to us face-to-face in the Gospel.

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53 Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure*, 126.

54 *ME* II, 34.

55 See Lawrence D. Folkemer, "A Study of the Catechumenate," A. Turck, "Aux origines du catéchuménat," and Jean Daniélou, "La Catéchèse dans la Tradition patristique," in *Conversion, Catechumenate, and Baptism in the Early Church*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York: Garland, 1993), 244-92.

56 There are, of course, exceptions to this general rule. The *Homilies* and *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, for instance, seem to deal more with the eschatological age. See Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure*, 54-62.

The "Four Senses of Scripture"

This catechetical function of Origen's fourfold exegesis with its three *skopos* of learning about the mysteries, purgation, and our eschatological finality becomes increasingly schematized until it reaches its acme in the medieval understanding of the four senses of Scripture. In what follows, I will ponder each of the senses both to emphasize the holism of this theological and catechetical grammatical strategy and to suggest how, by the time of the Thomistic revival in neo-Scholasticism, the individual fragments had radically separated from each other in conformity with the new mechanical imaginary of modernity.

The Historical Sense

Littera gesta docet (The letter teaches events) goes the axiom of the fourfold sense. Yet the use of "letter," as inspired by the Pauline corpus, is merely a substitute for the function of this initial interpretative technique, which is to tease out the "historical" meaning of the text. History in this medieval sense should not be confused with our modern historicism, as exceedingly stressed through these past centuries of historical criticism in biblical studies, or oppositely, with a blind faith in the Scripture's historical inerrancy. Instead, de Lubac notes that the medievalists interpreted *historia* through its ancient etymology. "History" is rooted in both the Greek *historein,* to see and get to know, and the Greek *isteron* for gesturing. By embracing both meanings, it encapsulates the objective and subjective dimensions of narrative as the actual events or deeds accomplished, and how they are witnessed.[57] Both emphases are essential, for while the former grounds divine revelation in a concrete place and time, the latter accentuates its meaning as true "salvation history," a divine presence and penetration into human contingency, a divine-human relationality. Thus: "History is the thing done of the thing seen."[58] It

57 In contrast, the historical critical method attempts the almost impossible past of recomposing actual events.

58 Jean Chatillon, "De la polémique antijuive à la catéchèse chrétienne: L'objet, le contenu et les sources d'une *Altercatio Synagogae et Ecclesiae* du XXIIe siècle," *Recherches de Theologie Ancienne et Medievale* 23 (1956): 52.

is a witness of God's revelation to humanity—even if this revelation always reaches us veiled through the limitations of human language.

As a pondering of the form of Scripture, the historical sense is necessary to Christian exegesis in the same way that the body cannot be forgotten or divorced from the spirit. History is thus the "universal *foundation*"[59] of exegesis, even if on its own, it is insufficient to fully comprehend divine revelation. Rather, as the veil that hides the divine face, a "theological sense of history" serves to guide the disclosure of deeper truths:

> [The] theological sense of history.… supposes precisely that one does not stay at the level of its mere *historia*, i.e. the facts pure and simple, or the pure and simple report of the facts. It supposes that one places oneself, at least a second time, in another point of view than that of the simple narrator. To explicate the facts—and already somewhat to choose them and to expound them—one thus applies a principle of discernment which can itself be inserted within the facts, but which, as such, pertains to a different sphere and overflows into the observation of the facts… Only faith anticipates the future with security. Only an explication founded upon faith can invoke a definitive principle and appeal to ultimate causes. At the same time, it is clear that the word "explication" no longer has the same sense as when it is a question of scientific explications.[60]

In itself, therefore, the historical sense is already an interpretation, or perception, of "facts," and in the Christian exegetical tradition, the hermeneutic is primarily guided by the ultimate principle of discernment: Christ himself. The Logos is the principle of intelligibility of the Scriptures as a whole, and the advent of Christ is the lens through which salvation history, in both the old and new covenants is read. Indeed, it is the Logos-made-flesh who gives biblical history its

59 *ME* II, 47 (author's emphasis).

60 *ME* II, 71.

"proper value."[61] For this reason, the ecclesial tradition exegetes the Old Testament historically as prefiguring and prophetically announcing the coming of Christ—a stance that is contrary to modern scientific historical criticism—just as the New Testament is a revelation of divine life over and above it being a literal account of Jesus' deeds.

From this perspective of the sacredness or revelatory power of history, it should not be surprising that the Fathers and medieval exegetes saw no contradiction when the historical sense in itself called for a figurative rather than a literal interpretation. First and foremost, this was because certain pericopes are essentially "fables," "historical drama" or "parables," whose "truth" is unmistakably mythical and metaphorical.[62] More significantly, however, the historical sense was always the witness of a divine-human encounter happening in the history of salvation, which enticed and demanded the moral and spiritual transformation called for by the spirit of Scripture. As such, all the foundational work of contextualizing the pericope, of presenting *historia*, served the greater purpose of facilitating a similar God-human encounter in the here and now. In this sense, its significance was that of transposing the hearer of the word of God into the universal drama of God's divine love for humanity enacted in the history of the world. Thus, the particular story merges with the communal narrative, which becomes its horizon of meaning. This essentially pedagogical and pastoral stance is radically different from contemporary historical or literary criticism, whose interest is primarily knowledge rather than transformation. Yet even in the medieval schema, that deeper meaning or spiritual sense of the text still needed to be cracked through a three-fold allegorical technique.

The Allegorical Sense

Allegory,[63] from the Greek *allos* (other) and *agoreuein* (to speak in public), is an alternate form of speech, or "a sort of alien

61 *ME* II, 72.

62 Terms used by William of Saint Thierry, quoted by *ME* II, 57.

63 For a historical evolution of allegory, see Jon Whitman, *Allegory: The Dynamics of Ancient and Medieval Technique* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987). See in particular the development from Homer to Origen, 14-77.

speech."[64] As an elaborate extension of metaphor that spans entire narratives,[65] allegory holds together multiple meanings, and its interpretation relies on the skill of recognizing resemblance of form, by dissecting the multiple overt and covert elements. In Saint Ambrose's classic definition: "there is allegory when one thing is being done [and] another is being figured."[66] Thus, while, technically speaking, all three spiritual senses are metaphorical or allegorical in that they reveal a deeper meaning hidden under the veil of the form or literal meaning of the text, each can be understood as having a specific function, and therefore as revealing distinct aspects of the Christian life. In this sense, if the tropological sense reveals the efficient causality of the Christian life and the anagogical sense exposes its finality, the allegorical sense is like the matter or the "mysteries" that are the fundamental teachings to initiate the Christian to holiness. In the succinct words of the medieval couplet: "allegory [teaches] what you should believe."

Accordingly, the allegorical sense teases out the doctrinal dimension of the Christian life, which becomes summarized in the symbols or creeds of the faith, and in modernity is systematized through the different specialties of dogmatic theology. The exegetical tradition recognized that "[t]he divinity of the Word of God incarnate is in fact the central object of allegory. It is revealed, however, only to the 'eyes of the heart,' to those 'inner eyes,' those 'spiritual eyes,' those 'eyes of the soul,' those 'better eyes' that are opposed to the eyes of the flesh."[67] The allegorical sense is the ecclesial reading of the text, for it reveals the fundamental tenets of the faith, or "right" Spirit-filled "opinion" that distinguish the Christian (or Christ-filled) interpretation of the text from any other. It is about a true understanding or comprehension that can only be achieved through a commitment or conversion to Christ in the first place. Allegorical reading

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64 An old grammarian definition of allegory as quoted in *ME* II, 89.

65 Heraclitus writes that allegory is a "continued metaphor," "making one thing be understood by means of another" (*On the Life and Thought of Homer*, 70, as quoted in *ME* II, 89).

66 St. Ambrose, *De Abraham*, Bk. I, c. I, n. 28 (PL, XIV, 432 C) in *ME* II, 90.

67 *ME* II, 108, quoting the masters of allegorical exegesis, Jerome, Augustine, and Origen.

is thus about the faithful encounter with the Word of God, to ponder his Voice for a journey of deepening discipleship. It is a spiritual understanding *par excellence*, for it is the presence of the Spirit in the church who guides the faithful interpretation as revelatory of the deepest divine mysteries.

The shift from *historia* to *allegoria* is therefore a stance of understanding the Scriptures not merely as a narrative of salvation history, but as a revelation of God in Godself through the deeds of history. As allegorical, the Scriptures are truly sacramental, echoing the mysteries of the divine realm in the here and now. This is evident not only in the way that allegorical exegesis of the Old Testament is frequently about discerning the *typos* of Christ in the prophecies or the Psalms (which enables a distinct Christian tradition to form in the first place), but more essentially in the way that the New Testament reveals an entirely new order of creation, the radical novelty of the cosmos imbued with the presence of Christ and the Spirit. "At the summit of history, the Fact of Christ supposed history, and its radiance transfigured history."[68] The sacramentality of the Scriptures becomes an entry point to interpreting the new reality inaugurated in Christ, where the created realm healed of its slavery to sin, becomes resplendent with God's presence in order to fully mirror the divine realm.

The Tropological Sense

If the allegorical sense introduces the deepest truths of the faith, mystical tropology teaches the virtues that befit the Christian life. This understanding of a properly Christian, and not merely natural, morality assumes that faith and the right understanding of divine revelation are a precondition for the purity of heart that characterizes holiness. Indeed, it is "by contemplating what God has done [that] we recognize what is to be done by us."[69] This deed to be accomplished by the human is often a "turning around" or a nuanced repetition—reminiscent of the etymology of "tropology" itself, a "turn"

68 *ME* II, 105.

69 *ME* II, 129, quoting Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicae Libri Septem*, Bk. VI, c.v. (PL, CLXXVI, 806 BC).

of phrase[70]—of the deed done by God, as revealed in the Scriptures. Thus, in the words of the School of St. Victor, "It is tropology when through one deed another thing to be done is pointed out."[71]

This is not to suppose that morality is simply reduced to righteous acts, but rather the tradition emphasizes how the tropological sense turns its focus from theology proper (the focus of the allegorical sense) to anthropology. Christian anthropology is properly mystical, with no separation between morality and spirituality, as it reflects "the passage from the sinful life to the virtuous life, from the mediocre life to the spiritual life."[72] While in the early church this literally meant a conversion to Christ as opposed to empire or pagan culture, in the Middle Ages it is epitomized by the monastic life as a discipline of holiness. Medieval tropological exegesis is thus imbued with monastic symbolism and includes the traditional stages of the mystical journey from purgation to illumination to a state of union, through the practices of "silence, psalmody, vigils, fasting, manual labour, chastity."[73] For the laity, however, tropology became the favoured approach for sermons with a distinct paraenetic bent. Yet as the people were increasingly uneducated and uncatechized, tropology became more practical in its approach, robbed of its spiritual core, with allegorical exegesis becoming gradually drier and focused on the speculative and theoretical. As early as the twelfth century, the schisms between theology and the Christian life on one hand, and spirituality and morality on the other, become increasingly apparent, culminating in the standard Catholic manualist pre-Vatican II separation between moral theology for the masses and ascetical theology for the elite.

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70 *ME* II, 129.

71 Hugh of St. Victor, *Speculum de Mysteriis Ecclesiae*, c. viii (PL, CLXXVII, 375 A) in *ME* II, 130.

72 *ME* II, 143.

73 This reflects Bernard of Clairvaux's popular exegesis of the six urns at the wedding of Cana as symbolizing the six disciplines of the monastic life. See Sermons 1 and II in *Dominica Prima Post Octavam Epiphaniae* (PL, CLXXXIII, 155-60) as quoted in *ME* II, 152.

The Anagogical Sense

The shift from an exegetical to a dialectical theology, however, is nowhere more evident than on the impact on the anagogical sense. The tradition of fourfold exegesis centering on Christ understood the historical sense as prefiguring the coming of Christ and the spiritual senses as the three means of his advent. The first is the Incarnation and the unfolding of redemption through the understanding and celebration of the mysteries by the church; the second is Christ's indwelling in every person of faith, molding each to his image; but the third, revealed through anagogical exegesis, is about the "end of the age," the *parousia* of Christ, where the project of creation will reach its fulfillment. The anagogical sense is thus properly mystical and eschatological, a universal spiritual ascent, and a contemplation "from things visible to those invisible,"[74] as reflected in the etymology of *anagoge* itself, "a leading upward."[75] As the culmination of exegesis itself, anagogy is both dogmatic, and therefore a continuation of allegory, and existential, as the fulfillment of tropology in the ecstatic experience of union that is the true taste of heaven in this world. The two forms of anagogical understanding in effect fuse into one, as the state of union granted through the contemplation of Scripture is in itself a profound wisdom of the universal *telos*.

In many ways, therefore, the anagogical sense is the culmination of Christian exegesis, where the Scriptures as God's word are, just like Christ incarnate, the way to the Father. Ecclesial exegesis, or exegesis in the power of the Spirit is properly a process of "becoming" to the human finality of divinization that not only actuates the Christian journey, but also reveals it to be our absolute hope. In this sense, anagogical exegesis also reflects the fundamental paradox of Christianity itself: the already and the not yet, the stance of radical trust that in Christ the world has come to fulfillment and the absolute hope that it will. The anagogical sense captures this tension as faith and discipleship culminate to an actual experience of holiness or a becoming like Christ in the world.

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74 Hugh of St. Victor, *Speculum de Mysteriis Ecclesiae*, c. viii (PL, CLXXVII, 375 B) in *ME* II, 180.

75 *ME* II, 180.

Recapitulation

Origen represents a crucial turning point between Jewish Christianity and its Hellenistic flourishing. In his scholarship, the concrete historical expression of Christian culture was fashioned, through his conviction that one could live the Christian life with full integrity in a pagan culture—indeed, in the process, transforming, converting the culture's ethos to the Gospel. Many have lamented the church's loss of Pauline apocalyptic zeal or of Johannine stubborn elitism, yet Christ did not come to the world for a small flock: "I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd" (John 10:16). He came for the whole world.

In this brief historical exposition of early *paideia tou kyriou*—quite literally a "Christ centered education"—I have attempted to show that Origen's efforts were successful because he did not merely seek to reason with his pagan context, or argue with the Gnostic errors. He rather discerned and utilized wisely the strengths of his pagan culture in service of catechetical formation and of Christian witness. Through his scholarship he sought to form, but simultaneously also to transform, convince, and persuade with the power of the Gospel. Origen was a teacher whose reputation extended throughout the empire among Christians and pagans alike. He welcomed anyone who sought him for his wisdom and his openness was a witness of Christ-centered humanism. Yet his method remained consistent: the Scriptures were the holy literature, with the canon of Greek *paideia* serving as mere human fodder for the real food that was the word of God. He became a divine instrument serving the Logos, that the Word, the holy Wisdom and Teacher, might bestow his divine Knowledge to the world.

Our times are not that different from Origen's: we just live on the opposite end of a thick mirror. In his time, probably nobody could even conceive an imperial Christianity; in our time it is a dream from which we have awoken. In Origen's time, education and literate culture were becoming institutionalized; in our time the educational institution is failing our youth. In his time, political turmoil in a pseudo-*Pax Romana* was the rule of the day; in our time, our feeble attempts to live peaceably in a globalized world often bear

little fruit. In Origen's time, to be a Christian was for the minority who accepted that it was a long arduous path of repentance, knowledge, and glory in being conformed to the Gospel. In our own time, Christians publicly committed to the path of discipleship are increasingly a minority, especially in the secular West.[76] Like Christians in Origen's time, we continue to desire the nurturance of spiritual food, of the "words" that God always speaks to his people.

Hence, we have nowhere to turn but to our roots—the long tradition of the Fathers and wise teachers of the church—in order to learn from their efforts of drinking from Scripture and to apply their insights and practices to our own efforts at catechesis and theological education. The Fathers were attentive to their milieu: they interpreted the Scriptures with a careful eye on the cosmos and the political sphere, attempting to create a distinct Christian *paideia* that responded to the signs of the times. The times have changed, but as Christian educators we still need to be attentive to our new ground, the world in which we live and the exigencies of its people, and to respond with the Good News of hope. If we truly believe that the Gospel is "living water," then our own efforts at formation must also drink from its source. To drink is to ponder, to study, to contemplate, not only with the eyes of learning, but with children's eyes, the eyes of faith, in order to become what we behold.

76 A recent demographic study of the Pew Research Center shows that even if "the United States remains home to more Christians than any other country in the world," the number of Christians is declining as the rate of those who claim no religious affiliation is growing. See "America's Changing Religious Landscape: Christians Decline Sharply as Share of Population; Unaffiliated and Other Faiths Continue to Grow," Online (May 12, 2015): http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/ (Date accessed Dec. 15, 2016).

Christ-Centred University Education: A President's Perspective

David Johnson*

Abstract

This essay gives one president's perspective on Christ-Centred university education. It highlights three relationships that a president and a school must negotiate. First, the school must negotiate the relationship between the church and the education it offers. This is a public relations issue. The church influences the ethos and curriculum of the school and the school influences the church through its alumni and faculty. Second, the school must balance its constituencies, namely faculty, students, church, and society. This is an issue of human and financial resources. Third, the school must negotiate the relationship between the Bible and the university curriculum. This is a hermeneutical issue. All three of these relationships deal with the issue of academic freedom. How does the president steward the academic freedom within the context of a Christ-centred university? The president's role is to keep lines of communication open between all constituencies.

This essay is about Christ-centred university education. It is not an academic treatise and therefore does not interact with scholarly literature. Nevertheless, I have read extensively about Christian Higher Education, have attended numerous gatherings of Christian university presidents, and have been at the job for over four years. While the essay is research based, it comes out of my experience. Any resemblance to things I have read is because I have absorbed the material and made it my own.

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Christian seminaries are, by nature, Christ-centred. A Christian university, has more difficulty holding to a firm centre, because of the breadth of its mission. This essay is about Christian universities. A Christian university is not a Bible or ministry-training school. It teaches a broad curriculum and its faculty embark on research and publication in a broad array of different and sometimes disparate disciplines. It has fuzzy edges. Hence, without careful stewardship, Christian universities drift from their original centre, as has been often documented in stories of many schools, however that centre is defined. The stewardship of the Christian university's centre lies with the president as the only employee of the Board of Governors. This essay defines one president's perspective on Christ-centred university education.

Stephen Covey is widely quoted as saying, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing." To this dictum a president can say "I agree;" but one also realizes that the "main thing" is complex for higher education in general and even more complex for Christian higher education. What follows is a discussion of three complex relationships where the main thing must be kept the main thing in Christ-centred higher education. All three are important, but each one may rise to the surface in different circumstances.

Church and Gown

In addition to the relationship of "Town and Gown" faced by every university, the Christ-centred university must also negotiate a relationship between "Church and Gown." This is a public relations issue, because the church is the main constituency for Christ-centred higher education. Christian schools have their roots in the church. Ideally, university graduates attend a church, raise their families there, and serve in various capacities, eventually providing lay leadership. Most Board members belong to and even represent churches. The university is accountable to the church. The church determines the definition of Christ-centredness. Picture a circle with Christ at the centre. Because of the diversity of its disciplines, the university explores everything from the centre to the fringes of the circle. The church is the centripetal force that draws the university toward the centre. The many and varied disciplines of the university are a cen-

trifugal force that increases the diameter of the circle and creates the fuzzy edges. History has shown that often as the university spins its disciplines, Christ is no longer at the centre. Anthropology replaces Christology as the centre and guiding concept of education.

The Christian university also has a profound influence on the church through publishing resources, providing opportunities for theological reflection, and offering critical thinking about the "way we have always done things." The university is the seedbed of new ideas, and it discerns if and how old ideas can interact with new situations. While the church has to interact immediately with the culture surrounding it, the university explores the theories that govern that interaction. On behalf of the church, the university can explore tough questions about the church's relationship to culture, if the church gives it the freedom to do so. The university can also call the church to be counter-cultural, something not always appreciated by the church. It can also call the church to be open to different ways of thinking about itself and how it relates to culture. The church needs to allow the Christ-centred university to explore new ways of thinking about old problems. The university must test these new ways of thinking with academic rigour and ultimately submit them to the church.

Most Christian universities are oriented toward the arts, to which, in recent years, the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) and more career-oriented programs (education, nursing, business) have been added. Christian universities do not concentrate on training people for vocational church ministry. They train people for the marketplaces of life. Therefore, the issue of the curriculum and its objectives is crucial. Are we training students for a job? Yes, but even more, we are training them for a vocation (a divine calling). Christ-centred higher education teaches students to discern and obey the voice of God when it comes to their life's work. Training for a vocation means students learn more than the nuts and bolts necessary for a job. They grow in character, i.e., in the disciplines of honesty, integrity, and servanthood, and the virtues of generosity, kindness, and love. This can be an expensive proposition given whole departments devoted to student development and Bible and theology. Emphasis on character development can also appear

to lower the quality of education. Anecdotal information shows that Christian parents often think that the education at a Christ-centred university is more expensive and less academic than that gained at a secular one. The church may question the value of Christ-centred education if graduates are not pursuing a ministerial vocation.

To keep the main thing the main thing in the complex relationship of school and church, a president must create avenues of communication between the two entities. The president must be a member of and actually love the church, and must give the church its rightful place in the divine economy. God created the church. Human beings created the university. At the same time, the president always represents the university in deeds and in words. In a church gathering one wonders if people under their breath are saying, for good or ill, "There goes the president of the university."

How does one create avenues of communication between church and university? Some presidents might create a department or a position for church relations. It is important for the president to be present in churches, preaching or teaching when possible, but also available to meet with church groups to provide guidance on various issues of the day. The president needs to establish trusted relationships as much as possible. One needs to be honest about the struggles of leading a complex organization. It would be helpful if the president could amass a list of university professors who are available to speak as community "experts" on contemporary issues.

Balancing Constituencies

The relationship between the Christian university's various constituencies is an issue of human and financial resources. The problem is that you cannot please all of the people all of the time.

The faculty is the life blood of the university. Its members are the primary constituency. The faculty is like the team of doctors who practice at a hospital. A Christian university can hire Christian faculty members in keeping with its mission. But there are many different brands of Christians. If the school is denominationally connected, it is possible to hire Christians of that denomination only. This decision can bring two problems. First, the university may not be able to hire a top-notch faculty member because he or she does not have the right

stripe. Second, the university can become in-grown, like a school that hires only its own graduates.

Even if the school is interdenominational with a diverse faculty, these faculty members change their views over time. If they never change their minds on some things, one might wonder if they are really growing in the knowledge related to their discipline. How does a president deal with a faculty member who seems to be moving away from the core of Christ-centredness? Perhaps the faculty member does not look at it this way. They perceive that they have only matured in their understanding of the faith. A good exercise might be to have faculty share with their colleagues at ten-year intervals "How my mind has changed." The natural tendency of faculty (in fact of all people) is to drift away from the centre. The president must carefully steward both the faculty and the identity of the Christ-centred university.

There are two poles on the continuum of faculty members. Some have the notion of educating by first creating cognitive dissonance. To build a new knowledge edifice, the old needs to be destroyed, or at least questioned. Young students go home after their first semester as iconoclasts in the eyes of their parents and pastors. Critical thinking is defined as rejection of everything they have been taught till now. Other faculty members see their job as indoctrination. They want students to know "the truth," which is monolithic and relatively simple. This faculty member sees her job as removing the complexities of life by giving firm answers. Critical thinking is defined as criticizing the "wrong" position on a given topic. The president wants to combine both so that students learn the fine art of critical thinking, the Christian tradition in all of its expressions, and the outworking of faith in personal, professional, and civic life. One realizes the need for both types of professors and tries to keep them together even when they are at loggerheads. Happy is the president who has a majority of faculty members close to the middle of the continuum between indoctrination and iconoclasm. The middle is where true discipleship occurs.

Students are a second constituency. They also come in various shapes. There are those who come from sheltered Christian backgrounds with grounding in one form of the Christian faith. They

know the truth and do not want to be confused by other viable traditions. Others are religiously cynical and are certain that there is no truth, only opinions. Many come from nominally religious homes, and others come with no Christian background at all. Balancing the two types of faculty with this variety of students is delicate. Often the complaints from students (or their parents) and about students wind up in the president's office.

A third constituency is clergy. They represent the church, so some of the things mentioned earlier with regards to church and university do not need to be repeated. Here, let me just mention the balance between students who come from churches and go back to them, faculty who attend churches and who often serve churches through preaching and teaching, and clergy who sometimes exalt faculty and sometimes look askance at them. Clergy look at students as their sacred trust. They expect a Christian university (as opposed to a secular university) to steward these students so that they become well-formed Christians who love the church and embrace its mission (as understood by the clergy). When the faculty and clergy differ on how to go about this task or what it means to embrace the church's mission, it creates tension and misunderstanding.

Some faculty have a very different view of the church and its clergy, either because they themselves have been wounded, or they know people who are. These faculty, as they represent the university, may speak against a church or the church in general. This gets back to clergy and an impasse is created between clergy and the school, which the president of a Christian university must negotiate.

Donors and alumni are a fourth constituency. These people are vital to a Christian university, more so than to a public university. Donors make up the difference between what students pay and what it costs to operate the institution, provide scholarships so students can attend, and supply capital so schools can advance their mission. Christian schools cannot operate, much less advance, without donors. These people who support the university are generous and gracious individuals, and they have dreams for the school. Those dreams may be at odds with the direction in which either the faculty or the church thinks the university should go. It is difficult to turn down a large donation because the cost of receiving it is too high. There are also

donations that will privilege one part of the university over another. It is easy to say that a rising tide raises all ships, but until all ships are raised, a donation that favours one department can be a hard pill to swallow for other departments. Donors and alumni have much to do with the direction of the university. They are valuable partners in more than a financial way. Their life experience and external perspectives can guide the institution in its advancement. These people often serve a term or two as members of the Board of Governors, or they might be members of a president's advisory committee. In stewarding donors, the president must maintain a longer-term perspective on what any particular investment might mean for the direction of the university.

To keep the main thing the main thing in the complex relationship between divergent constituencies a president must mediate the communication between them. One way to do this is to bring groups together. This can backfire when adequate relationship building does not precede a difficult dialogue. The president often needs to represent all these groups to one another. It helps to "walk a mile in their shoes." Having experience as a faculty member, a member of the clergy, and a significant donor is beneficial, as is remembering what it was like to be a (financially poor) student. This is not always possible, but at least the attempt needs to be made to identify with each constituency. The key to this sort of communication is trust. Trust is built over time and can be lost in an instant. It is not just that people need to trust the president. The president needs to trust people to be honest about their alignment with institutional values.

The Bible in the University

The relationship between the Christ-centred university and Holy Scripture is an epistemological and hermeneutical issue. Universities teach people to interpret texts of all sorts: written texts like novels, monographs, and textbooks; visual texts like movies, photographs, and advertisements; and living texts like speeches, discussions, debates, and culture in general.

Of the many areas of life effected by post-modernism, hermeneutics is at the top of the list. The intellectual history of the western world has been divided into three periods: pre-modern, modern, and

post-modern. Out of the Enlightenment (1650-1750), modernism was born and replaced pre-modernism (pre-17th century), which was characterized by knowing through revelation and the traditions spawned from it. Modernism was the dominant way of knowing from about 1750 until about 1950. Modernism assumed objectively observed reality to be the ground of knowledge. Everything (physical, social, personal, and spiritual) was interpreted using the scientific method, which is based in human observation and reasoning. Around 1950 the seeds of post-modernism were sown in the areas of epistemology and hermeneutics. In the extreme, post-modernism reduces certainty virtually to zero. Truth is a matter of one's perspective. Post-modernism cut the pre-modern and modern anchors loose so that knowledge is adrift on a sea of personal opinion. Since 1991, the World Wide Web has nurtured post-modernism by making the multiplication of opinions endless. Anchorless knowledge is more recently counteracted by critical realism, which is similar to modernism (hence realism) but recognizes the subjectivity of knowledge (hence critical). Critical realism recognizes that human knowing needs an anchor.

Christ-centred university education adopts an epistemological and hermeneutical anchor, namely, Holy Scripture, as divinely sourced revelation from and about the Triune God. In post-modern terms, Scripture provides the narrative in which we find ourselves. But is the Bible to be interpreted like any other book? Or is there a special hermeneutic for interpreting the Bible? The answer to both questions is yes. There is no special code for interpreting the Bible. It was written like other books by authors with particular agendas and personalities. It is also a special book in that it is divinely inspired unlike any other book. The Bible presumes for the reader a relationship with God learned through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the crucible of a life of community, suffering, and faith.

One's view of the nature Scripture is determinative for how all other "texts" are interpreted. The integration of the university's various disciplines with biblical theology must not be facile, picking and choosing "convenient" biblical texts, or using the Bible merely for illustrations of, for example, biology, psychology, or sociology.

Integration must go to the very roots of the discipline, informing its presuppositions and methods.

Divine revelation (i.e., Scripture) is the anchor for being, knowing, and doing. Christ-centred universities adopt creeds or compose covenants of faith and community life that are restatements and summaries of Scripture in systematic form. These covenants give latitude to faculty, Board, and administration, but they form a broad band on the fringe of the circle where that latitude exists. The creeds or covenants, agreed to by the Board and faculty and reflecting Scripture and church tradition, serve to hold the school together around the centre.

To keep the main thing the main thing in the complex world of interpretation a president must ensure that Holy Scripture has precedence in all that is taught and practiced. At the same time, the president must be attuned to the various viable approaches to interpreting texts. The president must also steward the institution via the covenants agreed to by all.

Conclusion

From the president's perspective, the complex relationships of the Christ-centred university to church, constituencies, and Scripture point to one major issue: academic freedom. How does the president steward academic freedom within the context of a Christian university? As the president stewards the university on behalf of the church, is the university free to pursue truth wherever it may lead? As the president seeks to work with all the constituencies of the university, how are faculty held accountable to clergy and donors, and how ought clergy, donors, and students respect the nature of university education which, by definition, implies academic freedom? As the president seeks to steward the biblical foundations of the Christ-centred university, what shape does academic freedom take? Presidents, the church, and the faculty need not fear academic freedom, that is, the freedom to pursue truth within the context of one's field of expertise. We need not fear the pursuit of truth; in fact, we need to make room for it, because all truth is God's truth.

To keep the main thing the main thing in a post-modern context the president of a Christian university must guard academic freedom within the limits of the church and Holy Scripture. Freedom and

limits may sound like incompatible concepts. But freedom always has limits, like someone on an island in the ocean. This is the lesson of post-modernism. All of our knowing is limited by our particular physical, social, historical, and intellectual location. To the degree possible, we must identify our location, i.e., our starting point in the pursuit of truth. Academic freedom is not radical autonomy.

A president must construct and defend a clear policy statement on academic freedom that incorporates the free pursuit of knowledge and the scriptural anchor of all knowing with its concomitant mission. This statement must be reviewed and refined regularly with faculty and board. The circle of the Christ-centred University must have a minimal but solid core with some fuzzy edges. The president must determine when a board member, an administrator, or a faculty member has moved so far from the centre that they are actually outside the circle, and so has a different centre than the historic Christian faith. One must act decisively to keep the circle intact.

At the end of day, the president's main tool for managing the complexities of Christ-centred higher education is open communication between all concerned constituencies. This requires regularly engagement with faculty, donors, students, and the church and honoring them all. The president must not hesitate to bring to the surface tensions that exist between constituencies. Stewarding a Christ-centred post-secondary institution is not an easy task, but it is highly rewarding.

A Theology of Confessional Teaching

David Guretzki*

Abstract:

It is common in higher education to outline a philosophy of teaching and classroom engagement focusing on pedagogical goals and practices. However, for those teaching in Christian confessional contexts such as Christian colleges, universities, or seminaries, less attention is devoted to the relationship of teaching to the broader mandate of the church to make disciples of all nations. This article explores how careful consideration of the church's so-called "Great Commission" (Mt. 28:18-20) might inform a theology of teaching appropriate to the confessional academic context. It also explores how such a theology might work itself out in the day-to-day practice of confessional teaching, regardless of the teacher's specific academic discipline.

Candidates to professorial posts are usually required to supply a "philosophy of teaching." Such a document outlines candidates' fundamental thinking about their goals for teaching and how that works itself out in the classroom. However, for those seeking to serve in a theological confessional setting, is it not fundamentally more important to ascertain candidates' "theology of teaching" even before one asks for their philosophy of teaching? A theology of teaching should seek to answer, at the very least, the following questions: On what biblical and theological grounds is theological teaching even possible? What are the goals and anticipated outcomes of teaching? How does this all relate to the mission of the church?

Here I seek to provide a theological framework for teaching in a post-secondary confessional context, whether in an undergradu-

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ate or graduate school.[1] I define "confessional context" to mean a post-secondary educational organization in which faculty and staff are expected to sign an institutional doctrinal statement or confession of faith, and agree to abide by an organizational code of conduct that is explicitly framed from a Christian worldview.[2] It is from over 23 years of experience teaching within one such confessional context that these reflections have arisen.

I am convinced that a theology of teaching in a confessional setting must be both *christologically-grounded* and *ecclesiologically-located*. Put another way, a view of teaching in a confessional setting should not be divorced from the mandate given by Christ to the church itself. It is not that the form or even content of such teaching at the confessional school will be identical to that offered in the church, but that ultimately and substantially, "confessional school" and "church" are to be viewed as complementary contexts of theological teaching. Or more accurately, the confessional school is a servant to the mission of the church. Thus, even if it is admitted that the *context* of theological teaching occurs in what I view as the ecclesiologically ambiguous setting of a Bible institute, a Christian liberal arts college or university, or a Christian graduate school or seminary, it is nevertheless the case that the ecclesial function of the confessional educational context need not be ambiguous: teaching in school and church alike ought to serve as a witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the whole world and certainly in and over every discipline and as a participation in the church's mission, which of course, is God's own mission.[3]

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1 Hereafter, I will refer to both undergraduate and graduate level theological schools simply as a "confessional schools."

2 For one of the best treatments of the place and value of post-secondary religious education in Canada, see Elmer John Thiessen, *In Defence of Religious Schools and Colleges* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001). For a fine treatment of the place and value of Christian scholarship in post-secondary public/secular education in general, see William Lane Craig and Paul M. Gould, eds., *The Two Tasks of the Christian Scholar: Redeeming the Soul, Redeeming the Mind* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2007).

3 We cannot defend here the assumption that church has no independent mission from God's own mission, his *missio Dei.* Though there are dozens of books on the history and theology of the *missio Dei,* I highly recommend John G. Flett, *The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian*

Matthew 28:18-20, the so-called "Great Commission" of Christ to his followers, while not explicitly addressing the role of confessional teachers per se, nevertheless provides a theological framework for an understanding of teaching in a confessional setting. The Matthean passage is suggestive of five distinct areas to be considered: the *authority, end, grammar, outcome,* and *hope* of theological teaching.

I. *Authority* in Theological Teaching

Consideration of the very concept of teaching invokes the notion of authority. Teaching, if it is to avoid falling prey to accusations of pedagogical sophistry, must be duly authorized. The locus of teaching authority is not easy to identify, but has sometimes been neatly summarized according to classical categories of rhetoric. That is, the authority to teach arises from a combined consideration of *ethos, pathos,* and *logos*.[4] Teachers are deemed to be authoritative because they are recognized by their students as those whose character is well established and respected (*ethos*); who are able to understand and appeal to their students in ways that demonstrate they understand their intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual capacities (*pathos*); and who exhibit mastery of the subject material being taught (*logos*).

However, there are significant limitations for the confessional teacher when viewed through these classical rhetorical lenses. This is because the rhetorical model of authority is inherently anthropocentric, and more significantly, decidedly non-theological in outlook. Authority in the classical rhetorical framework is located in the *teacher,* and more specifically, in the conjunction of *logos, pathos,* and *ethos* within the teacher. However, I argue that confessional teaching authority needs to be located *externally* to the teacher in the *source* of all knowledge and wisdom, namely, from Jesus Christ who is none other than the Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24). Teachers must

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Community (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010); and Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).

4 A set of essays in which a return to classical categories of rhetoric is proposed as a way forward in theological education can be found in David S. Cunningham, ed. *To Teach, to Delight, and to Move: Theological Education in a Post-Christian World* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2004).

draw upon the one who creates, authorizes, and gifts the teacher: the Triune Creator of heaven and earth.

In contradistinction to the locus of authority as understood in classical rhetoric, I propose that Matthew 28:18 be taken with utmost seriousness in seeking to understand the confessional teacher's authority. Three things should be noted here.

First, Jesus says, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me" (Mt. 28:18). The identification of the locus of all authority in Jesus Christ means that the confessional teachers' authority is immediately dislocated and decentred from themselves. This means teachers must resist locating their didactic authority as *primarily* arising from within themselves or from their disciplinary guild or even from within the disciplinary literature they teach and inhabit. While the vital importance of teachers' personal moral character (*ethos*), their ability to empathize with their students (*pathos*) and their mastery of a subject area (*logos*) should not be undermined, *authority* itself does not flow from any one of these aspects, nor even in the confluence of the three. The fact that Christ has all authority in heaven and earth indicates that teaching authority is *extra nos,* "outside oneself," we theologians like to say.

Second, it should be observed that authority, even in Christ's case, is something *received.* Even as the Lord Jesus Christ does not say, "I *have* all authority in heaven and earth" but rather, "All authority has been *given*[5] to me," so, too, our authority as teachers cannot be grasped, nor demanded. Rather, authority must be recognized for what it is: as something received, as a *gift* from God. In this sense, a teacher does not *have* authority as much as he or she is *authorized* by God through Christ to teach and similarly, *enabled* to teach with authority by the Holy Spirit. Any so-called authority exercised by teachers is not intrinsically theirs, but flows as a gracious gift *(charism*) from the Spirit of Jesus who has been given all authority by the highest authority of all, God the Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth.

Third, it is worth noting the contrast made in Scripture between worldly and godly views of authority. Jesus himself gives us insight

5 That 'Εδοθη, "given," leads the sentence adds emphasis to the nature of authority as that which is received, even for Jesus.

into these contrasts. The worldly authority of the Gentiles, he says, is viewed as something which is *taken.* Worldly authority means asserting one's will over the other for selfish gain (cf. Mt. 20:25); godly authority, in contrast, is manifest in humble service to others (Mt. 20:26). In short, worldly authority *takes control* in order to subject the other to one's will, while godly authority *receives* only what is given in order to serve the other. In this regard, James' warning to teachers is apt: "Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly" (Jas. 3:1). If James has anything to say about the authority to teach, it is that teachers who fail to understand that their teaching authority comes as a good gift from God the Father above (cf. Jas. 1:17) will answer to that same Father as those who arrogantly grasp after authority which is not theirs to take.

So what are the implications for the theological teacher of this view of authority?

First, confessional teachers must continually absorb the lesson that they have no authority independently of the Lord Jesus Christ who himself receives all authority ultimately from God the Father. So where then should one look? Because Jesus Christ is our *material* authority, and because we only have mediated access to this authority found *formally* in Scripture, this means that theological teaching must continually return to Scripture as the fount of all authority. Teachers must, in other words, resist the temptation to assume a form of teaching authority that flows from their own supposed academic wisdom and expertise; rather, teachers must remember they are called and authorized to direct students to the authority of Christ himself as revealed in the Christian canon. Thus, the more a teacher "triangulates" by recognizing and confessing to her or his students that Jesus as revealed in Scripture stands over against teacher and students alike, the more likely it is that the confessional teacher will be truly *recognized* by students to have been given the authority to be a teacher of the Word. No legitimate teacher replaces the Word to which he or she testifies; rather, the teacher is proven "authoritative" when that which he or she teaches continually points to the claims which Jesus Christ himself makes upon his disciples and situates oneself as also being under that same authority. It is not, "Do as I

say" nor even "Do as Jesus says," but "Let us together listen to and do as Jesus says."

Second, confessional teachers must, in a disciplined and transparent way, consistently submit to the living authority of Jesus Christ. A teacher without a living and growing submission to Christ's authority may be knowledgeable, interesting, even entertaining and motivational, yet will lack spiritual authority as one who directs others to Christ and his kingdom. It is a dangerous irony that a theological teacher may be deemed to be theologically brilliant yet fail to acknowledge Christ's all-encompassing authority over her or his own life and faith, and over the life of the church and society. Thus, one's true spiritual effectiveness (i.e., spiritual authority) as a theological teacher is manifest in direct proportion to the extent one lives in submission to Christ's authority and the extent to which students are given evidence of that submission. Though in the original context Calvin is speaking specifically of the "pious mind," his observation is especially apt when applied to the teacher: "Because [the teacher] acknowledges him as Lord and Father, the [teacher] also deems it meet and right to observe his authority in all things, reverence his majesty, take care to advance his glory, and obey his commandments."[6] Such is the pre-requisite of the theological teacher.

Third, because authority for the teacher lays *extra nos*, it is imperative that the vocation of theological teaching be carried out with great *humility* and in *love*. In my opinion, one of the greatest temptations of the theological teacher is to be puffed up with pride and arrogance (Cf. 1 Cor. 13:2, 4), not least because of the greatness of the subject matter to which one attends. Theology and biblical studies, as profoundly significant as they may be, are never surrogates for the authority of Christ himself. So it is precisely when teachers acknowledge the extrinsic nature of their authority that they can simultaneously speak with confidence and yet also with humility when they remember that their own claims are always subject to the correction and clarification offered by the Word. In this regard, theology and biblical studies especially (and here we would specifically add, the task of teaching theology and biblical studies) is, as Karl

6 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1989), I.3.2.

Barth put it, "a modest and, at the same time, a free science."[7] The task of theological teaching is *modest* because it can only function as a witness to divine authority, and never as divine authority itself. But theological teaching is also *free* because by Christ's Spirit it is enabled to submit itself to correction from the authority of the Word itself, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (2 Cor. 3:17)![8] In contrast, anthropocentric authority becomes paradoxically bound to itself: once teachers make a claim based upon their own authority, they have no option but to uphold that claim lest their own intrinsic authority be tarnished if and when they are proven wrong.

II. The *End* of Theological Teaching

Matthew's record of Christ's Great Commission goes on to provide an incisive statement of the "end," "telos," or "goal" toward which Christ authorizes the church in her mission, mainly, to "make disciples of all nations."[9] In this regard, "going," "baptizing," and "teaching" can all legitimately be understood as the duly authorized "means" of accomplishing this end. If it is not converts, or intellectual adherents that Jesus wants, but *disciples* or *followers,* then neither should we as teachers be sufficiently be satisfied with academic performance alone as an indicator of teaching success. On the contrary, it is not a "graduate" which we aim to produce, but a lifelong "student" (i.e., disciple) which is the goal. This *end* of

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7 Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*, trans. Grover Foley (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), 17.

8 Here I am also reminded of James' promise: "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." (Jas. 1:5) Theological freedom consists in *not* claiming to have all wisdom and authority, but resting in the promise that wisdom is given to all who ask God, the fount of Wisdom.

9 Commentators have long recognized that the main imperative in Matthew 28:19 is not "Go" but "Make disciples" (μαθητευσατε). See especially D. A. Carson, "Matthew" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary,* vol. 8, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 595. On the centrality of "disciple-making" for mission in Matthew, see the important discussion in David Bosch, "Matthew: Mission as Disciple-Making" in *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 56ff. But we note Bosch's caution well: "It is inadmissible to lift these words [i.e., Mt. 28:18-20] out of Matthew's gospel, as it were, to allow them a life of their own." Ibid., 57. Pertinent to this statement also is Bosch's observation that in Matthew, "Jesus never 'preaches' to his disciples; he 'teaches' them." Ibid., 66.

theological teaching, it must be admitted, stands in contrast to the kind of learning often expected in academic contexts. Since the end of theological teaching is the making of disciples, teachers must be constantly aware that their task is not to produce expert scholars,[10] even if many students may eventually become professional scholars. Nor are teachers seeking to produce "experts," "critical thinkers," or even "practitioners." These descriptors—scholars, experts, critical thinkers, practitioners—while undoubtedly having some legitimate application, are finally theologically inadequate taken on their own precisely because of their anthropocentric bent. In contrast, the end of theological teaching is to produce persons who are christologically identified as wholly defined in their lifelong relationship to the Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Thus, it is not simply making *disciples* (particularly disciples of us as teachers or of our disciplines), but making disciples of *Christ* that is the end of theological teaching. It is to help students to become increasingly aware of all that it means to be, to use the eschatologically Pauline phrase, *in Christ,* in what they say, do, or think. While we may hope that some of our students might become scholars, intellectuals, or original thinkers, no students, whatever their intellectual capacity, are exempt from being called upon by the theological teacher to become known as disciples of Jesus—Christians.

To be sure, theological teaching should not be set in sharp contrast or even in opposition to academic scholarship, as has been sometimes common in the history of evangelical piety,[11] as if the life the mind could be divorced from the life of Christian discipleship. Rather, theological teaching upholds academic work and scholarship as one aspect, and one aspect only, of becoming devoted disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

At least three implications of the end of theological teaching should be noted. First, the teacher should be committed to working

10 It is unfortunate that the word *scholar* has taken on nearly the opposite meaning of its archaic meaning of "schoolboy or schoolgirl." See *Canadian Oxford Dictionary,* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), s.v. "scholar." Scholars, in other words, are sometimes viewed as having arrived as experts rather than accomplished learners.

11 See Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

with students wherever they are at intellectually and spiritually, providing the student is willing also to submit her or himself to such challenges as the confessional academic context provides. This means that the intellectually capable student should and must be called upon by the theological teacher to exercise her intellect in wholehearted service to Christ. Indeed, the intellectually gifted student who fails to exercise well the intellect she has been given should be held to account by the teacher; so important is this that the teacher who fails to hold such students to account is failing in her or his calling. Conversely, the student in the confessional school who is less academically apt cannot simply be passed over by the teacher in favour of the intellectually "brighter" student. Indeed, the theological teacher must be reminded regularly that intellectual and academic capabilities are not the sole, or even prime, indicators of a disciple, but rather *obedience* to Christ.[12] In other words, as teachers we have an obligation to *all* students who find themselves under our instruction: to call them to nurture their God-given gifts and capacities, whatever their level, in submission to Christ as the Spirit enables. This is a keen challenge in light of the admittedly common tendency of teachers to be drawn especially to the academically "best and brightest" and to disdain, even if secretly, the academically weak.

It is a reality of teaching that we tend to be drawn especially to those students who are most like us in their interests and learning styles and to evaluate them against those implicit standards of how well they align with our own expertise, methodologies, and perspectives. But if the end goal of teaching is to make disciples, then we are obligated to seek to bring students along in their discipleship, regardless of their learning style or interests, let alone their scholarly conclusions. This doesn't mean that we will be equally successful with every student, but it does mean that we can't simply pick and choose who we will put our efforts into. My years of teaching experience have more than once revealed to me that students will flourish,

12 We can probably all think of past students who were intellectually bright but no longer following Christ, and intellectually challenged students who are nevertheless obedient and vibrant followers of Jesus today. This is not to argue a case by appeal to anecdotes, but simply to remind us that academic achievement is no guarantee of faithfulness.

albeit often in different ways, if we patiently and lovingly seek to help them to flourish, even for those who learn quite differently. Of course, the real challenge here is exhibiting patience and love with those who, at best, we find less interesting, and at worst, who annoy us, as teachers!

Second, confessional teachers need to be reminded regularly that the goal is to make disciples of *Christ,* not disciples of a discipline or great thinker or school of thought. Academics know how easily one can make a disciple of a great thinker or movement or academic discipline. It is, however, much more difficult and challenging to make a faithful disciple of Jesus while simultaneously helping the student to appreciate important theological personalities or movements. Simply put, teachers must guard against the real possibility of favouring an important theologian, scholar, or philosopher such that the wisdom of Christ and his Word become secondary!

To do this well, the teacher must be able to think through and articulate how knowledge of this particular subject matter or thinker or movement contributes to greater love for God, greater love for his fellow-creatures, and a greater sense of the need to care for the world he has created. This struck home to me recently as I was completing a manuscript for an introductory book on the theologian Karl Barth, arguably the thinker I'm most known for being a disciplinary expert on. Throughout the writing process, I tried to remind myself that in the end, the most important indicator of the success of the project will not be how well readers know Karl Barth, but how well they will be able to make use of Karl Barth's work to be better disciples of Jesus. God only knows whether and to what extent the book will be used by God in that way, but that is certainly my heart's desire as a theology teacher and scholar.

Third, I make note of the ecclesiological import of the plural noun, *disciples,* implied in the main verb of Matthew 28:19, μαθητευσατε, "make disciples." The context of theological teaching is corporate or *ecclesial* in nature. While personal formation is undoubtedly important, a biblical view of teaching, built as it is upon the concept of discipleship, emphasizes the corporate, churchly nature of learning. It is not the building of individual disciples who follow Christ in their "heart," as it were, but the making of disciples

who, together with others from all nations, share in the common fellowship of the Spirit and common mission of the church.

In light of this ecclesial recognition, teaching in a confessional school must emphasize that discipleship is accomplished corporately. Here we acknowledge the critical role of two important groups: great historic witnesses to Christ in the church *and* contemporary co-disciples. On the one hand, because disciple-making is the task of the whole church (i.e., it is a mark of the catholicity of the church), it is imperative that students be trained to listen to the great cloud of witnesses in the church who have gone before us and who have left us rich testimony. In this regard, I view my role as a theological teacher to introduce students to what are typically called in the classroom "primary sources" (writings of theologians, preachers, and teachers of the historic church) but which, theologically, are secondary sources to the great primary scriptural source to Christ.[13] These secondary witnesses to the Christ of Scripture are heard as members of the church and I see it as my task as a theological teacher to train students to learn to listen to these voices with humility while continually challenging them to subject these voices to the testing of Scriptural authority.[14]

On the other hand, the ecclesial, corporate nature of disciple-making means that contemporaries—peers or co-disciples—play a vital part in becoming devoted followers of Christ. This means humbly admitting that while I may be more "learned" in the theological literature, I am not the sole "expert" or conveyor of theological information or spiritual experience. It is therefore my job to ensure that my teaching voice does not dominate over the voices and insights that other students have in the classroom. From a pedagogical

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13 As Karl Barth has wisely reminded us, "Even the smallest, strangest, simplest, or obscurest among the biblical witnesses has an incomparable advantage over even the most pious, scholarly, and sagacious latter-day theologian." Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction,* trans. by Grover Foley (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), 31-2.

14 In regard to seeing all voices in the church as "contemporary" voices to whom we are obligated to listen as members of the catholic church, I especially recommend Karl Barth, "The Task of a History of Modern Protestant Theology," in *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. John Bowden, New Edition (London: SCM Press, 2001), 1–15.

perspective, this means giving chances for students to speak up in and out of class. Having students work together in groups and with their peers can be an important element of the theological learning environment. Indeed, this coincides with the Pauline insight that in the body, there are many gifts that contribute to building up the body (1 Cor. 12:12-20), even if in the end one acknowledges that there are some gifts which are greater (1 Cor. 14: 1-5). But even more importantly, we confessional teachers must be ready to acknowledge the wisdom of our students and humbly accept their contribution to our own growth as well, treating our students respectfully as our peers. Confessing before our students that we are still learning and accepting new insights from our students provides a concrete example of this "co-learning" mindset. This is not to undermine educational or scholarly expertise, but to recognize that in ecclesial learning, there are no greater or lesser disciples of Jesus, but all are learning where they are at.

Finally, it is very important to acknowledge that the ecclesial nature of discipleship is made possible only by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ. Though I uphold the concept that the Spirit of God resides *within* each individual believer, I believe that Scripture more commonly speaks of the presence of the Spirit *in the midst* of believers corporately (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16[15]). In this regard, the spiritual connection between individuals is mediated by a common Spirit, and not simply by recourse to an abstract or common human spirit. Theological teaching, therefore, is understood as a *spiritual* exercise in which appeal to another human spirit is possible only because of the Holy Spirit's common presence in our midst, holding us together in the grace of Christ and the love of God (Cf. 2 Cor. 13:14).[16]

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15 "οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ναὸς θεοῦ ἐστε καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν." I take the ἐν ὑμῖν here in the sense of "in your midst," i.e., "You" (plural) are the temple of God because the Spirit dwells therein, not simply in the collective of individuals, but as the bond of fellowship which holds individuals together in their common baptism into Christ's body.

16 On the spiritual task of theological teaching, I highly recommend Adam Neder, "'The Sun behind the Clouds': Some Barthian Thoughts about Teaching Christian Theology," in *Karl Barth and the Making of Evangelical Theology: A Fifty-Year Perspective*, ed. Clifford B. Anderson and Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids,

III. The *Grammar* of Theological Teaching

Having examined the authority and end of theological teaching, we now address the "grammar" of theological teaching. Since the work of teaching is, from start to finish, concerned with communication in words and language, it is imperative that confessional teachers be well aware that their words can be instructive or misleading, healing or damaging, helpful or harmful, beautiful or ugly, and of course, true or false. However, beyond the pedagogical, epistemological, ethical, and pastoral concerns of the proper use of language is the identification of what fundamental conceptual grammar shapes one's overall teaching narrative. What is the overarching "pattern" or "structure" which gives shape to one's entire teaching programme?

While the grammar of the English language provides form for our lectures, syllabi, writing, and handouts, there is also a theological grammar that provides theological shape to all our lecturing, writing and thinking. In this regard, I am indebted to T. F. Torrance's notion of the doctrine of the Trinity as the fundamental "ground and grammar" of scriptural revelation.[17] Torrance argues that the doctrine of the Trinity delineates not simply a synthesis of all of the Christian faith (as would be understood after Schleiermacher)[18] but functions as the "ground and grammar" of the way that Christians speak of God's redemptive purposes, mainly because it corresponds to God's own self-revelation of his being as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are thereby constrained to have our own theological discourse be conformed to this revealed theological grammar.

In this regard, I understand the second participial phrase of Matthew 28:19 ("baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit") to be far more encompassing in scope than simply engaging in the rite of baptism practiced in the church, as vitally important as it is. Theological teaching, therefore, ought to be shaped by the grammar of the church's language of the Trinity derived as it is as an analysis of the event of the Father's self-rev-

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Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2015), 222–35.

17 Thomas F. Torrance, *The Ground and Grammar of Theology* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1980).

18 See Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 738-751.

elation in Christ by the Spirit as testified to in the Spirit-inspired Scriptures. To teach theologically is to "immerse" students into the all-encompassing framework of the Triune God and his redemptive history. Or to put it in the converse, there is no properly Christian theological education divorced from the three-fold name into which we as Christians are baptized as we enter into the body of Christ. To think Christianly *is* to think trinitarianly. As Karl Barth put it, "The doctrine of the Trinity is what basically distinguishes the Christian doctrine of God as Christian… in contrast to all other possible doctrines of God or concepts of revelation."[19]

Of course, there is a significant danger of oversimplification when speaking about trinitarian theology, such that one might assume that simply mentioning the Trinity or trying to find "threeness and oneness" in every topic is to think "trinitarianly." This is most assuredly *not* what I am trying to espouse. It is not that science or mathematics or sociology, for example, must themselves be explicitly trinitarian in their language (indeed, this would be artificial and unhelpful because their subject matter is not explicitly about God), but that these disciplines are relativized when their claims may be intentionally or unintentionally elevated as challenges to the revelation of the triune God through Scripture and history/tradition. The proper theological attitude, therefore, of the Christian scientist, for example, is not to pretend to find trinitarian analogies in the world (*trinitatis vestigium*),[20] but to distinguish the world from its triune Creator and to give God the honour due him as Creator.

It is thus the task of the confessional teacher not to set theology against all other disciplines, but to see theology as a witness to the triune Creator and, when necessary, as a "humble critic" of disciplines and thinkers who intentionally or unintentionally displace the creator God from his rightful place by elevating a given discipline to the position of a "meta-narrative" or "theory of everything." Confessional teachers, in other words, have a prophetic role (cf. 2 Cor. 10:5) of reminding students that the grand narratives *sometimes* (though certainly not always) articulated by other disciplines—mathematics,

19 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics,* I/1, 2d ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 301.

20 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics,* I/1, 333–47.

science, economics, history, etc.— presume that the world can be explained and understood independently of its relationship to the triune God. Economics is not an all-determinative explanation of how things work; history cannot explain every historical event through an appeal to natural causations; science does not solve every problem which humanity faces; psychology does not discern all there is to know about what humans are and why they act as they do, etc. This is not to denigrate the genuine knowledge which these disciplines can garner, but to keep us on guard when they overstep the limits of their own humble boundaries.[21]

Beyond these formal considerations, I also see theological teaching itself as having a trinitarian shape. I am convinced that far too often we teachers settle with a presentation of the doctrine or dogma of the triune God which, once confessed, can be safely passed over to matters more pertinent to every day experience. On the contrary, the doctrine of the Trinity serves as the essential character of the God to whom we are personally devoted and who is personally known. As Trinity, God gives himself not only as the *object* of knowledge, but also as the *means* of coming to know him. Because the end of teaching is to make disciples of Christ, it behoves us to recognize that this is not an operation external to God, but is made possible by God himself in his triune being. Thus, Christian learners who fail to perceive even in a rudimentary way the distinctiveness of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity will have difficulty in understanding how Christian faith is fundamentally about being enabled to follow a *distinct* God unlike all other gods who may seek to make claims upon their lives. This is particularly important in the multi-cultural, multi-religious world we now inhabit, especially here in Canada.[22]

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21 On the relation of theology and modern disciplines, especially in the sciences, see Augustine, *Teaching Christianity* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1996), 6–7.

22 For a thorough biblical and historical introduction to the doctrine of the Trinity, see Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity in Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Philipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2004. For a helpful set of essays on the doctrine of the Trinity in a pluralistic age, see Kevin J. Vanhoozer, ed. *The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age: Theological Essays on Culture and Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997). For a classic defense of the logical coherence of the incarnation, see Thomas V. Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Ithaca: New York: Cornell University Press,

The possibility of passing on a "trinitarian grammar" means that our teaching must be wholly imbued with prayer in the Spirit for our students. For it is only by the anointing of the Spirit that we are able to come to know Christ and therefore, the Father he reveals (cf. 1 Jn. 2:20-27). Teaching that does not rely on the Holy Spirit's work fails, once again, to acknowledge that our authority and effectiveness are not our own. This has meant for me that I intentionally include prayer, albeit falteringly and imperfectly, at every level of my teaching, from the preparation of my lectures, to the opening of the class, to the time spent praying with my students in one-to-one situations and as they bring requests to me and as the Spirit brings them to mind after class and even after graduation. Thus, if Jesus Christ is the external authority for teaching, it is God's gift of the Spirit that internalizes that authority and enables us to be spiritually effective in teaching. In short, it is in this trinitarian framework that *theological* teaching is wholly trinitarian: it is to and for God, in the authority of Christ, by the power of the Spirit.

IV. The *Outcome* of Theological Teaching

The fourth area of concern may be easily stated, but is potentially the most difficult to apply. That is to say, when it comes to the question of what is the intended outcome of theological teaching, the answer is simple: obedience to Christ and all that he has taught. Or to put it another way, if the "end" of confessional teaching is to make disciples, the "outcome" will be concretely shown in students living in daily, growing obedience to Christ.

If in fact Matthew's account of the Great Commission has anything directly applicable to the task of teaching, it is that it is undertaken in order to bring about a certain kind of "competence" (to use a contemporary watchword): obedience to Christ's commands. Disciples are made through baptizing and "teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:20a). In the immediate

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1986; Wipf & Stock, 2001) and Thomas V. Morris, "Understanding God Incarnate," *The Asbury Theological Journal* 43:2 (1988): 63-77. For an excellent introduction to the doctrine of the Trinity for a broader audience, I recommend Fred Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

context of this passage, it should be understood that the Evangelist has in mind all of Christ's teaching as presented in Matthew's Gospel, including, but not limited to, the vitally important Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7). Indeed, the Sermon itself does not present ethical *ideals* or even *principles,* but concrete spiritual instruction for those who seek to be obedient disciples of Christ. In other words, disciples are those who are not only marked publicly and in the punctiliar (at a certain point in time) by their baptism into the triune name, but manifest publicly and continuously obedience to Christ's commands. To be sure, Christ's commands cannot be split dualistically into "inner" and "outer" aspects of the human experience. Christian obedience, therefore, is neither a matter only of the "heart" nor of external conformity to the rule of Law. Rather, Jesus insists, Christian obedience *is* when the fruit of a disciple's words and deeds demonstrates an ever increasing conformity in character to goodness of the triune God revealed in Christ by the Spirit (Cf. Mt. 7:15-23).

This means that the goal of theological teaching must be understood in terms of both present and progressive increase toward fuller obedience to Christ. This does not negate the need for the presentation of theological "information" (such as the biblical teaching on various theological loci, the history of biblical interpretation, the philosophical debates concerning theological epistemology, etc.), but that all of this must be taught in such a way that the vision of greater obedience to Christ in the daily walk is not lost.

In this sense, obedience (an act of faith) is wholly connected to seeking after a better understanding of the nature of Christ and his command. In this vein, I perceive the ancient phrase *fides quaerens intellectum* to best describe how it is that theology and teaching in theological disciplines proceeds. It is "faith seeking understanding," or better, "obedience seeking understanding." Here we are reminded of Jesus' words: "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own" (Jn. 7:17). That is to say, the discovery of the truthfulness of teaching is wholly and unambiguously connected to obedience to Christ's command. There is no genuine theological knowledge disconnected from the life of Christian obedience. To put it another way, real theological knowledge requires not simple cognitive recall or

even intellectual "understanding," but putting such knowledge into action as obedience.

Pedagogically, I understand this to be worked out in at least three important ways. First, it is imperative that the confessional teacher think carefully through how a course of study ultimately contributes to and calls upon students to become more obedient to Christ. From this perspective, I seek often to ask how the topics of our inquiry relate not only to daily concerns students may have (although those are important as well) but also how the inquiry touches ecclesial, marketplace, national, or even international contexts. To teach students the doctrine of God as Creator, for example, should certainly touch upon a student's personal response to and handling of the creation God has given. Does the student treat creation with respect for its Creator, or is creation simply used to benefit selfish gain? Our teaching should also seek to touch on matters such as public policy, international development, or the church's mission work.

Doctrine is never purely theoretical or purely practical knowledge, but always *practiced* knowledge. As Jesus puts it, "[the one] who comes to me and hears my words *and puts them into practice*" (Lk 6:47, emphasis added) is the one who has built upon a firm foundation, not just the one who comes and hears. Thus, even instruction in "practical" knowledge (e.g., how to preach a sermon, how to run a youth group, how to lead a Bible study, etc.) can ironically still remain in the realm of "coming and hearing" when it is done without engaging in the "practices" of *actually* preaching a sermon, *actually* running a youth group meeting, or *actually* leading in a Bible study in a real local church or in a real assembly of believers. In this regard, I am a high advocate for students' *ecclesial* involvement throughout their time of study because it gives them ongoing opportunities to *do* the knowledge they are gaining, especially in the context of the local church. As confessional teachers, therefore, we do well to foster at every turn students' time of study not as a pause in their churchly life, but as a heightened opportunity to engage in the reflexive practice of Christian discipleship.

Second, I believe it is also important that the theological teacher be willing to assess those topics which he or she presents such that even a tentative assessment be made on how study of this topic con-

tributes to the greater obedience of the church in its time in the world to Christ. More specifically, it is vitally important that the theological teacher be ready to respond to her or his students in ways that relate most directly to current issues the church is facing and to where one senses that it is going. Understanding local, national, and international trends is critical. Thus, what is of value toward Christian obedience to one student or even one class of students may not necessarily be of value to the next, given ever changing contexts. Knowing the difference, of course, requires spiritual discernment that comes only by being attuned to the "spirit" of the class as the Holy Spirit enables.

Of course, there is always danger to allow some notion of ministerial or devotional or even political "relevance" to dictate the theological curriculum, but that need not be the case. While a topic may not be *immediately* relevant to an immature student, it is the task of the theological teacher to make an informed judgment of the theological import of a topic to the broader cause of the Gospel and to challenge students to obedience where they are at. Consequently, teachers may sometimes need to repent of teaching their "pet topics" or their favourite thinkers or even their favourite biblical texts or books, especially when knowledge of the topic becomes a goal in and of itself, rather than the goal of greater obedience to Christ. This requires an element of "risk-taking" in seeking to speak to matters that the confessional teacher may not yet feel ready to address, but is compelled to address regardless. As I write this, for example, the assisted suicide debate is raging and though it is not explicitly an area of expertise on my part, there may be no way to avoid speaking to it at some level.

Third, I believe it is necessary for the confessional teacher to expose students to different types of learning. While it may be practically expedient for the purposes of evaluation at the university, college, or seminary to rely solely upon the research paper or critical book review, it behoves the teacher to think carefully about giving assignments that stretch students to engage in opportunities where they can actually test—*do*—their own obedience to Christ. I have personally found, for example, that working in groups, while not always possible in every teaching situation, pushes students at

many levels academically and spiritually. The more academically apt students sometimes have to overcome their contempt and pride for those less intellectually capable, and the more "practically oriented" students are pushed by the more "reflective" students to think through their practices and their "get it done at all costs" approach.

Thinking outside the box in terms of traditional assignments can, again, be risky. This does not mean that we should jettison tried and true types of research papers and reviews. However, given both the variety of learning styles and the variety of gifts amongst our students, a confessional teacher who believes that all members of the body can contribute must be willing to find new ways to let all students flourish, and not just the ones who have done well in traditional academic exercises.

V. The *Hope* of Theological Teaching

In my own experience, I have found teaching to be simultaneously the source of great joy and, at times, great frustration. This is because what seems to "work" in one class sometimes fails miserably in another. Or, what seems to excite one group of students is met with an epidemic of yawns by the next. This has forced me to think through the issue of student motivation. While seeing successes in getting students motivated to learn and to grow can function as pedagogical fuel for the teacher, students can, unfortunately, also be relatively easily manipulated in order that we, the teachers, might experience a "teaching high," as it were. In such cases, there is a danger of teachers becoming increasingly "student-driven" such that they locate their own self-worth and motivation in getting and maintaining the accolades of their students. Consequently, teachers can often find the formal classroom and student evaluations to be a source either of great encouragement or great discouragement, depending on whether the students give positive or negative feedback.

While I do not deny that the responses of students should be used to improve our own teaching, I am also convinced that long-term teacher effectiveness in the theological school must be, not surprisingly, theologically-centred. Thus, without wanting to undermine the importance of attending to the psychological notion of "motivation" for both teachers and students, I also believe there needs to be

a proper *theological* sense of motivation. It is here I prefer to speak of the biblical notion of *hope* which, consistent with the paper so far, I understand in extrinsic, relational terms rather than from a psychological, anthropocentric perspective of student or teacher motivation.

I find the last phrase of the Great Commission to be *the* statement of Christian hope: "And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age" (Mt. 28:20b). The words which end Matthew's Gospel are themselves the beginning and anchoring point of the Christian task of disciple-making. That is, it is only because of the *promise* of Christ to be with us always that we have *hope* that our theological teaching will bear fruit. In this regard, I am reminded of the oft-repeated but meaningful accounts of missionaries who, for one reason or another, failed to see any significant fruit of discipleship occur during their lifetime of ministry, only to have others come after to "finish the job." Thus, the Apostle Paul notes, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow" (1 Cor. 3:6). In like manner, teachers must do their work in such a way that they realize that the manifestation of the fruit of their work is largely yet to come and usually quite far removed from the classroom and student evaluations! This is why, perhaps, Paul says that "when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the *hope* of sharing in the harvest" (1 Cor. 9:10, emphasis mine).

Jesus Christ's enduring presence in the world by his Spirit *is* our hope that our work as confessional teachers will be fruitful. This is because Christ's ageless presence extends past our own personal histories. Were it not for Christ's enduring presence by his Spirit in the church, the best we could hope for would be a temporary influence among a generation of students. But it is precisely because Christ endures long after we are gone that we can *hope* that our work, as small and insignificant as it might seem, can be used of God to the furthering of his kingdom (cf. Phil. 1:6). Indeed, Christ's closing words in Matthew's Gospel function as a bookend to the former statement of his all-encompassing authority (cf. Mt. 28:18). Whereas Christ's kingly authority is truly *cosmic* ("all authority in heaven and earth") in scope, he exercises this authority not from afar, but as one present to the world in and through (though, I would argue, not restricted to) the church's own concrete history. While the church has been

tempted in the past to think of herself as identical to the kingdom, the account in Matthew makes it difficult to come to such a conclusion, if for no other reason than that it is Christ's, not the church's, authority and presence that serves to accomplish God's purposes in the world. Thus the church *serves* Christ's kingdom as we submit to his authority, as we make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching them to obey Christ's rule. This is the hope that we have that our work will not be in vain and that we are participants in the kingdom and mission of God—a kingdom and mission whose greatness so far surpasses our point of view and yet which we have nevertheless been graciously allowed to glimpse in the living and present Jesus Christ himself.

But how does this hope in Christ work out pedagogically? I note here but two applications. First, confessional teachers need to think through both the short- and long-term senses of what they wish to see accomplished by their students. While success in writing, thinking, reading, hearing, and speaking, or indeed, the level of biblical or theological literacy, can be more or less charted in the short-term over the course of a semester or four years, these improvements should not be viewed as ultimate indicators of successful confessional teaching. Even these short-term gains must be viewed as "seeds" that we have planted that we may not, in our lifetime, see come to fruition. We know that the ongoing presence of the Spirit of Christ in the life and ministry of our graduates will continue to be the water that makes those seeds to grow. Thus, while we seek to foster the traditional academic skills in our students, we rightfully relativize the cultivations of these skills as only instrumental to how Christ may use these students in the long-term for the furtherance of his kingdom. Ours is only to commit our students to Christ in hope that he will use our efforts to his glory. Consequently, it is imperative that teachers commit their students to Christ in prayer and that this be done both publicly in the classroom where our prayers may be the Spirit's way of encouraging our students in their growth, or privately in the study and home where students may never be aware of our intercession on their behalf.

Second, teachers need to view themselves also as co-heirs of the hope that we have in Christ. Our hope that our students may mature

into the fullness of Christ is no less our own hope that we will also continue to grow in our calling as teachers. This means accepting failures in the classroom, relational and disciplinary break-down, laziness and sloth, or even self-promotion and pride, as in need of the purifying fire of the future judgement of Christ when all our thoughts and deeds are tested in the light of his righteousness. It is all too easy for teachers to present themselves as "having arrived" when in fact, if we are truly honest with ourselves, we know full well that our struggles continue. This does not mean that teachers should unduly or unwisely expose their weaknesses to their students at every turn, but it does mean that teachers must be willing to accept encouragement, indeed, even chastisement, from our students when our own hope falters or when we clearly fail our students. Indeed, having to ask a whole class for forgiveness for a failure of some sort might be one of the more spiritually important lessons our students remember.

In this regard, teachers should not avoid the "give and take" of everyday relationships with students outside of the classroom. Students who only see their teachers in the classroom context are less apt to see that growth and hope in the Christian life is continual, even for those who are further ahead on the path. It is because of this that I believe that teachers must find ways to enter into worship, service, recreational, and social contexts with students such that students see their teachers as co-heirs with the hope that is ours, the Glory of God in Jesus Christ our Lord, magnified in the light of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

The task of becoming and sustaining the practices of a theologically informed and responsible teacher in a confessional setting is not easy. Not only do confessional teachers need to pass on and contribute to their scholarly discipline, they are called to do so with greater ends and purposes in mind. This makes confessional teaching doubly difficult. However, the good news is that the promise of confessional teaching lies neither in a teacher's disciplinary, pedagogical, or theological astuteness as much as in the fact that God has decided to make his life and his ways known in and through human agents. In this regard, I conclude with Augustine's apt observation.

> The human condition would be wretched indeed if God appeared unwilling to minister his word to human beings through human agency. It has been said, 'For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are' (1 Cor. 3:17): how could that be true if God did not make divine utterances from his human temple but broadcast direct from heaven or through angels the learning that he wished to be passed on to mankind? Moreover, there would be no way for love, which ties people together in the bonds of unity, to make souls overflow and as it were intermingle with each other, if human beings learned nothing from other humans.[23]

23 Augustine, *Teaching Christianity* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1996), 6-7.

"Unity-in-Distinction": Toward a Model for Understanding the Relationship Between Faith Practice and Academic Practice

Amanda MacInnis-Hackney*

Abstract:

This article examines the tensions that the Christian scholar experiences in trying to integrate and/or reconcile faith practice with academic practice. The author suggests a model for holding faith and academic practices together in such a way that the Christian scholar is shaped, through the cultivation of habits, to be a person who loves God and loves her neighbour. This model uses Hans Urs von Balthasar's work on the nature of virtue as a way to frame an integration of James K.A. Smith's work on "thick" practices with Karl Barth's theological asymmetrical dialectic, such that faith practice orients academic practice, and academic practice enriches faith practice.

In his *Explorations in Theology: The Word Made Flesh*, Hans Urs von Balthasar laments the apparent separation of theology and spirituality, and argues that in the early church there was a unity between knowledge and character, and that this unity began to separate after the Middle Ages.[1] As such, today, it is entirely possible for a Christian who is an academic to compartmentalize her faith from her scholarly activities. This can happen to scholars across disciplines, whether in the humanities, the sciences, or even theology. Some

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1 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology, vol. 1: The Word Made Flesh*, trans. A. V. Littledale and Alexander Dru (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1989), 184–87.

of the compartmentalization is the result of external forces. Gavin D'Costa argues that the study of theology has become "separated from the practices that are required for its undertaking: prayer, sacraments, and virtue."[2] He argues that theology departments (specifically in Britain, but also in North America) are under constant pressure to function more like religious studies departments, where the scholar takes a neutral, scientific, detached position relative to the material she is researching or teaching. This is also paired with the financial and enrollment pressures that can lead to an overall secularization of the religious university.[3]

In response to this situation, there is a growing body of literature on the nature and task of the Christian academic. George Marsden looks at the nature of scholarship, and what makes Christian scholarship distinctly Christian, as opposed to being scholarship merely done by a Christian.[4] Richard Hughes looks at the identity of the Christian scholar, and focuses on the relationship between the rich intellectual heritage of the Christian faith and the life of the mind.[5] Since Hughes is focused on the life of the mind as it relates to Christian identity, his focus is on intellectual ideas in the Christian tradition. Even when he examines four Christian traditions, and notes that the Mennonite model focuses on how life influences thinking, he limits his study to ideas, beliefs, and creedal statements, rather than considering the practices of that tradition. James K. A. Smith, drawing on the virtue ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre,[6] applies the mod-

2 Gavin D'Costa, *Theology in the Public Square: Church, Academy and Nation* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 5.

3 Robert Benne, *Quality with Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with Their Religious Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001); George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

4 George Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

5 Richard Hughes, *The Vocation of a Christian Scholar: How Christian Faith Can Sustain the Life of the Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005).

6 Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

el of "thick practices," first to the shape and purpose of a Christian university,[7] and then, specifically, to the practice of teaching.[8]

In this article, I will apply Smith's model of "thick practices" to an examination of the relationship between faith practice and academic practice. Faith practice is comprised of the classic spiritual disciplines that characterize the Christian faith. These can be gathered into three main disciplines: prayer, the reading and hearing of Scripture, and corporate worship. Academic practice is the close reading of a breadth of texts for the purpose of advancing new ideas, and making a unique contribution within the field of existing scholarship through a variety of forms of dissemination, including publishing and lecturing. The relationship of these two practices, I will argue, is best understood through an appropriation of Karl Barth's dialectical framework, which is based off of the Chalcedonian Definition of "very God and very man." It is both flexible enough and structured enough to be applied beyond its original christological context, and can be used to explore a variety of dual-natured relationships, including the relationship between faith practice and academic practice. Faith practice and academic practice form an asymmetrical dialectic and exist together as a "unity-in-distinction," and as such the Christian scholar lives under this tension, and both practices shape who the scholar is and what the scholar loves.

To do this, I will examine the nature of both practice and virtue, and define a Christian vision of the good life that is broadly ecumenical and applicable to a variety of vocations, not just that of a scholar, or more narrowly, that of a theologian. I will then examine the dialectical nature of faith practice and academic practice and give a few examples of how this dialectic could shape the Christian scholar.

The Nature of Practice and the Telos of Virtue

James K.A. Smith suggests that practices, whether cultural or religious, are liturgical in nature as they fundamentally shape human desire. All humans are creatures who love, and what they love

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7 James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 215–30.

8 James K.A. Smith and David Smith, eds., *Teaching and Christian Practices: Reshaping Faith and Learning* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011).

is what they ultimately worship.[9] Christians should be oriented, through right practices (lit. 'orthopraxy'), to love God and love their neighbour (Lk. 10:27). Practices consist of habits, virtues and vices, which are "so intricately woven into the fiber [sic] of our being that they function as if they were natural or biological."[10] These habits are "second nature" and can be cultivated or starved depending on the practices of the person, and they are "the fulcrum of our desire: they are the hinge that turns our heart."[11] Practices, and their corresponding habits, are teleological, pointing the person to a vision of the good life.[12] As such, they are powerful and shape the entire existence of the person, influencing their behaviour, their actions, and their worldview, either consciously or unconsciously. Smith's purpose is to demonstrate how truly unaware we are of the secular and cultural liturgies that shape us. So much so, that for Christians in North America especially, our primary framework for understanding the good life has come not from the church, but from the shopping mall and consumerism.[13]

Complementing Smith's understanding of a *telos*, which orients the Christian to the love of God and neighbour, Balthasar defines the *telos* of the Christian faith as being, "a participation in Christ's vision, [with] Christian hope a nestling in his trust and assurance, [and] Christian love the outpouring of his love."[14] Both Smith and Balthasar offer visions of the good life that are compatible, and I would suggest that by combining them, a vision of the good life can be articulated that is broadly ecumenical across various Christian denominations, as well as across various vocations, not just academic ones. Therefore, building off of both Smith and Balthasar, the *telos* of the Christian life is a participation in Christ's vision, a participation that is in response to Christ's love, wherein Christians are shaped to be a people who love God and love their neighbours. The plural

9 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom,* 51.

10 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 56.

11 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*.

12 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom,* 62.

13 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 19–24.

14 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Prayer*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1986), 169.

"Christians" is important because the *telos* is not individualistic but corporate in nature. The vision of the good life, for Christians, is one in which the church corporately participates as one body with many members (1 Cor. 12:12-14).

Orientation toward the *telos* of the good life requires the cultivation of specific virtues. Framed by the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love, Balthasar suggests that the virtues that should be cultivated in the life of a Christian are humility, renunciation, and reticence in knowledge.[15] This is because the Christian faith is a response to the work of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, such that, "it is impossible to contemplate this Person [i.e., Christ] in a detached manner: the true contemplative can only respond to his Word."[16] Faith practice, and by extension academic practice, is neither neutral nor done in a vacuum. Instead, it is always done in response to the Word, and never the other way around. Contemplation, or the Christian's faith practice, does not provoke or initiate the encounter with the Word.[17] Because of this posture of response, Balthasar argues:

> Thus the Christian never takes the form of the 'sage,' that unmistakable kind of man [sic] met with in all systems of philosophy whose lofty enlightenment arouses our admiration (and in time gets on our nerves). It may be part of a Christian's mission to know and say many things about God and divine matters. But most of them, including the genuine contemplatives, the saints, are modest and reticent in their knowledge.[18]

The virtue of humility is grounded in the surprise of God's revelation in Christ. There is nothing humanity can do to anticipate, prepare for, or hasten God's self-revelation. Instead, "[w]hen God suddenly appears in Christ, the ground is taken from under us; this is

15 Balthasar, *Prayer*, 162, see also 168.

16 Balthasar, *Prayer*, 165.

17 This parallels Barth's emphasis on theology only ever being done in response to the Word. Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*, trans. Grover Foley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963).

18 Balthasar, *Prayer*, 168.

something to which we can only respond with ever greater humility and renunciation, more and more simply and vulnerably, increasingly revealing our nakedness and poverty."[19] This virtue of humility is characterized by surrender, which is, according to Balthasar, the very essence of faith.[20]

Renunciation is closely related to humility, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's reflections on the shape of the Christian life are helpful here to briefly unpack this virtue. Renunciation is the rejection of self-centred love. Self-centred love "turns itself into an achievement, an idol it worships, to which it must subject everything. It cares for, cultivates, and loves itself and nothing else in the world."[21] Renunciation requires the repeated turning away from self-centred love toward spiritual love, which comes only from Christ, and differs from self-centred love because spiritual love is fundamentally an act of service which "loves the other for the sake of Christ" instead of for the sake of itself.[22] Therefore, at the heart of the habit of renunciation is Jesus's call to take up one's cross daily and follow him (Mt. 16:24).

Reticence in knowledge, or modesty, stems from the shock of encountering the immense mystery of God's revelation. While this revelation is knowable, because Christ is fully human, there is still an element of "non-comprehension."[23] There is a tendency, as a result of the Enlightenment, for religion (and scholarship) to be seen as a means of putting the puzzle together. Each piece has its place, and mysteries are only mysteries until they can be solved, either by evidence or/and by right (rational) thinking. And yet, as much as Christ can be known, as much as we are like the disciples on the road

19 Balthasar, *Prayer*, 162.

20 "Faith is the surrender of the finite person in his entirety to the infinite Person." For Balthasar, this surrender is in response to love and it reveals hope. Hence the interconnectedness of the three classic theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. Balthasar, *The Word Made Flesh*, 149.

21 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together and Prayerbook of the Bible*, trans. Daniel Bloesch and James Burtness, vol. 5 *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 43.

22 Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 42.

23 Balthasar, *Prayer*, 159.

to Emmaus whose eyes were opened to the truth through Christ's expositing of Scripture and his breaking of bread (Lk. 24:13-35), the mystery of *Deus Dixit*, God speaks, is such that our justifications, explanations, and rationalizations are imperfect and incomplete. Not only are our explanations imperfect and incomplete, but because they are responses to the revelation of God in Christ, it is impossible for them to control the revelation, and thus they must be grounded in modesty, because they are first and foremost an act of service.[24] As Barth notes, "it would be presumptuous to imagine that [the Christian] might and could gain control over the Word…for in that event the Word would cease to be the object of theology."[25]

As well, the knowledge of revelation is not earned based on a person's level of intelligence. Instead, this knowledge of the mystery of revelation is a gift, such that even the "little old lady" in church may have a more complete explanation than the pastor, the theologian, or the expert. The proper posture, then, or the proper way to cultivate this virtue of modesty, is to pray and study "with uplifted heads, as upright men [and women] who intend to take pleasure in [the] work for a moment."[26] Together, humility, renunciation, and reticence in knowledge mirror the very virtues that Christ himself demonstrated in his kenosis, because, "being in very nature God, [he] did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Phil. 2:6-8, NIV).

A shaping of a Christian toward the *telos* of the good life not only consists of the cultivation of specific virtues; it also consists of specific actions. Broadly speaking, faith practice consists of three main actions, each comprised of a multitude of overlapping tasks in which a Christian can participate. The threefold nature of faith practice includes: prayer (which includes tasks such as fasting, the Daily Office, *Lectio Divina*, contemplative prayer, and silence); the reading

24 Barth, *Evangelical Theology*, 188.

25 Barth, *Evangelical Theology*, 189.

26 Barth, *Evangelical Theology*, 189–90.

and hearing of Scripture (including daily Bible devotions, preaching, group Bible study, and Scripture memorization); and corporate worship (including church attendance, hymn-singing, acts of service, and church ordinances and sacraments such as communion and baptism). Together, these three actions assist in the cultivation of the virtues of humility, renunciation, and reticence in knowledge.

If the key virtues of faith practice are humility, renunciation, and reticence in knowledge, what then are the key virtues for academic practice? The foundational virtue of a properly oriented academic practice should be wisdom, which includes both theological and practical wisdom. Celia Deane-Drummond argues that theological wisdom, which is, "the appreciation of the fundamental causes of everything and the connections between them, including God,"[27] guards against the overarching tendency toward utilitarianism, which breeds overspecialization and compartmentalization. Academic practice that is not grounded in wisdom divorces both praxis and social context from the search for knowledge, and wrongly attempts to turn the scholar into a neutral observer of whatever subject she is studying.[28] When wisdom is the central virtue of academic practice, there is no attempt at neutrality, but rather a recognition and embracing of the ways in which social context (community), faith, and praxis shape and inform knowledge. This does not make scholarship less scholarly, rather, it gives it depth and allows it to avoid over-compartmentalization. It "has the capacity, therefore, of enlarging a person's horizons to think of those issues that are important not just to the human community, but to the community of others in the world that God has created."[29]

A rightly oriented academic practice will also be shaped by prudence, or practical wisdom, which is closely related to theological wisdom. Prudence includes "deliberation, judgment and action," and it walks the line between caution and foresight, taking into account mistakes made in the past and possible future hazards.[30] Prudence, in

27 Celia Deane-Drummond, "Wisdom Remembered: Recovering A Theological Vision of Wisdom for the Academe," *London Review of Education* 5 (2007): 178.

28 Deane-Drummond, "Wisdom Remembered," 174.

29 Deane-Drummond, "Wisdom Remembered," 176.

30 Deane-Drummond, "Wisdom Remembered," 178–179.

turn, cultivates the virtues of patience and humility. And, according to Deane-Drummond, the virtue of humility is built specifically on the cross and suffering of Christ, because "while not doing away with the wisdom of the sages, the wisdom of the cross points to another way of being."[31]

These virtues—wisdom, prudence, and their off-shoots, patience and humility—are not just habits that people, in this case academics, learn. For the Christian, these virtues are, first and foremost, gifts of the Holy Spirit,[32] because while "striving after the virtues requires the will" the actual attainment of them is a gift.[33] As such, the life of the Christian academic is characterized as being a life that is led by the Holy Spirit who is actively present, "guiding and leading all believers, including theologians, into a deepening indwelling with God, through increased knowledge (faith), through tireless struggle (hope), and most vitally, through the practice of charity (love)."[34] Second, these virtues overlap with the virtues that characterize faith practice because, as I will demonstrate in the next section, faith practice and academic practice exist together in a dialectical unity-in-distinction.

All of this assumes a rightly oriented academic practice. If theological wisdom's *telos* is recognized to be understanding the world that God has created, it is then oriented similarly to the overall *telos* of faith practice, which, as stated earlier, means participating in Christ's vision. But if the *telos* of academic practice is regarded or assumed to be something else, then the habits or virtues that it cultivates may actually be what Christians have traditionally considered vices. For example, if the Enlightenment *telos* of academic practice is knowledge for knowledge's sake, or worse, knowledge for mastery over creation, which results in an ever-narrowing compart-

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31 Deane-Drummond, "Wisdom Remembered," 177.

32 For example, see Dan 5:11; 2 Cor. 6:6; Gal 5:22-23.

33 D'Costa, *Theology in the Public Square*, 129. See also, N. T. Wright's description of the practice of virtue in his discussion of Galatians 5. It is important to note the ordering of the relationship between God's work and the believer's work in the practice of virtue: "Christian virtue…is *both* the gift of God *and* the result of the person of faith making conscious decisions to cultivate this way of life and these habits of heart and mind." N.T. Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (New York: HarperOne, 2010), 197.

34 Ibid.

mentalization of separate and distinct specializations, then it would not be surprising for it to prize competition. This habit of competition would be cultivated by the "virtues" of pride, envy, and greed. Academic practice so orientated will tend to press the scholar to be the first to disseminate texts, resulting in an impatient and imprudent drive toward innovation and advancement of cutting-edge or provocative theories—not because of their inherent value and contribution to overall human understanding, but for the sake of making a name for oneself, achieving tenure, or obtaining grant money.

The Dialectical Relationship

The question, then, is: what is the relationship between faith practice and academic practice? How can these practices exist together in such a way that they both point the Christian academic toward the vision of the good life – which is participating in Christ's vision as a response to Christ's love – such that Christians, including Christian academics, are shaped to be a people who love God and love their neighbours? I propose that the relationship between faith practice and academic practice can be framed using Karl Barth's Chalcedonian dialectic.

In the *Church Dogmatics*, Barth uses the Chalcedonian definition of "very God and very man" in a flexible way, beyond merely exploring the divine and human natures of Christ. In IV/3.2, Barth uses this dialectic to construct his theology of Christian witness, in which both God and the church participate in their own distinct, yet connected way. Specifically, the work of Christian witness consists of God's divine initiative and free offering of his grace, and the church's reception of and grateful response to that grace. By exploring the flexibility of the definition,[35] and by not being tied down to specific

35 Sarah Coakley's analysis of the usefulness of the Chalcedonian Definition and the fundamental difference between how the West and East understood the purpose of the formula may be useful here to give context to the inherent flexibility that Barth detects. While she does not directly reference Barth, it appears that in Coakley's description of the use of Chalcedon, Barth would embrace a more 'Eastern' understanding of the definition. That is, whereas the West understood the definition primarily as a rule, the East saw "beyond the limit" and turned the definition into something flexible enough to even be used in liturgical prayer. Barth takes an 'Eastern' perspective on Chalcedon, exploring its flexibility and using it to go beyond

ontological terms, Barth reformulates the Chalcedonian Definition from being strictly christological to being a vehicle through which he can explore the overall relationship between the Divine and the human.

For Barth, this dialectic is not a Hegelian dialectic because the dialectic is fundamentally asymmetric, held together in one specific form by a "unity-in-distinction" where each component, in the original instance, the divine and the human, contributes in its own unique way without being identical in nature or task. In the original equation "very God and very Man," the "and" functions, grammatically, as this "unity-in-distinction" and makes it impossible for the equation to be reversed as if Christ's humanity came first, because "the *Logos* can never become the predicate or object."[36] Put another way, Barth also sees this dialectic at work in the grammar of the equation "the Word became flesh" where the predicate "became" anchors the statement in such a way that it cannot be reversed to say "the flesh became the Word."[37]

Because of the flexibility, this dialectic can now serve as a paradigm for understanding the relationship between faith practice and academic practice. Thus, the word equation that I propose is "*faith practice orients academic practice; academic practice enriches faith practice*." "Orients" and "enriches," as the two predicates in this equation, encapsulate the pneumatological dimension of Christian practice. Since Christian practice is a part of sanctification, it is first and foremost a work of the Holy Spirit, a work by which the Christian is conformed to the image of Christ and in which the Christian

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the basic christological question. Sarah Coakley, "What Does Chalcedon Solve and What Does It Not? Some Reflections on the Status and Meaning of the Chalcedonian 'Definition,'" in *The Incarnation: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God*, ed. Daniel Kendall, Stephen Davis, and Gerald O'Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 162.

36 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley, vol. I/2 (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2010), 136. While Jesus is the incarnate Word (word with flesh), he was the Word prior to his enfleshment. The flesh is dependent on the Word.

37 For a more complete analysis of Barth's understanding and use of the Chalcedonian equation as it relates to "The Word became Flesh" in John 1:14, see Amanda MacInnis-Hackney, *A Selective Exposition of Karl Barth's Exegesis of "The Word became Flesh,"* M.A. Thesis, Briercrest College and Seminary (Spring 2014).

participates rather than merely responding passively. Therefore, while practice is a form of work, it is not a works-based righteousness or a works-based salvation.

There is a limitation inherent in the language used in this equation that needs to be addressed briefly. While it points to the *telos*, the term "orient" does not adequately convey the empowerment of development toward the *telos*. This empowerment is found in the definition of practice, as laid out originally by MacIntyre,[38] but not necessarily in "orient" unless we can say that "orient" picks up this empowerment because of its proximity to the term "practice." This is in fact the case because, given the "unity-in-distinction" structure of the equation, the word equation must be seen as a whole.

The key difference in this equation, "*faith practice orients academic practice; academic practice enriches faith practice*," from Barth's original dialectical equation is that since faith practice is not solely "divine," because it is also the work of the Christian, the asymmetric nature of the dialectic does not have to be as rigid. Instead, while faith practice should "orient" academic practice, it is also possible for academic practice to shape or influence or "enrich" faith practice. The "unity-in-distinction" of faith practice and academic practice allows the two practices to work together, and depending on where the emphasis lies, be it giving priority to faith practice over academic practice or academic practice over faith practice, will profoundly shape both aspects of the life of a Christian scholar. If the emphasis is on academic practice, then there can be either a positive or negative impact on faith practice.

Let me illustrate. Professor Johnson is working steadily toward tenure. He is building an impressive list of publications, regularly attends conferences, and is negotiating with several publishers who are competing for a book contract. Professor Johnson has spent several years promoting himself and it leads to an arrogant confidence, or

38 It takes MacIntyre several pages to unpack the term "practice," but his working definition is "any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved are systematically extended." MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 187.

pride. The tasks associated with academic practice can produce habits that are antithetical to Christian virtues. In becoming an expert, in making unique contributions to scholarship through the academic practice of critical engagement with texts, Professor Johnson has allowed the practice to cultivate pride, vanity, and possibly even envy and gluttony. These habits then can influence his faith practice. His prayer life has changed. Instead of praying for forgiveness for his sins, for humility, and for discernment, Johnson's prayers are boastful, centred on telling God (or, more probably, other people) how awesome his life is. His posture toward Scripture changes, and he begins to use Scripture as a tool to justify his work and to criticize every author or preacher who interprets Scripture differently. He might even find that he has no need for corporate worship, as the church community is not on his level and has nothing to offer him in his quest for attaining tenure.

This example does not mean that academic practice always and necessarily negatively impacts faith practice. In fact, depending on the habits or virtues, the opposite can occur. Professor Jones, Professor Johnson's colleague, is also on the tenure-track. She is building an impressive list of publications, regularly attends conferences, and is in the process of negotiating with book publishers competing for a book contract. In this case, the tasks associated with academic practice can cultivate Christian virtues. In becoming an expert in her field, Professor Jones has learned to think deeply, to reflect slowly, and to be respectful of the ideas of those scholars and/or historical figures with whom she interacts. She has learned that great ideas are fostered in community and regularly reaches out to other scholars, asking for their input on her latest research projects. In seeking advice, she understands that the different gifts and knowledge bases of other scholars help to expose weaknesses in her argument and open new avenues to explore. These habits then shape her faith practice. Her prayers become more humble, as she recognizes her own limitations, biases, and sinful inclinations. Her posture toward Scripture becomes one of reception as she learns to read slowly and deeply. And her participation in corporate worship increases as she recognizes that the diversity of voices challenge, encourage, and hold her accountable. Professor Jones acknowledges, and is shaped by,

the dialectical unity of faith practice and academic practice, and she realizes that faith practice is not "an optional and private extra" [39] but fundamentally guides and judges her academic practice and scholarship.

If the academic practice cultivates habits or virtues that are at odds with Christian habits or virtues, because of competing *teloi*, then it is possible for academic practice to influence faith practice negatively. In other words, it is possible for faith practice and academic practice to have competing visions of the good life and for a Christian scholar to be stuck between them. This is usually an unconscious reality, but it seriously strains development toward either *telos* and results in a life that is non-flourishing.

The soft asymmetrical nature of the dialectic requires that if the Spirit is what empowers faith practice and academic practice, then the proper equation should always see faith practices as the subject of the equation, and academic practices as the object of the equation. The Spirit "empowering" both sets of practices shapes academic practices in such a way that they support faith practices, rather than dictate them. In other words, just as "the Word became flesh" cannot be reversed to say "the flesh became the Word," the statement "faith practice orients academic practice; academic practice enriches faith practice" should not be reversed to say "academic practice orients faith practice; faith practice enriches academic practice." To do so risks an abandonment of Christianity in favour of a generic, works-based, civil religion.

Conclusion

In this article, I have attempted to create a model for understanding the relationship between faith practice and academic practice. I have engaged Hans Urs von Balthasar's work on the nature of virtue as a way to frame an integration of James K. A. Smith's work on "thick practices" in the university with Karl Barth's theological dia-

39 Specifically, D'Costa is talking about the practice of prayer. He argues that "good, intellectually rigourous theology within the university can only be done within the context of a praying community, not just nourished by prayer as if an optional and private extra, but also guided and judged by prayer." D'Costa, *Theology in the Public Square*, 114.

lectical equation that holds two things in a tension of "unity-in-distinction." I have suggested that the relationship can best be described as "faith practice orients academic practice; academic practice enriches faith practice," and I have sought to give a few examples of what this may look like. But it should be noted that the application of this model is not limited to the life of a professional Christian scholar. Indeed, it can be applied to various aspects of Christian higher education, both at the undergraduate and graduate level, and across a variety of academic disciplines, and not limited to theology and biblical studies departments. For example, an application of this model of the relationship between faith practice and academic practice can be employed by the professor as she teaches her students about the *telos* of being a Christian student. It can be used by academic councils seeking to create and structure degree programs. Finally, it can be used by alumni and enrollment departments as a way to dialogue with churches and future students about the role and distinct purpose of Christian higher education. What I have presented here is just one piece of a larger research puzzle that merits further exploration. As a starting point, though, this article offers a vision of the Christian life, in which Christian scholars are shaped to be people who love God and love their neighbours through the cultivation of faith and academic practices.

The Veneration of Truth: How Analytic Theorizing Can Make Us Wise

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Abstract

Analytical reasoning is often thought not to move us toward wisdom. In a Christ-centred context, however, wisdom is at least a significant part of our goal. How, then, does the Christian thinker understand the role of analytical thinking in wisdom-making? Our proposal is that there is a way of thinking about, and practicing, analytic work that opens the possibility of bridging such theorizing and spiritual wisdom. While we believe many sorts of analytic theorizing can engender wisdom, we take philosophy and analytic theology as the framework for our discussion.

What relationship holds between analytic theorizing and wisdom, if any? Can analytic theorizing make us wise? Our proposal is that there is a way of thinking about, and practicing, analytic work that opens the possibility of bridging such theorizing with spiritual wisdom. While we believe many sorts of analytic theorizing can engender wisdom, we take philosophy and analytic theology as the framework for our discussion.

Section I outlines the challenge of wisdom to philosophy as theoretical work by noting the recent comments of some Christian analytic philosophers and analytic theologians. Section II provides brief accounts of wisdom and worship. Section III places the problem into the context of two notions: a universe "shot through" with value and the overly narrow notion of "intellectual" professional philosophers and theologians often use. Section IV introduces two terms: "vener-

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ation" and "participation" and gives an account of how venerating the truth is embedded in the worship of God which in turns generates wisdom. Section V concludes.

I

In *Analytic Theology*'s "Introduction," Michael Rea responds to objections to analytic theology, an approach to theology using the tools of analytic philosophy. Analytic philosophy, some say, has lost the goal of wisdom and hence will fail as theological method. The presumption here is that theology (if not philosophy) should make us wise. Rea responds: "[D]espite the superficial attractiveness of the idea that philosophers and theologians ought to be aiming in the direction of wisdom and moral improvement, Christian philosophers as such, and theologians as well, might in fact have some reason for resisting that idea."[1] He reports a student email asking for suggestions on what philosophy to read to generate wisdom. Rea's response? Don't read philosophy, read scripture. He continues: "If philosophy as a discipline (or theology) were to aim its efforts at the production of a self-contained body of wisdom, or, at a general theory of right living, it would (I think) be aiming at the production of a *rival* to scripture."[2] Instead of taking Christian philosophy (and theology) as wisdom-aimed, Rea says the right theoretical task is the business of clarifying, systematizing, and model-building, just what analytic philosophers do. While Rea doesn't mention truth explicitly, we'll assume that what stands behind the sort of claim he makes is that philosophy and theology value the discovery of true propositions that will, taken together, give us a true account of a given subject.

Rea is not alone in his assessment of philosophy, at least as it is typically practiced by analytic philosophers. Consider the suggestions of Michael McFall and Paul Moser in *The Wisdom of the Christian Faith.* After summarizing Paul's gospel, they turn to wisdom. They write: "Paul anchored spiritual wisdom not in an abstract principle or Platonic Form, but instead in a personal agent who manifests

1 Michael Rea, "Introduction," in *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology,* ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Michael C. Rea (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 18.

2 Rea, "Introduction," 19

God's power without defect.… The immediate question is which particular features of the human person Jesus Christ constitute his being the power of God and the wisdom of God."[3] They quote Philippians 2 and report this key feature to be "the willing conformity of Jesus to God's will, even when the result is self-sacrificial death. Paul relied on the idea of Jesus' *humble obedience* to God to capture the feature in question."[4] Giving the object of their discussion a name, they add:

> *Cruciform* wisdom is the kind of spiritual wisdom manifested by Jesus in Gethsemane on his path to the cross and his subsequent resurrection. It comes in a person rather than merely a principle, because it inherently involves an engaged person's will and not just claims about a will. God's wisdom comes from a personal agent who seeks to engage other personal agents at the level of their wills, where intentional action can emerge. Genuine spiritual wisdom does not reduce to talk about such wisdom, because it includes *power* from God to welcome and to obey God's perfect will. Talk is too cheap and easy to supply this powerful wisdom.[5]

Christian wisdom hence does not derive easily from theorizing. Philosophy analyzes and debates concepts and propositions. Cruciform wisdom draws on God's power and conforms one's life to God's will. "The foundation of cruciform wisdom is not a philosophical idea but instead is God's power as exemplified in Jesus Christ."[6] Practical wisdom's goal is understanding reality and acting on it; cruciform wisdom moves beyond understanding to a transforming experience of God's power.

The same theme is found in Moser's earlier book, *Jesus and Philosophy,* where cruciform wisdom is linked to love. He writes:

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3 Paul Moser and Michael McFall, "Introduction," in *The Wisdom of the Christian Faith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 6.

4 Moser and McFall, "Introduction," 6.

5 Moser and McFall, "Introduction," 7.

6 Moser and McFall, "Introduction," 8.

> How . . . is Jesus relevant to philosophy as a discipline? Philosophy in its normal mode, without being receptive to an authoritative divine challenge stemming from divine love commands, leaves humans in a discussion mode, short of an obedience mode under divine authority.… Hence, the questions of philosophy are, notoriously, perennial. As divinely appointed Lord, in contrast, Jesus commands humans to move, for their own good, to an obedience mode of existence relative to divine love commands.… Accordingly, humans need to transcend a normal discussion mode, and thus philosophical discussion itself, to face with sincerity the personal.… Philosophical discussion becomes advisable and permissible, under the divine love commands, if and only if it genuinely honours those commands by sincere compliance with them.[7]

II

For ease of discussion, we'll concentrate most of our comments on philosophy. Can philosophy move us toward the sort of lovingly wise changes in our existential lives demanded by cruciform wisdom? Wisdom is a controversial notion, describable in any number of ways. We'll begin with a general description. How wisdom actually looks depends on filling in some details of the description. By "wisdom" we mean the following: a (sort of) knowledge of the world that leads to an engagement with that world, an engagement that has at its centre the fulfillment of the good for humans. We also believe that the good for humans leads to the good for the non-human world as well, but we won't focus on that issue here. Wisdom can help us to deal with a variety of problems posed by the world and our interactions with it. Such a description covers what we might think of as practical wisdom, the wisdom that ranges from knowing how to do certain things (making the little food left in the cupboard last longer, for instance) to solving problems (motivating a melt-down prone child do what is needed to get to school on time) to knowing how to

7 Paul Moser, *Jesus and Philosophy: New Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 17.

live a better, more successful life (brief sabbaths enable one to make more progress on one's day-to-day work). But the general description is broad enough to leave open various religious or other metaphysical accounts of ultimate reality. As such, to know what genuine or real or true or complete wisdom is, we'd have to include an unpacking of the nature of ultimate reality.

Since our concern is Christian wisdom, we have to link the general description to some specific account of reality, the Christian account. Hence the knowledge of concern must include knowledge of the creator, sustainer, lover, and redeemer of the world, viz., knowledge of the Trinitarian God. The Christian's engagement in the world thus recognizes our dependence on God for creation, sustenance, and redemption. The result is a (complete, in the end) fulfillment of the overall good for the human individual, the human community, and the world. Christian wisdom leads to a willful engagement with the world following the pattern of Jesus Christ. It is, in Moser's terms, obedience to the love commands.

What are the love commands? Are they basically aimed at meeting the material needs of our neighbor or are they theoretical also? Christian knowledge, we believe, leads to doing the work of the sub-creator, sub-sustainer, sub-lover, and sub-redeemer and that should include doing philosophy. But can philosophy really generate the sort of Christian wisdom in which one both knows and obeys God's call on her life to fulfill the love commands?

The general account of wisdom is not separable from the larger concerns of Christian wisdom. One who is not a Christian can of course reach an appropriate conclusion about how words refer to the world or how morally to distribute limited medical resources. But since "the earth is the Lord's and fullness thereof," when the non-Christian discovers some wisdom she also discovers something about how God put the world together. Yet while philosophy can lead to practical wisdom *sans* God, it is much harder to see how it can lead to cruciform wisdom. Abstract theorizing remains just too heady, or so it appears.

To help develop our view that philosophy can make us Christianly wise (here forward we'll use the term "wisdom" to refer to cruciform wisdom), we suggest that wisdom cannot be separated

from worship. By "worship" we mean the involvement of the whole of a human person (and her community and larger ecosystems, in the best conditions) in response to God's creation, sustenance, love and redemption by growing in one's obedient and grateful attitude of praise to God. Worshipful praise is due to God alone and never to the created order. How then does philosophical work describing arcane features of the universe lead to worship? Although there is much we do in our lives that should lead to our worship of God, those things are not, arguably, worship itself. Nevertheless, we propose that non-worship activities themselves are possible only in the context of a truth in which worshiping the Lord is the central reality.

Worship and wisdom nest together neatly. One who is wise with cruciform wisdom will know how to worship and one who worships—even, perhaps, in halting ways—will have at least some wisdom. But if the Christian faith is true, then practical wisdom (whether described as Christian or not) will fall under the purview of the Trinitarian God. Jesus is the ultimate ontological ground of creation and hence every truth that comes about in creation. Insofar as wisdom is a sort of knowledge, all wisdom is God's wisdom just as all truth is God's truth.

III

Wisdom, we think, is a sort of knowledge. Since we can only know things that are true, wisdom is rooted in truth. Our access to truth is in part intellectual, the heartland of the philosopher. But knowledge is not merely abstract, either in content or kind. While knowledge certainly includes knowledge of the abstract, a fuller sense of knowledge is rooted in our *embodied* lives. When analytic philosophers confine themselves to understanding knowledge via thinking about propositions such as "S (the subject) knows that *p* (some proposition)," they are concerned only with a small slice of what knowledge is and how it works. A tendency exists among analytic philosophers to separate the intellect and the will and therefore to separate the intellect and our existential lives. But separating the intellect and the will from one another traps many philosophers into thinking wrongly about knowledge as well as wisdom.

But not all. Karl Marx took the point of philosophy to be not just a description but a changing of the world. Surely his ideas did.[8] Many feminist philosophers argue that Western philosophy divides the intellect from praxis.[9] Pragmatists such as John Dewey and Jane Addams literally took their philosophies "into the streets."[10] Christian faith and its theoretical components, properly understood, would seem to agree. God made humans embodied, contextual, and social. To separate thinking about God from worshiping God or serving one's neighbor or becoming wise is perhaps the fundamental mistake of Christian philosophy *as it is often practiced*.

Note the "political" or "ideological" nature of Marxism, feminism, and pragmatism. In each case, there is an apparent axe to grind (although perhaps less so with pragmatism). Are we suggesting that Christian theorizing is also "political" or ideological?" Perhaps. But perhaps we merely call attention to the nature of the created order, viz., that everything God created flows out of God's love and is itself "shot through" with value. To philosophize always involves the "political" or "ideological." As such, one cannot finally separate intellect from will.

Thus looms the question: If we don't make the separation, won't we all be out serving the poor rather than researching in the library? Rea makes this point in response to Moser. If we take Moser seriously, says Rea, we must stop doing philosophy and take up soup ladles. The resistance to "taking up soup ladles" is a means, perhaps, of saying that the world is not "shot through" with value and that theorizing done for the sake of theorizing is just fine. The "soup ladle" problem is a problem for many philosophers. We philosophers will surely reject the soup ladle problem and ask whether there isn't some place for theory in the Christian life. Yet we all know the felt internal conflict of doing our academic work vs. serving Christ more materi-

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8 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1975).

9 For an excellent summary of feminist theory from the late 19th century through the present, see Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (Boulder: Westview, 2013).

10 See for example "Dewey and Addams," in *An Unconventional History of Western Philosophy*, ed. Karen J. Warren (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009).

ally. Doesn't wisdom—cruciform wisdom—demand the latter? On the one hand, Moser struggles to bring together the will-shaping call of Christ with an intellectual activity oft-times quite disembodied and lacking in praxis. On the other, didn't St. Paul use philosophical as well as theological tools to present the message of willful obedience to love's call? It certainly seems possible to be a Christian philosopher whose will is conformed to Christ's mind. Paul didn't spend all his time feeding the poor. He wrote theology too. But his life, one might argue, was so shaped by his beliefs about God (theologically derived, at least in significant part) that he could hold himself up as an exemplar of one who follows Christ.

Perhaps Paul's being so shaped was due, however, to the fact that his philosophizing had the "right" content; that is his thinking was largely about the Christian God and our human relationship to the divine. Yet conforming one's will to one's beliefs is not merely a Christian possibility. Socrates shaped his will according to the use of reason through which he appropriated the received deposit of wisdom (the proposal by the Oracle, that no one was wiser than Socrates). While not having what Moser calls "cruciform wisdom," Socrates surely lived a life in which philosophical reasoning led him to believe certain things about himself and others. Once again, however, perhaps that is possible only when the subject matter of one's theorizing is how to live wisely. The issue is, much of contemporary philosophy doesn't concern itself with such issues (being more worried about how, for example, language refers to things). And certainly many aspects of contemporary philosophy (and theology) do not have wisdom as their subject matter. So how can they make one wise? What is the connection between philosophy and wisdom?

Perhaps we can glean an answer by thinking about Socrates's ability and success at conforming his intellectual life to his existential life and death. This won't do, however, for Moser and McFall. They write off Socrates's wisdom in a single sentence. Socrates's work was "too intellectual" to suit what they call "cruciform wisdom." Here an important issue arises. Is their point just that Socrates wasn't a Christian or that Socrates *qua* philosopher couldn't conform his will to God's? If the problem is that Socrates wasn't a Christian, then Moser and McFall may have picked the wrong example, for

certainly historical figures such as Origen or Justin Martyr tried to conform their wills (philosophical or otherwise) to the will of God leading, even, to martyrdom for the sake of Christ.

So is it impossible for a philosopher *qua* philosopher to conform her will to God's? If so, then the Moser-McFall essay virtually rules out anyone *qua* philosopher reaching the kind of existentially authentic life lived according to God's will. Moser bears this out when he says philosophy could (and presumably regularly does) interfere with the love demands of faithfully following Jesus. But if Socrates *had* come under the influence of Jesus, would he not have taken on cruciform wisdom? It seems Socrates *qua* philosopher might very well have died for Jesus instead of dying "merely" for the good of Athens. If the shaping of one's will to God's is the core of Christian wisdom, why think Socrates's will too detached from his intellectual work? For Plato the Good is the highest form, the source of growth and light. In the Christian faith, God is good and the good is God. The goodness of love woos us toward God. Perhaps Moser thinks the problem is that (normal) philosophy doesn't require love. Clearly, sometimes theorizing (when detached from living well) takes one away from following Christ. But why think philosophy must be practiced in its typical "professional" way or that philosophers move away from obedience to God of necessity?

Maybe we philosophers have a failure in imagination when it comes to the nature of Christian philosophy or perhaps we suffer from historical amnesia. Perhaps we take on the professional attitude handed to us by the guild, an attitude that makes seriously flawed assumptions. In contrast to the professional philosopher's model, a number of historical philosophers saw that living the Christian life results *from* philosophizing. Among them are the early apologists and theologians mentioned already, Origen and Justin Martyr. But there are many others: Augustine, Aquinas, Pascal, and Kierkegaard. Anselm's ontological argument, for example, is deeply embedded in prayer. What of Teresa of Avila or Hildegard?[11] The latter are no less philosophers for not having written scholastic-style treatises. Much

11 Many of the works of the authors listed here can be found at http://www.ccel.org (Date accessed Dec. 15, 2016).

earlier Christian philosophy was done in the very context of spiritual growth and community outreach to the poor, viz., in monasteries.

Perhaps the earlier thinkers had a vision we've lost: an integrative sense of the whole person and a deep sense of God's ability to work in many venues. Here's what we mean. In regard to the integrative sense of the whole person, scripture does not separate the intellect from the spiritual, or the emotional from the cognitive, or any of these from the volitional. God's saying "come, now, and let us reason together" is not decorative metaphor. It is integrally related to the rest of the verse: "'Come now, and let us reason together,' says the LORD, 'Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool'" (Isa. 1:18). Reasoning with the Lord leads to conversion, redemption, salvation. The problem is not the use of reason but *too narrow a sense of what reason is*. Our academic culture was led into the wilderness of Cartesian individualism where the mind is a disembodied "thinking thing." But reasoning, as we see it, is not in fact detached from the body, the will, or the emotions, and truth is not merely concerned with abstract propositions but embodied people. We can cross the Jordan again.

Humans are created in the image of God. Typically Christians say that emotional, volitional, intellectual, cognitive, and creative abilities make up the image. Sometimes a spiritual component is added as well (although perhaps the spiritual just is these various things together). When Christians cordon these off from one another, the human person dis-integrates. But the list is too short. God made bodies too. We do not live either now or after death as disembodied souls but as embodied beings. Our other aspects—emotional, cognitive, intellectual, and creative—come to fruition in our bodies via the will. It is an error to forget that our spiritual aspects are always and forever integrally connected to a body in space and time. We are historical, concrete people. What, then, is the connection between one's use of reason (or the intellect more broadly) and the shaping of one's will? A difficult question, surely. We have no detailed answer, although we have some suggestions. But our struggles to see how wisdom can derive from theorizing rest in this neighborhood. We can say, however, that the vision of the human in God's image is a vision

of the truly integrated human experiencing (bodily via reason, emotion, and desire) what is good, true, and beautiful. Thereby she lives her existentially embodied life accordingly. Or, at least, that possibility is open. To draw a hard and bright line among the various "components" of the human person is simply to shortchange the integrated vision of the faith.

IV

If Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, then we Christian philosophers had better say something about the relationship between true propositions and the embodied, lived truth of the Christ into which all Christians are called.[12] Let's turn to consider Jesus' embodiment of truth. Truth matters. Suppose Jesus was an atheist who managed to arrange the biggest scam of all time so that history recorded his life just the way it does in fact. Suppose the historical record is wrong. Some things didn't happen—his resurrection, for example. He was able to orchestrate even that facade. His disciples were completely fooled and spread the Christianity we know today. As such, all features of the Christian faith would be the same except that Jesus would have little or no truth in him. The story would be the same but not true. However, Christianity cannot be divorced from Jesus' extraordinary claim to be the truth. A Christianity without truth would not, in some significant ways, be Christianity at all.

Perhaps the most straight-forward interpretation of the "I am the truth" claim of Jesus is to take Jesus to be saying that he is the true God and that he is faithful. Nevertheless, it is worth exploring the notion that Christ is saying more than that and then to embed our findings into the notion of Jesus' claim that he is the true God. We want to explore the idea that because Christ is the truth, all propositional truths flow from him. However, let's begin not with propositions but with the notion that Christ is an icon or portrait. In iconography there are different ways of representing the same person, each one focusing on a different name or aspect of the individual. Often we see icons of Christ the redeemer, Christ the light, or Christ the life. Each is a

12 For an important essay on this, see N. N. Trakakis, "Truth, or the Futures of Philosophy of Religion," *International Journal for Philosophy and Theology*, Vol. 74, 366-90.

different portrayal or way of seeing the same Christ. We suggest that the icon of Christ the truth is just as central a portrait or icon of Jesus as Christ the redeemer, Christ the light, or Christ the life. Indeed, Christ *himself* is a portrait—an icon—of God. He is God sculpted in human flesh. Christ, taken as truth, redeemer, light, or life—indeed, the entire host of portraits of God—is himself the fullest portrait of God. If Christ is an icon of God, each of the separate ways in which Christ portrays God is itself an icon of God. Truth, as one of those portraits, is itself an icon of Christ. While an icon is not identical (in most cases) to what it images (its "object"), we might say that an icon *participates* in its object. Because truth participates in Christ, truth is an icon of Christ. Because truth is an icon of Christ, we can *venerate* truth.

"Participation" and "veneration" need some explanation. To venerate a thing is to honour it, to hold it in high esteem, to value it. Veneration is not worship. The distinction is commonly made in Roman Catholic and Orthodox theology. To venerate the saints is not to worship them. Only God should be worshipped. Veneration, however, is derivative of worship—or at least of worship contexts. A saint is worthy of veneration because God is worthy of worship. But not only saints can be venerated. Icons of the saints can be venerated. These icons represent the saint; the saints, in turn, represent God. So pictures of the saints, indeed, the saints themselves, are icons of God.

What of propositions? Perhaps the truth of propositions is iconic. The truth of a proposition is worthy of veneration because its truth-maker (bits and pieces of the world) can be venerated. The truth-makers can be venerated because Christ the creator is worthy of worship. Truth is one of the aims of our philosophizing. We hope our theories are based on truth. In some sense, though, truth is a place-holder. A business person doesn't just want to earn money to have money and a philosopher doesn't just want to believe true propositions. We want more. Truth is embedded in a host of other values and because of that, we want to embrace reality itself because we think embracing reality allows us to access all that is valuable.[13] Chris-

13 On the connection between truth and happiness, see Mark S. McLeod-Harrison, "Relaxed Naturalism and Caring About the Truth," *Forum Philosophicum* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 89-103.

tians, of course, take reality to be, fundamentally, divine, the divine of whom Jesus is the fullest, most complete icon. When it comes to Jesus, we don't just want true propositions; we want Jesus himself. We want Jesus because we want God. When Jesus says he is the truth, however, things become complicated. As hard as it is to grasp the nature of propositional truth, it is harder still to grasp the nature of what we will call the "personal truth" found in Jesus.

Let's consider "participation." To begin, we acknowledge that to say that true propositions participate in Jesus is a metaphorical truth, at least in significant ways. It might be thought, hence, that we aren't really doing theory here. We reject that view in line with a good many philosophers of science (Mary Hesse),[14] philosophers of language (Donald Davidson)[15] and philosophers of art (Nelson Goodman).[16] Admitting that, however, we can still say some literal things about what it is for a proposition to participate in the person of Christ. When Christ claims to be the truth he says something more than that he knows all true propositions or that we come to know true propositions through him. The claim is ontological rather than merely epistemological; there is ontological participation of the true in the person of Christ. We are not saying, however, that there is an ontological identity between true propositions and the person of Christ. Let's assume that our basic, intuitive understanding of what makes some proposition *p* true is correct. That is, let's assume that some proposition *p* is true just in case p (the truth-maker) is the case. Here we follow William Alston's minimalist realist account. That is to say, the content of the statement gives us everything we need to specify what makes the statement true.[17]

What relationship then holds between true propositions and Christ the truth? If what makes a proposition true is a truth-maker (typically a bit of the world, a fact, a state of affairs, etc.), what is the

14 Mary Hesse, *Revolutions and Reconstruction in the Philosophy of Science* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980).

15 Donald Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean," in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984).

16 Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978).

17 See William P. Alston, *A Realist Conception of Truth* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

relationship between the truth-maker and Christ? We propose that to say some proposition *p* is true (relative to Christ) is to say *p* participates in Christ. To say *p* is false (relative to Christ) is hence to say *p* does not participate in Christ.[18] Of course, Jesus is not a proposition or a theory, but a person. Jesus as the truth is not an aggregate of all true propositions but rather a true person—indeed, the true God—in whom all truth participates. The true God grounds reality causally as its ultimate source. True propositions are true just in case the world is a certain way and the world is a certain way just in case Jesus supports the structures of the way the world is.

To take the notion of participation further, we can say that by "X participates in Y" we mean, in part, "X is like Y." This is particularly true when we use "true" as an adjective modifying a person or thing. How so? Take the example of a true Corgi, a cattle herding dog breed. The phrase "true Corgi" is ambiguous. To be a true Corgi means on the one hand to be the real thing—a real Corgi as opposed, perhaps, to a Corgi without a Corgi pedigree. But it can also mean that this particular Corgi exhibits Corgi-like behavior, looks, personality, and so forth, as a sort of exemplar. The Corgi who wins the national dog-show for Corgis is a good example of this latter meaning. Let's begin with the first of these: a true Corgi is one that has the appropriate pedigree.

To be a true Corgi in this sense is to be like all other Corgis. Typically, there is a genetic underpinning to the likeness, a bit of shared natural structure. True Corgis participate in Corgi-structure. True Corgis are like one another in that they all participate in the Corgi genetic coding. In a similar manner, all true propositions are alike in that they are grounded in the structural relationship of truth to truth-maker. There is an ontological ground for likeness among all true propositions. In the case of Corgis the structure is genetic. In the case of true propositions, the structure is ontological. Jesus, as creator and sustainer of all that is made, grounds reality. True Corgis arise from the genetics that underlie the breed; true propositions arise from the structural relationship between them and their truth-makers which is itself grounded in the creator, Jesus.

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18 Which perhaps explains Jesus' claim that Satan is the father of all lies.

There are other components of participation. Reflecting on the nature of pictures can help us here. While perhaps pictures can be true (or contain true content) in the same way as a proposition, surely that is rare.[19] But there are other senses of "true."[20] Nelson Goodman introduces the term "rightness of rendering" to cover not only truth, but a host of other notions of "getting things right" (such as representation, metaphorical truth, and making art appropriate to its goals). Truth, as relevant to true propositions, rightly renders the world. The true proposition *p* rightly renders the relevant aspect of the world, viz. p (the truth-maker). True Corgis are rightly rendered Corgis. But we can also talk about true pictures.

One could say that all true pictures show a picture-like structure. In that sense, they are rather like the genetic understanding of true Corgi. But another sense of true picture is a sort of Goodman-like rightness of rendering. A painter might rightly render a bowl of fruit. But there is a large breadth of right ways of rendering things. There is the so-called "realist" way of rendering the fruit when the picture of the fruit looks (nearly) like the fruit. But there are also cubist, impressionist, and expressionist ways of rightly rendering fruit. Thus the creator provides for the right way of rendering the fruit. When the creative artist makes a rightly rendered painting (or more broadly speaking, artwork) we might say that a true painting (artwork) is made. This is not necessarily a matching of one thing to another (as a proposition to an aspect of the world) but what can be called a "generative" notion of truth. When X is rightly rendered, it is a true X. The connection between reality and truth in some sense begins to merge.

Many pictures are thought of as true in that they represent other things; when a picture represents well, it is true. Perhaps the clearest (or, at least, most easily recognized) representations we take to be true are those actually resembling their object. But true representa-

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19 Consider the famous Magritte painting of a pipe where the painting itself says "This is not a pipe."

20 See a discussion of truth and rightness of rendering, including the notion of metaphorical truth, found in Mark S. McLeod-Harrison, *Make/Believing the Worlds: Toward a Christian Ontological Pluralism* (Montreal: McGill-Queens, 2009), especially chapters 4, 9, 10, and 16.

tion need not require resemblance. Once we understand what various aspects of a picture symbolize, we could judge a picture true. But to be a picture is not necessarily to represent. Some are abstract and *present* themselves rather than represent some other thing. They are newly created bits of reality themselves rather than "copies" of it. Just as the statement "a mother bears her child" is ambiguous between carrying the child and giving birth to the child, so "X bears the truth" is ambiguous. Some things bear truth in a "carrying" sense (be it a "resemblance" or a "symbolic" sense) while others bear truth by being made, created, or brought forth.

We suggest, then, two senses of "truth." One is the typical "matching" of proposition to reality, of truth-value bearer to truth-value maker. The other is generative truth.[21] Generative truth is as much about making things in a rightly rendered way as it is about any sort of matching between signifier and signified. Pictures can be true in both senses. What we call abstract paintings are most illuminating for our purposes, however, for an abstract picture both presents itself and is its own representation.

Christ is truth. As such, all true things flow from him as the source of generative truth (maker of heaven and earth). He generates reality and therefore true things. A thing is a true tree because Christ makes it so, a true shark because Christ makes it so, a true human because Christ makes it so. In true things, truth and reality come together, rather like an abstract painting both presents *and* represents itself. A thing is true insofar as it is rightly rendered by Christ (and hence real). However, truth as proposition is typically thought of as somehow "distinct" from reality. Reality, surely enough, is the truth maker and the proposition is typically thought of as the truth-value bearer. When thought of in these terms, Jesus grounds all true propositions by making reality. True propositions are alike one another in being true; they participate in created reality. All created reality is alike in its ontological ground, Jesus.[22]

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21 McLeod-Harrison, *Make/Believing*, chapter 10.

22 In philosophical theorizing about the nature of truth, there is a recent revival of the "identity theory of truth" that is relevant to, but too technical for, this essay. Suffice it to say that in the identity theory of truth, propositions just are the situations that make the propositions true. In other words, true propositions and their

Note that Jesus doesn't, so to speak, make true propositions "all by themselves."[23] True propositions are not "free-floating" entities. Instead, they are placeholders that "come into being" with the bits of reality Jesus creates.[24] Yet sometimes one just looks at a picture and is in contact with its object. One contemplates an abstract picture and is thereby directly in contact with the object presented. But one can also say that the painting represents itself. In the analogy, propositions are both reality and a representation of it. This possibility lends itself well to thinking about worship and its relationship to truth. Just as we want reality, not just true beliefs about it, so we worship the Lord, not just true propositions about the divine. How?

One needs here to *contemplate, not merely cogitate*. One needs to *see* the picture and not merely *think* about it representationally. When seeing the picture, one is appreciating it directly and not thinking about it abstractly. We might say one is communing with the reality the picture is (what it presents, viz., itself) rather than merely thinking about what the picture represents (viz., itself). This parallels our worship of the Lord. When we worship we don't necessarily think (abstractly) *about* the object of worship. We commune with the reality Jesus is rather than merely thinking about what Jesus represents. When we do our theoretical work, however, we are looking for true propositions. Here we don't worship but we can come close. *We can venerate*. Truth, as propositional, is a picture of Christ, not Christ himself. To venerate is not to worship; it is to honour. We can venerate truth, and in this context, the propositional truths we discover in theoretical contexts. But all true propositions reflect the realities beyond them and ultimately those realities are rooted in Christ. We worship Christ, not propositions. When we say truth is an icon of Christ, we say that propositional truth participates in Christ; truth is like Christ. Propositional truth, in effect, is a representational picture.

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truth-makers are identical. The reader will see this theory reflected in the main text although there is much more to the theory then we can give account of presently.

23 Unless propositions are identical to bits of reality, as the identity theory of truth proposes.

24 Propositions are often thought of, by philosophers, as necessary entities. Our emphasis here is not on propositions *qua* propositions but true propositions *qua* true. So while we admit that propositions may be necessary objects, their truth need not be.

Propositions are alike when true, and that truth is ontologically rooted in Christ.

There are other likenesses beyond the structural. We might think here not of true propositions in some abstract form but of true propositions as being part of the reality they "picture." When doing theory, it is tempting to think of ourselves as rational machines generating a list of truths that are valuable in and of themselves. We disagree with this notion of rationality and with this notion of true propositions. We are to speak the truth in love as Christians, and while it is typical to take this command to be discussing truths about other people, say, or about theoretical work that has clear and obvious implications for how we live our lives, perhaps we should think more broadly of it. To speak the truth in love is, perhaps, to recognize that within the Christian worldview, love—that is, God in the divine self—is the core of reality. God creates, arguably, because God loves. To speak the truth in love is, in the end, the only true way to speak, for the world is created out of, and hence "shot through" with, God's love.

This point of view can then be linked to St. Paul's advice that we become *like* Christ, and here we move closer to the other sense of "true Corgi," viz., where a true Corgi is an exemplar of Corginess. For humans, being true includes moral maturity, but it also includes bodily, psychological, emotional, spiritual, and theoretical wholeness. One might call such maturity "wisdom." To be like Christ is to become fully what we were meant to be. To become finally mature and hence wise is to become totally reliant on the power of the Holy Spirit. To become like Christ cannot be merely to "believe" true propositions, even though intellectual assent concerning the content of true propositions structures our Christ-likeness. Philosophy and theology need to be placed in the right perspective. The personal nature of truth leads us to understand that *the mystical route is the only way fully to know the truth.* The mystical route can be understood as a species of what philosophers have traditionally called "knowledge by acquaintance."[25] While we can gain propositional truths

25 Philosophers have typically divided knowledge into three categories: propositional knowledge, knowledge by acquaintance, and know-how. The "mystical route" can be subsumed nicely under knowledge by acquaintance, i.e., direct awareness or experience of something or someone. See J. P. Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle* (Grand

by doing philosophy and other theoretical work in the "normal" or "professional" mode, we cannot gain personal truth that way alone. But since propositions represent Christ, we can venerate them as participating in Christ and thereby allow them to direct us to proper personal intimacy. Hence the importance of the mystical approach, the approach, one might say, of prayer.

What is the mystical, the prayerful, approach? Before we answer that question, we call attention to a continuum of veneration when it comes to philosophizing and the truth it may generate or discover. At one end is, perhaps, the ubiquitous value we place on truth. Having truth is more valuable than not having truth, other things being equal. This is something to which we think all Christian philosophers will agree. At the other end of the continuum, however, is not merely the recognition of truth's value, but a richer, more complete understanding of truth as flowing out of the love-rooted universe in which we live. At this end of the spectrum, veneration is most closely aligned with worship and hence wisdom because truth is understood as love-ordered. Truth calls us all not merely to knowledge of an abstract sort, but to a deeply embodied commitment to the very will of Christ, that is, to love itself.

We cannot, of course, enter a full description of the way of the mystic, but here are some road signs. In general, mystical approaches to Jesus are "dialogical." "Dialogical" is applied analogically, however. Rather than involving propositional exchanges, mystical dialogues are much like physical "dialogues" of bodies. Neither can be reduced to rational propositions, but rather transcend rational interactions. They evade the medium of propositions and put one person in direct contact with the other and thus are a species of knowledge by acquaintance. Arguably, all bodily interactions are a type of mystical interaction. The prime example is the greatest mystical experience in Christianity, Holy Communion, as understood sacramentally (as opposed to its "merely" symbolic understanding). Eucharist is a physical encounter with Christ. While we use language to describe physical interactions, we never capture the whole interaction linguistically. The whole of theology, in one sense, attempts to describe the

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Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), chapter 5, especially pp. 126-27.

Eucharist, for the Eucharist contains the fullness of truth. We eat and drink truth itself.[26]

One of the great mystical practices is veneration, the reverencing of the holy, particularly holy icons. Veneration, although requiring gazing upon the holy, is not merely looking at something; it is bringing in the holy through the windows of the eyes. Veneration is the entrance of the holy through longing contemplation. At its core it is a mystical encounter with the sacred. In this encounter, both the venerator and the venerated are agents of a joint action: the venerator actively contemplates the venerated and the venerated actively enlightens the venerator. This encounter cannot be contained in a narrowly construed "intellectual" dialogue (of propositions). It involves a personal encounter. The resulting mystical truth is a fuller truth than the merely propositional. It is intimate with the object from which truth flows. It moves from an abstract truth to being.

We are cognizant of the apparent confusion of the mystic's grasp of the truth and the truth itself in these last few sentences. But the confusion is an honest one, for the nature of truth here (the Trinitarian reality) cannot be understood unless the knower is changed by it. The power of God in us conforms us to God's image more fully. Truth makes us free; free to be who we truly are, the spitting image of God, mud turned to truth. But if mystical truth is far greater than propositional truth, the truth that comes from philosophizing, then what is the point of philosophy? To understand the role of philosophy as a search for true propositional accounts of the world, we can illustrate from the great Russian spiritual classic *The Way of a Pilgrim*. The *starets* (wise and pious monk) explains to the unnamed pilgrim the relationship between scripture and the writings of the Church Fathers this way: "The sun is the greatest, the most resplendent, and the most wonderful of heavenly luminaries, but you cannot contemplate and examine it simply with unprotected eyes. You have to use a piece of artificial glass that is many millions of times smaller and darker than the sun. But through this little piece of glass you

26 For this high-church view of Eucharist, we make no apology, since one of us is Roman Catholic and the other Anglican. Of course others take the sacraments to be symbolic rather than sacramental. For the more "symbolically" inclined one might say that one symbolically eats and drinks truth itself.

can examine the magnificent monarch of the skies, delight in it, and endure its fiery rays."[27] The relation of mystical truth to philosophical propositions is parallel. The mystical truth (Christ) is a sun brilliant beyond measure. Our finite minds cannot examine it unaided without being blinded. In order to gaze upon this truth our minds must either be elevated through the beatific vision (either in part or in whole) or the truth must be dimmed. The latter is the goal of philosophy and other bits of theorizing. Philosophy dims the radiance of the mystical object so that we might gaze upon the truth without blinding our reason. Philosophy is a little piece of glass through which we examine the Magnificent Monarch of Truth, God in the divine self. As St. Paul said, "At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully as I am fully known" (1 Cor. 13:12). Through finite philosophy we can now venerate Christ the Truth if only dimly.

Thus understood, philosophy does not illuminate the truth; it is illuminated by the truth. Indeed, philosophizing dims the truth that we might better understand it. Thus, if we aim our theoretical investigations away from Christ the Truth we will see less and less, just as a dark piece of glass shows little unless directed at a light. Philosophy is teleological by its very nature. Only in the world of Christ the Truth can philosophy find its real purpose, because only in such a world is there a truth that can be dimmed. This then is the relation of philosophizing to Jesus: Jesus is the very subject of our theorizing as the ontological source of all that is, including reality (the generated truth) and true propositions. Philosophy and theology are the darkened windows through which we venerate the truth, an icon of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here we would like to respond to a reviewer (unknown to us) who made some insightful comments about what we've said or implied with our analogy. The reviewer admitted that Scripture does indicate that we see through a glass darkly but added that Paul also talks about making known the riches of the mystery of Christ that is now disclosed (Col 1:27) as well as about demolishing arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God

27 *The Way of a Pilgrim*, trans. R. M. French (New York: Harper Collins, 1973), 10.

and taking captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). These passages, the reviewer proposes, suggest that the role of philosophy is better understood as a cleaner of the glass that permits us to know God dimly instead of as a further dimmer. In effect, Jesus himself is the glass through which we see God.

We think this is an important addition to our position but it is an addition rather than a refutation. Here's why. First of all, the glass, in our analogy, is the analytic mind and the propositions it contains. The analytic, theological, or philosophical mind dims down the truth it sees. But it still sees propositions and not the divine itself. But as the reviewer notes, the divine has already dimmed down the divine self via revelation. As the reviewer put it: "In Scripture and most of the patristic tradition, Christ is not the ineffable but the revealed Word and Wisdom of God (of the Father, who is ineffable). In the sun analogy, the Father is not seen; we see the sun by its rays (Christ) and by experiencing its heat (Spirit). Or Luther: it is in Christ that we see the Father's face (as opposed to Moses' access only to God's backside)."[28] This is a helpful addition to our claims but it is subtly different from our claims. The glass in our analogy is not Christ but propositions.

We would add that the "window cleaner" metaphor/analogy doesn't quite capture what we want to say either, for the glass is the analytic mind that contains the propositions. It is neither Christ (the rays) nor written revelation (which contains propositions). On one understanding, this implies both that the philosophical propositions are dimmed down by the analytic thinker but also that the propositions themselves, although rooted in reality, come already dimmed and in need of shaping, refining, and having new light shed on them. In some sense, then, we see through two bits of glass and not just one; one bit is philosophy and the other is Christ (or the rays of light). So the glass through which we see (the work of the analytic mind) helps us formulate propositions through which we attempt to capture a much greater, mystical truth. But in the kindness of God,

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28 This quotation is from a blind reviewer for the journal. We found this response to mesh well with our overall view and reminded us that we are working with analogies and metaphors that can and are taken in various ways. We would like to thank that reviewer for the comments sent to us.

the reality of the divine is already dimmed; the propositions are not the divine itself. So we can only venerate the propositions.

Veneration is not worship, however. To venerate is to honour. One doesn't worship the icon but venerates it; one worships only God.[29] But one can also venerate God. In thinking of Christ the Truth and theorizing, we should note two things. One is Christ himself as Truth and Christ as the ground of propositional truth. We can both worship and venerate Christ the Truth. We can only venerate the propositions of (true) theoretical thought. To worship the propositions rather than the reality is like worshiping the paint and wood of the icon rather than God.

Theology and philosophy can comport well with wisdom because they can comport well with worship. Wisdom, as we understand it, is a (sort of) knowledge about the world which leads to an engagement with the world that includes the fulfillment of good human purposes. Since our main concern is with Christian wisdom, the sort of knowledge with which we are concerned is knowledge of the creator, sustainer, lover, and redeemer of the world, viz., knowledge of the Trinitarian God of the Christian tradition.

Worship is important, for it is the involvement of the whole of a human person (and her community in the best conditions) in response to God's creation, sustenance, love, and redemption by growing in one's obedient and grateful attitude of praise to God. God is to be praised because of the divine nature and the out-flowing of God's love to the world. Worshipful praise is due to God alone. If worship of God is thus, then when we venerate truth we come close to worship. Veneration of the truth is only possible, in the Christian way of thinking, if, in fact, Jesus is God and hence worthy of worship. Worship cannot be separated from wisdom, however, for the goal of worship cannot be separated from the goal of wisdom, for the Christian's engagement in the world is one of recognizing human dependence on God for one's creation, sustenance, and redemption. The result is a fulfillment of the overall good for the human individual and the human community.

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29 And here is another reason the reviewer's observations are additions but not refutations—one both venerates and worships Christ but only venerates the true proposition.

To put this another way, wisdom is constitutionally willful. One cannot be wise without willing to act and be certain ways. To seek the truth, as all philosophers are wont to do, is to venerate it, to honour it for its importance. Now truths can more or less result in existential change. The truths of abstract philosophy may not be readily related to our daily lives but we still venerate them. In venerating them, we honour not only the truth and the reality it presents but also the reality of the creator God who supports the entirety of that reality in love.

But here we want to add just a brief comment about how we actually go about our work as "professional" philosophers. Are we Christian philosophers or philosophers who happen to be Christian? Sometimes it is the latter and one can say, for example, that really good *Christian* philosophy just is good philosophy. Because we search for truth we can be said to venerate it at the minimal end of the continuum noted above. But if we are Christian philosophers, perhaps it is better to say that the veneration of the truth would lend itself to the development of wisdom if we in fact baptize our research (and teaching and service) in a life of prayer. Perhaps part of what we do should be much more integrated by worship and prayer. We aren't, after all, wasting time when we pray. We seek the face of God and in so doing sometimes we see truths in a way that we can better venerate them. Perhaps then we can come full circle and see the study of philosophy or theology as always leading to important changes in how we live our lives, that is, in helping us become more wise.

From God's very nature as goodness, beauty, and truth flows worship. "And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing, 'Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come'" (Rev. 4:8). These creatures, full of eyes (even on the inside—perhaps to consider themselves in relation to God) to take in the beauty, truth, and goodness of God and to reflect back the glory found therein, have always sung their song and are singing it now. That is the point of creation. To say God is worthy of worship is just to say that the whole universe celebrates the One who made us in all our various facets. As philosophers and analytic theolo-

gians we can worship God via the work we do. Such work, properly understood, is veneration which in turn leads to worship out of which flows cruciform wisdom.

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We close with the following observation. Although we have written about analytic philosophy and theology, we think the general points are applicable to any and all disciplines involving the search for truth via analytic methods. This is the case because wherever analytic tools are used, the goal typically includes the discovery of true propositions. Whether philosophy, theology, history, physics or chemistry, we look for truth and if truth can be venerated, then Christians can engage our work via the worship of God. We'll leave the details of working out what our suggestions for other fields will look like, however, to those who understand those fields better than we do.

Natural Science and Supernatural Authority: Scriptural Infallibility and Evolutionary Theory in the Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield (1851-1921)

By Brent Rempel*

Abstract

Evangelicalism is presently divided upon the nature of the relationship between theology and science. In many circles, evangelical receptivity toward evolutionary creationism is held in suspicion. In this paper, I argue that modern scientific discoveries do not, of necessity, impinge upon the authority of Scripture. Benjamin B. Warfield serves as an example for future interdisciplinary dialogue by affirming the truthfulness of Scripture and appropriating a theistic form of evolutionary theory—a form which establishes God's supernatural intervention in the creative process and eschewed the naturalism commonly associated with Darwin's theory. Warfield's engagement with science was governed by his doctrine of divine inspiration. Therefore, he embraced evolutionary creationism insofar as it corresponds to and illuminated the Scriptures. Warfield's theological reflection and integration of the natural sciences ought to inform the present controversy within evangelicalism. Theologians may advance the discussion through selfless scholarship, epistemological openness, and serious engagement with general revelation, God's book of nature, and special revelation, God's book of Scripture.

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Science and Christian theology have a longstanding history of enriching dialogue, whereby the two disciplines shape and inform one another.[1] Modernism led to an abrupt halt to the interdisciplinary work of faith and science. Despite the challenges presented, theologians and scientists continue to engage with one another, bridging the gap and overcoming the conflict model adopted by many inside and outside the church. The theory of evolution stands at the forefront of the discussion, due to the vast theological implications of accepting the overwhelming evidence put forth by modern science.

In the present, evangelicals who are open to the conclusions of science are polarized by their "own," often treated unfairly and suspended from their institutions. The authority of the Scriptures is at the forefront of the controversy. Norman L. Geisler and William C. Roach critique the organization BioLogos for its stance on evolution, writing, "The members are intractably committed to theistic evolution and *thereby opposed* to the historic Christian stand on the inerrancy of the Bible."[2] In the opinion of these authors, accepting a theistic form of evolution is akin to rejecting the authority of God's Word. Ken Ham, the young earth creationist and president of Answers in Genesis, believes the true Christian response to evolution is straightforward. He writes, "This whole issue revolves around whether we believe the words of God who was there or the words of fallible humans (no matter how qualified) who were not there."[3] God's Word is equated with one particular interpretation of the Genesis creation account. Elsewhere, Allen Mickle writes, "Creation

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1 I am grateful for Dr. Patrick Franklin's helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.

2 Norman L. Geisler and William C. Roach, eds., *Defending Inerrancy: Affirming the Accuracy of Scripture for a New Generation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2011), 349.

3 Ken Ham, *The Lie: Evolution/Millions of Years* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Publishing, 2013), 35. It is ironic that in trying to simplify the issue, Ham has constructed complex schemes in order to defend his plain reading of the text. See Joel Duff, "Ken Ham's Darwinism: On The Origin of Species by Means of Hyper-Evolution Following Noah's Flood," *Naturalis Historia*, December 15, 2015, https://thenaturalhistorian.com/2015/12/15/ken-hams-darwinism-on-the-origin-of-species-by-means-of-hyper-evolution-following-noahs-flood/.

of mankind in God's image cannot be reconciled with evolution."[4] Scholars frequently appeal to a literal interpretation of the text as the only option that upholds the sanctity of the Scriptures.[5]

Christians are urged to reject the majority position of the scientific community out of hand, or else abandon the Scriptures as the rule of faith. Is it appropriate to equate the affirmation of evolution and the abandonment of the authority of the Bible? The history of the church resists this approach. Science, restricted to its sphere or area of influence, has great potential for positively directing the Church toward *truth*. The natural realm is a revelatory channel of the knowledge of God.[6] The Psalmist writes, "The heavens declare the glory of

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4 Allen R. Mickle Jr., "Review of Creation and Last Things by Gregory S. Cootsona," *Conservative Theological Journal 6*, no. 19 (2002): 390. In his commentary on the book of Genesis, John D. Currid writes, "The opening verses of the Bible… deny *evolution*, because man did not develop from the primordial soup, but he was specially created by the one true God. And, frankly, that is why there is meaning to life" (Currid, *A Study Commentary on Genesis: Genesis 1:1–25:18*, vol. 1, EP Study Commentary [Darlington, England: Evangelical Press], 64). To an extent, Warfield's stance on evolution aligns with Currid's sentiments, for Warfield was unwilling to concede to a naturalistic or dysteleological form of evolution that jettisoned the supernatural origin of humankind. See Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Studies in Theology*, vol. 9 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), 235-58.

5 Stanley E. Porter recasts the discussion of the authority of the Bible as a hermeneutical rather than an interpretive issue. See Stanley E. Porter, "The Authority of the Bible as a Hermeneutical Issue," *Evangelical Quarterly* 86, no. 4 (2014): 303–24. By resituating the discussion of inerrancy within the realm of hermeneutics, Porter's article transcends the problem of attaching biblical authority to particular interpretations of the biblical text. As a result, Genesis may be authoritative irrespective of its genre classification (e.g. ancient myth, semi-poetic or historical narrative).

6 The *Belgic Confession* (1561) speaks of general and special revelation as God's two books. God makes himself known, "First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book… Second, he makes himself more clearly and fully known to us by his holy and divine Word" (*Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century*, ed. A. C. Cochrane [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966], 189–190). More recently, Denis Lamoureux refers to his belief in the "complementary relationship between science and Scripture" or God's two books, which exist in a "*nonscientific concordist* relationship" ("No Historical Adam: Evolutionary Creation View," in *Four Views on the Historical Adam*, ed. Matthew Barrett, Ardel B. Caneday, and Stanley N. Gundry, Zondervan Counterpoints Series [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013], 63). B. B. Warfield spoke of "two species or stages of revelation, which should be discriminated to avoid confusion" (*The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Revelation and Inspiration*, vol. 1 [New York: Oxford University Press, 1927], 5).

God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (Ps. 19:1, NIV).[7]

In this paper, I argue that scientific discoveries do not impinge upon the authority of Scripture. Rather, science and theology ought to exist in a fruitful relationship. The Old Princeton theologian, B. B. Warfield, serves as an example of one who simultaneously upheld the truthfulness of Scripture and affirmed a theistic form of evolutionary theory.[8] Warfield assumed this position, not because he felt the scientific evidence warranted a reconstruction of biblical doctrine and a reinterpretation of the biblical text, but rather because evolution appeared to fit the biblical evidence itself. Evolution functioned as an explanatory principle that revealed God's providence and creative activity in the physical world. Warfield's work embodies the characteristics of scientific concordism. God is the author of two congruous books of revelation: nature and Scripture. Harmony, therefore, is the governing motif of concordism. As science develops, the theologian must reconcile new discoveries with the biblical text.

I begin by examining the nineteenth century scientific and theological context, which sets the parameters for this discussion. Second, I turn to B. B. Warfield's position on the nature of inspiration. The applicability of Warfield to the present situation in evangelicalism is found in his high regard for the authority of Scripture.[9] It is far too common for Christians to react against evolution by questioning its adherent's commitment to the inspiration of Scripture. In this regard, Warfield presents an example for advancing the debate from simplistic caricatures toward thoughtful and honest discussion. Third, I look at Warfield's critical interaction with the scientific discoveries

7 "Psalm 19…praises God's two books of revelation," in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, eds. Leland Ryken et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), s.v. "Law."

8 Weighing the evidence for theistic evolution lies beyond the scope of this paper. Regardless of how the evolutionary hypothesis develops in years to come, particular streams of ecclesial tradition will miss viable opportunities to be a witness in the world unless they cultivate a congenial disposition toward God's two books of revelation.

9 Bradley J. Gundlach describes the Old Princeton theologians, writing, "Indeed, it was their conservatism on biblical authority that made their proevolutionary statements so very important for concerned evangelicals, then and now" (*Process and Providence: The Evolution Question at Princeton, 1845–1929* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013], 10).

of his day. Warfield affirmed, to varying degrees, a theistic form of evolutionary theory throughout his academic career, although he was severely critical of metaphysical naturalism. I conclude by suggesting practical means for theologians to critically engage general revelation, God's book of nature, and special revelation, God's book of Scripture, while attending to the unique voice of each.

Science and Biblical Authority in the Nineteenth-Century

B. B. Warfield began his professorship at Princeton Seminary in the wake of two academic shifts. First, critical scholars and liberal theologians attacked the inspiration and authority of the biblical text.[10] Second, the influence of evolution increased and was met with both rejection and enthusiasm.[11] Many theologians responded by dismissing physical science and placing its findings in opposition to the perceived "biblical" position,[12] while others accepted evolution as

10 See W. Robert Cook, "Biblical Inerrancy and Intellectual Honesty," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 125 (1968): 160. Critical theories only result in skepticism when read atheistically. Apart from naturalistic presuppositions, source-critical methods may be theologically and historically enriching. Grant R. Osborne writes, "When one removes the negative presuppositions of the radical critics, one has in redaction criticism a tremendous, positive tool for understanding the early Church and its theology" ("Redaction Criticism and the Great Commission: A Case Study Toward a Biblical Understanding of Inerrancy," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 19, no. 2 [1976]: 85). See also Daniel C. Harlow, "Creation According to Genesis: Literary Genre, Cultural Context, Theological Truth," *Christian Scholar's Review* 37, no. 2 (2008): 163–98.

11 The Harvard botanist, Asa Gray (1810-1888), and the American geologist, George Frederick Wright, (1838–1921) were two of the first to "break down religious hostility to evolutionistic science" (John D. Hannah, "Bibliotheca Sacra and Darwinism: An Analysis of the Nineteenth-Century Conflict between Science and Theology," *Grace Theological Journal* 4 [1983]: 48). Hannah criticizes Gray and Wright for affording too much authority to general revelation. Cf. James R. Moore, *The Post-Darwinian Controversies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1979) 280; Frederick Gregory, "The Impact of Darwinian Evolution on Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century," in *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 383.

12 Dyson Hague contends in *The Fundamentals* that the book of Genesis is only authoritative and true if reflects human history. Furthermore, Adam was the result

a means to witness to God's providential care over creation.[13]

Biblical Authority and Higher Criticism

In the late nineteenth century, critical scholars such as David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874), Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-72) and Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) undermined the inspiration of the biblical text.

New Testament higher criticism developed in the Tübingen School through the pioneering work of Friedrich Schleiermacher, and in the following generation, by David Strauss and Ludwig Feuerbach.[14] The Tübingen School followed a "non-supernatural theological and historical perspective."[15] David Strauss sought to reconstruct the history of the New Testament. He believed that the gospels were primarily mythical writings.[16] The miracles and other supernatural events were redacted in the second century after Jesus' death.[17] Ludwig Feuerbach, who was influenced by Hegelian philosophy, argued

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of God's divine creative power, not evolution. He writes, "The Bible stands openly against the evolutionary development of man, and his gradual ascent through indefinite aeons from the animal." Hague, "Chapter XIV: The Doctrinal Value of the First Chapters of Genesis," in *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*, 4 vols., ed. R. A. Torrey and A. C. Dixon (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2003), 1:280.

13 T. H. Huxley believed that evolution provided "superior" knowledge to that of religion. See A. Hunter Dupree, "Christianity and the Scientific Community in the Age of Darwin," in *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science*, ed. David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 359, 362–65.

14 Friedrich Schleiermacher is considered to be the father of modern theology. He was one of the first to question Pauline authorship of the pastoral letters and he pioneered the quest for the historical Jesus. He laid the groundwork for later scholars to employ the historical-critical method to other disciplines. See Dawn DeVries, "Schleiermacher, Friedrich Daniel Ernst (1768–1834)," *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 889; Roger E. Olson, *The Journey of Modern Theology: From Reconstruction to Deconstruction* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 126.

15 H. Harris, *New Dictionary of Theology,* ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson and J.I. Packer (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), s.v. "Liberalism, German."

16 Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 161.

17 Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1998), 556.

that God is nothing more than the "projection" of finite human nature and attributes onto an "imaginary" being we call God.[18] The more extreme position of Feuerbach demonstrates the great disparity between some forms of liberal theology and older non-critical approaches.

In *Prolegomena to the History of Israel,* Julius Wellhausen applied the historical-critical method and proposed a history of the biblical text that reflected nineteenth-century evolutionary thought.[19] Concerning this work, Paul House writes, "No segment of biblical studies, not even those related to the New Testament, was unaffected by its influence."[20] In this documentary hypothesis, Wellhausen argued that there were four primary sources in the Pentateuch. Although this particular paradigm[21] was established before Wellhausen, he was the first to provide a "coherent" synthesis of prevailing arguments.[22] The Pentateuch, which was composed of four major sources (JDEP), came to this final form in the fifth century.[23] This framework was used to reconstruct the history of Israel's religion, which was divided into three sequential stages: animism, polydaemonism, and monotheism. Wellhausen's interpretation "tended to shatter" people's

18 Robert Duncan Culver, *Systematic Theology: Biblical and Historical* (Rossshire, UK: Mentor, 2005), 213; Mark J. Larson, "Three Centuries of Objections to Biblical Miracles," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 160 (2003): 96–97.

19 Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003). *Prolegomena* was originally published in 1883. See also Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 8–9.

20 Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2006), 25.

21 Eichorn posited a documentary hypothesis of two sources in the book of Genesis, marked by the two divine names. Hupfeld later developed this source theory into the fourfold source hypothesis of P, J, E, and D. Welhaussen adopted these four sources but reversed the order. See Brevard Childs, *An Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1979), 113.

22 Davis, *Shifting Sands*, 22.

23 Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch*, 10.

confidence in the Genesis creation account.[24]

The impact of critical scholarship was far-reaching. The theological concerns, which once dominated biblical studies, were rendered obsolete. The Bible was no longer perceived as an inerrant document and its divine nature was increasingly questioned. B. B. Warfield began his academic ministry in this hostile environment.

The Church's Response to Evolution

In the nineteenth century, Charles Darwin's theory of evolution was still in its infancy. In 1859, Darwin's *The Origin of Species* appeared and found high levels of acceptance in the United States.[25] From the earliest stage of engagement, theologians considered Darwinism to be *a* theory, but not *the* exclusive theory, of evolution.[26] James Orr (1844-1913) writes, "Darwinism is a theory of the process of evolution, and both on account of the skill with which it was presented, and of the singular eminence of its propounder, obtained for a time a very remarkable prestige."[27] Warfield argued that Darwin surrendered his faith on the basis of his naturalistic evolutionary convictions.[28] Natural selection, according to Darwin, appeared in

24 James E. Smith, *The Pentateuch*, 2nd ed., Old Testament Survey Series (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing, 1993), Ge 1:1–2:3.

25 Hans Schwars contrasts the reception of *The Origin of Species* in the United States and Europe, the latter, he argues, was far less enthusiastic about the work: "With relative ease Darwinism became accepted in America in a thoroughly theistic fashion" ("The Significance of Evolutionary Thought for American Protestant Theology: Late Nineteenth-Century Resolutions and Twentieth-Century Problems," *Zygon* 16, no. 3 [1981]: 276).

26 Gundlach, *Process and Providence,* 169.

27 James Orr, *Chapter XVIII: Science and Christian Faith*, vol. 1 of *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth,* eds. R A. Torrey and A C. Dixon (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 345. Warfield also spoke of evolution in its "specifically Darwinian form" (Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Studies in Theology*, 9:250). John Gresham Machen (1881-1937), a contemporary of B. B. Warfield and professor of New Testament at Princeton Seminary, likewise defends orthodox Christianity against the naturalism of liberal thought. See J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 115–17.

28 David N. Livingstone, "B. B. Warfield, The Theory of Evolution and Early Fundamentalism," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (1986): 79. B. B. Warfield writes, "[Darwin's] doctrine of evolution directly expelled his Christian belief" (*The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Studies in Theology*, 9:549).

conflict with the literal interpretation of Scripture. Livingstone and Noll explain, "To Darwin, it seemed that questioning a literalistic reading of Genesis was the same as rejecting the authority of the Old Testament and thus subverting the entire Christian faith."[29] Such a perspective accents the major point of contention in the theological debate: naturalism. It was an approach that theologians sought to transcend by evoking the providence of God.

Old Princeton exhibits the variety of Christian perspectives on evolution in the nineteenth-century. Within its confines were adamant supporters of evolution such as James McGosh (1811-1894), who served as the president of the College of New Jersey from 1868, and hostile adversaries such as Charles Hodge (1797-1878), who was the principal of Princeton Theological Seminary for thirty-eight years (1851-1878).[30]

James McGosh was the first "major religious leader" to voice support for non-naturalistic evolution.[31] In proposing a teleological formulation of Darwin's theory, McGosh struggled to "wrest[le] evolution from infidel hands."[32] Natural law was God's "method" of creation.[33] Warfield followed McGosh's understanding of natural law and teleology in formulating his own view on evolution.

Charles Hodge embodies the anti-evolutionary stream at Princeton. He famously wrote, "What is Darwinism? It is Atheism."[34]

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29 David N. Livingstone and Mark A. Noll, "B. B. Warfield (1851-1921): A Biblical Inerrantist as Evolutionist," *Isis* 91, no. 2 (2000): 297.

30 See Charles Hodge, *What Is Darwinism? And Other Writings on Science and Religion*, ed. Mark A. Noll and David N. Livingstone (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1994). Hodge harshly attacked Darwinism for its naturalistic tendencies and the implications for longstanding theological doctrines. He was far less critical of moderate theories of evolution that did not exclude divine providence and teleology. See Gregory, "The Impact of Darwinian Evolution on Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century," 376–77; W. Brian Aucker, "Hodge and Warfield on Evolution," *Presbyterion* 20, no. 2 (1994): 142.

31 Gundlach, *Process and Providence*, x.

32 Gundlach, *Process and Providence,* 139. See also Livingstone and Noll, "B. B. Warfield," 285.

33 Gregory, "The Impact of Darwinian Evolution on Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century," 380.

34 Charles Hodge, *What Is Darwinism?,* 177. See Peter S. Heslam, "Architects of Evangelical Intellectual Thought: Abraham Kuyper and Benjamin Warfield," *Theme-*

Darwin's theory of evolution *is* atheism because it excludes design, teleology and final causes.[35] Hodge writes, "The conclusion of the whole matter is, that the denial of design in nature is virtually the denial of God."[36] Hodge's exception to Darwinism remained at the forefront of Warfield's engagement with evolutionary theory.

Warfield and the Inspiration of Scripture

Higher criticism altered the traditional conception of the Bible as the divinely inspired and authoritative text of the Church. Christians with a more conservative bent were compelled to respond by reiterating their stance on the inspiration of the Bible. "The Princetonians," George Marsden explains, "were fighting overwhelming odds but going down with their guns blazing."[37] B. B. Warfield offered support for the infallibility of the Scriptures, which he believed was the historic and traditional position of the church.[38] The doctrine is not externally imposed upon the text, for Scripture witnesses to its own plenary inspiration.[39]

The doctrine of inspiration is grounded in the personhood of the God who cannot lie. Therefore, the authority of Scripture, or its inerrancy, is ultimately a characteristic of truthfulness.[40] Those who espouse a definitive doctrine of inerrancy often draw upon B. B. Warfield, who is known for his commitment to the authority of Scripture.

Holy Scripture is God's revealed will and the rule of faith and life.[41] The inspiration of God's Word is "pervasive" and applies to "all the books enumerated without exception, and to all their parts

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lios 24, No. 2 (1999): 8.

35 Schwarz, "The Significance of Evolutionary Thought," 271–72.

36 Charles Hodge, *What Is Darwinism?*, 173. See Ibid., 52, 141, 149-51, 168.

37 George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 124.

38 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Revelation and Inspiration*, 1:56.

39 Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 4 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999), 69.

40 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Revelation and Inspiration,* 1:51.

41 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*, 6:201.

and elements without discrimination."[42] Unlike some modern descriptions, Warfield's doctrine was highly nuanced and "carefully qualified."[43]

It is not the extant manuscripts that are infallible, for these contain copyist errors. Rather, the original autographic text, which was "immediately inspired by God," is inerrant.[44] God has providentially "persevered to the Church, through every vicissitude, these inspired and infallible Scriptures, diffused, indeed, in the multitude of copies, but safe and accessible."[45] The inerrancy of the original manuscripts extends to "any incidental affirmations of scientific and historical fact."[46] Warfield writes, "Every statement accurately corresponds to truth just as far forth as affirmed."[47] He distinguishes his view of inerrancy from a rationalistic view, which has "a lower conception of the inspiration and authority of Scripture."[48] Rationalists apply the doctrine of inspiration to matters of faith and practice alone. In contrast, Warfield argues that the biblical text is inspired in matters of history and science as well. In the book of Genesis, for example, Moses anticipated the conclusions of science thousands of years in

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42 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*, 6:202–203.

43 Moisés Silva, "Old Princeton, Westminster, and Inerrancy," *Westminster Theological Journal* 50, no. 1 (1988): 67.

44 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*, 6:237. The problems associated with locating inerrancy in the so-called original manuscripts are multiplied by the complex redaction history of the biblical manuscripts. For a more recent defense of biblical inerrancy, with an eye toward the original manuscripts and redactionary activity, see Jason Sexton, "NT Text Criticism and Inerrancy," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 17, no. 1 (2006): 51–59. See also David L. Turner, "Evangelicals, Redaction Criticism, and the Current Inerrancy Crisis," *Grace Theological Journal* 4, no. 2 (1983): 263–88; David L. Turner, "Evangelicals, Redaction Criticism, and Inerrancy: The Debate Continues," *Grace Theological Journal* 5, no. 1 (1984): 37–45.

45 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*, 6:238.

46 Gundlach, *Process and Providence*, 161.

47 A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield, *Inspiration* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 29. Quoted in Paul Helm, "B.B. Warfield's Path to Inerrancy: An Attempt to Correct Some Serious Misunderstandings," *Westminster Theological Journal*, no. 72 (2010): 26.

48 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Revelation and Inspiration*, 1:58.

advance. Warfield explains, "It has taken scientific thought up to today to bring its conceptions of the origin of the world to the point at which Moses stood some three millenniums ago."[49] Warfield's qualification is remarkable in view of his refusal to concede to the liberal agenda and jettison the Scriptures in matters of physical science.

The Word of God was characteristically human and divine, although its "origin" was strictly divine. From the beginning the Church has testified that "the Bible is the Word of God in such a sense that its words, though written by men and bearing indelibly impressed upon them the marks of their human origin, were written, nevertheless, under such an influence of the Holy Ghost as to be also the words of God, the adequate expression of His mind and will."[50] The personal experiences and limitations of the writers influenced the composition of the text. Warfield explains,

> It is not merely in the matter of verbal expression or

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49 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Revelation and Inspiration*, 1:442. Warfield, who interprets Genesis as foreshadowing evolutionary creationism, operates with a "concordist" hermeneutic of Scripture and science. Denis Lamoureux questions the viability of concordism with respect to the "recycled and reinterpreted ancient Near Eastern motifs" in the early chapters of Genesis (Denis O. Lamoureux, "Darwinian Theological Insights: Toward an Intellectually Fulfilled Christian Theism—Part I: Divine Creative Action and Intelligent Design in Nature," *Perspectives on Science & Christian Faith* 64, no. 2 [2012]: 116 fn. 11). For this reason, he argues that scholars must "separate" rather than "conflate" the ancient cosmology of the biblical text from "the inerrant Messages of Faith" (Denis O. Lamoureux, "Darwinian Theological Insights: Toward an Intellectually Fulfilled Christian Theism—Part II: Evolutionary Theodicy and Evolutionary Psychology," *Perspectives on Science & Christian Faith* 64, no. 3 [2012]: 174). Biblical authority hinges on our ability to rightly order the relationship between science and the Scriptures. Daniel C. Harlow writes, "General and special revelation are… two distinct kinds of sources that should be accorded their own integrity and not be collapsed into one another" ("Creation According to Genesis: Literary Genre, Cultural Context, Theological Truth," *Christian Scholar's Review* 37, no. 2 [2008]: 165–66). It is questionable, however, whether we are able to so easily separate the spiritual message of Scripture from its ancient medium, as Lamoureux suggests. See Hans Madueme, "'The Most Vulnerable Part of the Whole Christian Account': Original Sin and Modern Science," in *Adam, the Fall, and Original Sin: Theological, Biblical, and Scientific Perspectives*, ed. Michael Reeves and Hans Madueme (Grand Rapid, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 240.

50 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Revelation and Inspiration*, 1:173.

> literary composition that the personal idiosyncrasies of each author are freely manifested…. but the very substance of what they write is evidently, for the most part, the product of their own mental and spiritual activities…. [Each author of Scripture] gave evidence of his own special limitations of knowledge and mental power, and of his personal defects as well as of his powers.[51]

The Holy Spirit commandeered the common language and idioms of the day. "The current sense of a phrase is alone to be considered."[52] On the other hand, the human elements of the Word of God do not impinge upon its divine origin for the biblical authors wrote "as the organs of the Holy Ghost."[53]

In conclusion, Warfield held the biblical text in the highest regard. The inspiration of the Bible was foundational for his theology. If we cannot trust God's Word in every detail, we cannot trust him at all.[54] Warfield explains, "The Bible… is the Word of God in such a sense that whatever it says God says."[55] It was within this framework that he responded to Darwinism and evolutionary theory.

Warfield, Science, and Evolutionary Theory

B. B. Warfield writes, "Theology is as truly a science as physical science."[56] As a science, theology corresponds to objective reality. It has a "fact-basis" and "fact-content," and functions to "give an account of phenomena."[57] Warfield considered theology the "scientia scientarum," that is, the science of sciences.[58] Theology differed from other sciences because the "object is not at the disposal of the

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51 A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield, *Inspiration* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 12.

52 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Revelation and Inspiration*, 1:419.

53 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Calvin and Calvinism*, 5:61.

54 Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 4 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999), 163.

55 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Revelation and Inspiration*, 1:52.

56 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Critical Reviews*, 10:477.

57 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Critical Reviews*, 10:478; 480.

58 See Gundlach, *Process and Providence*, 68–69.

subject, but vice versa."[59] While each individual science orders one sphere of human knowledge, theology as the "scientia scientarum" orders the other sciences. Therefore, theology has a harmonizing function that separates it from the other spheres of science.

Warfield operated with a unitary view of knowledge and welcomed the natural sciences as channels of revelatory truth.[60] The controversial environment demanded that theologians investigate this locus of discrepancy. Warfield's approach to science was marked by serious engagement. He reviewed influential books in the fields of science, theology, and history that considered the relation between science and Christianity.[61] The natural sciences served to reveal knowledge of God. Livingstone and Noll write, "It was unthinkable to suppose that those who studied the earth, the universe, or the history of humankind were not studying the very works of God." [62] Therefore, according to Warfield, science demanded theological engagement.

Warfield's acceptance of evolutionary theory is wrought with difficulty. The difference in opinion among Warfield's interpreters attests to the complexity of his position. David Livingstone and Mark Noll argue that Warfield affirmed evolution throughout his academic career.[63] On the other hand, Fred Zaspel, W. Brian Aucker, and Mark Jones claim that while Warfield was affirming in his youth, he

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59 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Studies in Theology*, 9:9:13.

60 Warfield writes, "[T]he two species or stages of revelation [general and special] should not be set in opposition to one another, or the closeness of their mutual relations or the constancy of their interaction be obscured. They constitute together a unitary whole, and each is incomplete without the other" (*The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Revelation and Inspiration*, 1:6-7). See also. Gundlach, *Process and Providence,* 242; David P. Smith, *B. B. Warfield's Scientifically Constructive Theological Scholarship* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 120–55.

61 Livingstone and Noll, "B. B. Warfield (1851-1921): A Biblical Inerrantist as Evolutionist," 283.

62 Livingstone and Noll, "B. B. Warfield (1851-1921): A Biblical Inerrantist as Evolutionist," 291.

63 See Livingstone, "B. B. Warfield, The Theory of Evolution and Early Fundamentalism"; Livingstone and Noll, "B. B. Warfield (1851-1921): A Biblical Inerrantist as Evolutionist." See also Stephen N. Williams, "Adam, the Fall, and Original Sin: A Review Essay," *Themelios* 40, no. 2 (2015): 215–17.

rejected the theory later in life.[64] All scholars agree, however, that Warfield refined his position as he researched the scientific evidence and studied the Scriptures. Furthermore, Warfield remained open, in varying degrees, to the possibility that evolution explained God's providential activity.

Every science orders and harmonizes a certain sphere of knowledge and "may throw a broad and most helpful light upon the written text."[65] This occurred, Warfield argued, in the creation narrative of Gen. 1–3. He writes, "Science is making her first steps in reading the records of God's creative hand in the structure of the world itself."[66] Warfield anticipated further progression in theologians' interpretation of Genesis.

Warfield assumed that ancient perspectives were embedded in the biblical text. For the inspiration of the Holy Spirit did not circumvent the biblical writers' views of the cosmos. The biblical writer could,

> share the ordinary opinions of his day in certain matters lying outside the scope of his teachings, as, for example, with reference to the form of the earth, or its relation to the sun…and, it is not inconceivable that the form of his language, when incidentally adverting to such matters, might occasionally play into the hands of such a presumption.[67]

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64 Fred G. Zaspel, "B. B. Warfield on Creation and Evolution," *Themelios* 35, no. 2 (2010): 198–211; Fred G Zaspel, "Princeton and Evolution," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 8 (2012): 91–98; Aucker, "Hodge and Warfield on Evolution"; Mark Jones, "Strange Bedfellows: Darwinism and The Reformed Theological Tradition," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 11 (2015): 41–53.

65 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Revelation and Inspiration*, 1:206. Warfield's statement may be compared with Charles Darwin's assertion: "In the distant future I see open fields for far more important researches… Light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history" (Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, ed. Joseph Carroll [Peterborough, Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press, 2003], 397).

66 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Revelation and Inspiration*, 1:206.

67 B. B. Warfield, "The Real Problem of Inspiration," in *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1948), 166-67. Cited in Paul H. Seely, "The Geographical Meaning of 'Earth' and 'Seas' in Genesis 1:10," *Westminster Theological Journal* 59, no. 2 (1997): 255.

The Scriptures are not intended to communicate philosophy, science, or "human history."[68] Therefore, in constructing a plausible account of human origins, Warfield engaged relevant scientific theories as reliable sources for understanding the details of God's creationary activity.[69] Following in the footsteps of James McGosh, Warfield offered a mediating position by interpreting evolutionary theory through a teleological lens. Darwin's theory of evolution goes awry in its attempt to bridge science and philosophy.[70] The theory makes claims about God that lie outside the realm of physical science.[71] Natural selection, the "vera causa" of material origins, was set against God's creative intervention.[72] Warfield writes, "Thus to [Darwin] God became an increasingly unnecessary and therefore an increasingly incredible hypothecation."[73] Darwin erred in his rejection of teleology, for by excluding final causes in his scheme he

68 A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield, *Inspiration* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 29. While the Bible was not written as a repository of the secondary sciences, such as physical science, it remains uniquely authoritative whenever it incidentally touches upon these matters. This distinction contributed to Warfield's twofold reception and rejection of elements of evolutionary theory, for he believed the Scriptures allowed liberty in certain matters, such as the antiquity of humankind, but restraint in others, such as the unity of the human race. See Warfield's discussion, "On the Antiquity and the Unity of the Human Race," in *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Studies in Theology*, 9:235–58.

69 Warfield's openness is periodically restricted, however, by his doctrine of inspiration. In *Revelation and Inspiration*, Warfield criticizes those who look outside the biblical documents for the "Bible's doctrine of creation" or the "Bible's doctrine of man". This approach, he argues, epitomizes "an unwillingness to commit… to the *teaching* of the Bible" (*The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Revelation and Inspiration*, 1:204). On the surface Warfield rejects the conclusion of physical science; however, his emphasis lies in the specialized nature of the sciences, in which knowledge or truth is governed by the relevant discipline. The statement is not intended to dismiss the legitimacy of science but rather to maintain consistency among the many fields of study.

70 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Studies in Theology*, 9:246.

71 See Fred G. Zaspel, *The Theology of B. B. Warfield: A Systematic Summary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 369–70; Zaspel, "B. B. Warfield on Creation and Evolution," 199–200.

72 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Studies in Theology*, 553, 554.

73 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Studies in Theology*, 9:553.

thrust the providence of God aside.[74] However, as a theory of God's providential care, evolution illumines the biblical text.

Natural law, Warfield argues, is an outworking of God's "providential government."[75] God's providence extends to the second causes in creation. He writes, "The forces with which [the universe] was endowed are competent for its ordinary government and he traces in their action the divine purpose unrolling its faultless scroll."[76] Natural laws truly "express" the character of God, yet he is not bound by the natural laws and is free to act apart from them.[77] God acts in a "mediate" way through the evolutionary process to bring about developments impossible apart from his enablement.[78]

Warfield's understanding of evolution differed significantly from Darwin's philosophical naturalism. He writes, "'[E]volution' cannot act as a substitute for creation, but at best can supply only a theory of the method of the divine providence."[79] Chance and time, the two causes of change in a naturalistic theory of evolution, are unable to account for the "whole body of differentiated forms which animate nature presents to our observation."[80] Therefore, the universe is not an "absolutely closed system" for creation necessitates divine intervention.[81]

God's initial creationary act, ex nihilo, evades naturalistic conceptions of the universe. Warfield explains, "In creation, therefore,

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74 According to Lamoureux, Darwin did not discount teleology outright; rather, he rejected Paley's approach to design. See Lamoureux, "Darwinian Theological Insights: Toward an Intellectually Fulfilled Christian Theism—Part II," 168–69; Lamoureux, "Darwinian Theological Insights: Toward an Intellectually Fulfilled Christian Theism—Part I"; Denis O. Lamoureux, *Evolutionary Creation: A Christian Approach to Evolution* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 8–9.

75 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Studies in Theology*, 9:37. See also Gundlach, *Process and Providence,* 243.

76 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Studies in Theology*, 9:36.

77 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Studies in Theology*, 9:32, 38–9.

78 Livingstone and Noll, "B. B. Warfield (1851-1921): A Biblical Inerrantist as Evolutionist," 299.

79 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Studies in Theology*, 9:235.

80 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Studies in Theology*, 9:246.

81 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Critical Reviews*, 10:455; cf. Ibid., 3:299.

the Christian … is bound to confess a frankly supernatural act—an act above nature, independent of nature, by which nature itself and all its laws were brought into existence."[82] Such an occurrence is not unique, Warfield argues, for supernaturalism pervades God's providential care over his creation. He explains, "The Christian conception of creation involves thus the frankest recognition of the supernatural act."[83]

Naturalistic philosophy, likewise, offers an inadequate explanation of the soul. Warfield writes, "The fundamental assertion of the Biblical doctrine of the origin of man is that he owes his being to a creative act of God."[84] The Scriptural doctrine of the soul, Warfield argues, requires that God interfered with the evolutionary process to produce "an immaterial principle of life."[85] Warfield conceived of evolution within a theological framework grounded in God's providence. Thus, particular features of Darwinism and other evolutionary theories were found incompatible and precluded from Warfield's own evolutionary proposals. Warfield established his position upon the Scriptures and evidence from the physical sciences.

Warfield had significant reservations with particular forms of evolutionary theory. Nevertheless, he was a pioneer in critically engaging scientific developments within the confines of his theological program. He did not consciously adapt his interpretation in order to fit the scientific agenda. K. A. Mathews explains, "[Warfield] recognized that evolution was subject to correction whereas Scripture was not—only human interpretation of Scripture could be revised, not the text itself."[86] Discrepancies between physical science and theology, the "scientia scientarum," were the product of an inadequate understanding of either nature or the Scriptures, and overcome through careful and critical study. Warfield's receptive posture toward all truth enabled him to refine his theological system in dialogue with contemporaneous scientific findings.

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82 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Studies in Theology*, 9:35.

83 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Studies in Theology*, 9:34.

84 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Studies in Theology*, 9:235.

85 Gundlach, *Process and Providence*, 239.

86 K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 108–109.

A Reflection on Current Scholarship

B. B. Warfield paints a portrait of honest theological engagement and thereby serves to guide the modern evangelical debate, which remains unresolved. He sought to engage truth in areas uncommon within his tradition. For him, the Bible was the authoritative Word of God and evolution was consistent with the text and his confession. Scholars may model Warfield's approach in refusing to cast the debate of evolution and creationism in absolute terms. In honorable reflection upon the Biblical text, theologians and scientists have gifted the church with alternative (i.e. untraditional) accounts of human origins that consider God's revelation within and without the Holy Scriptures.[87] These many mediating positions warrant a hearing.

There are two common, though frequently overlooked, presuppositions of those engaging science from an evangelical perspective. First of all, the evangelical controversy presupposes the authority of the biblical text. For this reason, scholars confuse the issue in setting theistic evolution against Scriptural authority. The Old Testament scholar, Bruce Waltke, is an exemplar in this regard in that he is committed to "the inerrancy of Scripture as to its Source and its infallibility as to its authority."[88] Despite his strong claims, Waltke is accused of abandoning evangelicalism and an orthodox view of Scripture for defending theistic evolution. Geisler and Roach write, "[The] former creationist and evangelical Old Testament scholar Bruce Waltke has

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87 E.g. see Lamoureux, *Evolutionary Creation: A Christian Approach to Evolution*; Patrick S. Franklin, "Understanding the Beginning in the Light of the End: Eschatological Reflection on Making Theological Sense of Evolution," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 66, no. 3 (2014): 154–70; Daniel C. Harlow, "After Adam: Reading Genesis in an Age of Evolutionary Science," *Perspectives on Science & Christian Faith* 62, no. 3 (September 2010): 179–95; John C. Polkinghorne, *Science & Creation: The Search for Understanding* (Philadelphia, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2007); Meredith G. Kline, "Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 48, no. 1 (1996): 2–15; Nancey Murphy, "Science, Divine Action, and the Intelligent Design Movement: A Defense of Theistic Evolution," in *Intelligent Design: William A. Dembski & Michael Ruse in Dialogue*, ed. Robert B. Stewart (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 156–65. For a recent account of intellectual design see Stephen C. Meyer, *Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2014).

88 Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 77.

jumped ship and become a theistic evolutionist."[89] Such polarizing terms are fruitless as the discussion veers toward unhelpful questions of nuancing "inerrancy" or "infallibility" properly.[90] The issue at hand concerns the interpretation of the Bible, not its governance or rule over the Christian faith—a perspective which unites evangelicals. Furthermore, this criticism distracts from the larger issues of the biblical and scientific evidence.

Second, all parties describe their position in terms of "creation" and assign God either an active or providential role in creation.[91] For example, Denis Lamoureux writes, "the universe and life evolved through a teleological process that was ordained and sustained by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."[92] Evolutionary creationism does not entail a naturalistic worldview. Therefore, arguments that stress the disastrous effects of naturalism inevitably fail to advance the conversation by casting the debate in strict terms of creationism versus evolutionism—a distinction which no longer holds with respect to the recent proposals of theistic evolutionists.

By way of conclusion and in light of our interaction with B. B. Warfield, I want to offer several suggestions for the church's engagement in the science-theology dialogue.

Selfless Scholarship

In humility, scholars ought to imitate the risen Lord, who refused "to exploit the privilege of his deity and, giving up that right, became a slave" (Phil. 2:7).[93] In refusing to exalt the self, a scholar must be willing "to put his or her ego up for stakes; to abandon

89 Geisler and Roach, *Defending Inerrancy*, 349. See also Jones, "Strange Bedfellows," 45.

90 Defining terms is necessary to alleviate discrepancy, however, such discussions are only beneficial insofar as they advance the conversation. Unfortunately, the focus typically turns to discerning boundary markers of an unidentified "guild."

91 See Gerald Rau, *Mapping the Origins Debate: Six Models of the Beginning of Everything* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013); Deborah B. Haarsma and Loren D. Haarsma, *Origins: Christian Perspectives on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design* (Grand Rapids, MI: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2011).

92 Lamoureux, *Evolutionary Creation: A Christian Approach to Evolution*, 19.

93 Frank Thielman, *Philippians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 117–118.

long-cherished positions when necessary; and to acknowledge how and why one's mind has changed."[94] In an age of social media, every word is cemented in cyberspace and it is increasingly difficult to retract previous statements. The first step toward genuine engagement is a release of immutable and fixed dogmatic positions. God's Word stands, even if our fallible reconstructions fall. True humility is evidenced when scholars courageously retract or reform previous statements in light of new evidence.

Epistemological Openness

In the ebb and flow of Warfield's academic career, his certainty regarding evolution wavered. Nevertheless, he maintained a receptive disposition toward natural science throughout his life. Warfield displayed an epistemological openness toward subject matter outside of his primary discipline. Christians are not required to have a definite stance on every issue. Moreover, particular situations and uncertainties may force scholars to withhold definite proclamations. John Frame interprets the creation account in Genesis as a literal six-day period. Nevertheless, he writes, "I am not so certain of the literal interpretation as to judge the alternatives irresponsible."[95] In humility, he willingly reserves space for other viewpoints.

Scholars must consider alternative understandings of the text and their possible scientific implications. Dennis E. Johnson captures both the present tension and the future hope of finite human understanding. He writes,

> Here and now our ears and minds will never be fully attuned to hear the harmony of God's two words, never able to resolve all tensions, explain all mysteries, and convince all objectors, any more than here and now we

94 William G. Dever, *What Did The Biblical Writers Know And When Did They Know It?: What Archeology Can Tell Us About the Reality of Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 91.

95 John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2010), 198. In a more recent article, Frame is more certain of the literal six-day interpretation of the Genesis creation account and more inclined to rule out other interpretations. See John M. Frame, "Inerrancy: A Place to Live," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 57, no. 1 (2014): 32.

> always love others as ourselves or worship God wholeheartedly. This unsettling situation is livable, however, because the Truth himself has promised that today's flawed and fragmentary understanding, a dim, distorted reflection, will tomorrow give way to clear, face-to-face sight.[96]

In view of our own fallibility and imperfection, we trust God in the midst of seemingly irreconcilable differences. Warfield writes, "The science and religion of perfected humanity will of course be in harmony. What we have in the meantime, however, is only the distorted reflection of reality in warped intellects, dimmed by imperfections and clouded by prepossessions."[97] Christians remain open to the unknown future, the realm of the possibility of resolution.

Serious Engagement

Evolutionary theory has matured since its early stages in the nineteenth century. Confined by his context, Warfield's scientific views were naïve according to modern standards. Nevertheless, his level of intellectual engagement with the scientific community was striking. He reached outside of his discipline in order to gain awareness of the latest findings and to provide the church with resources and tools to participate in the conversation. Warfield represents a model of the Christian theologian that scholars continue to embody. The perceived conflict between science and faith is irreconcilable so long as those involved avoid serious engagement.[98] Therefore, the task of the church is to continue to appropriate the theological significance of the physical sciences for the people of God. In this task, there is no substitute for rigorous study.

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96 Dennis E. Johnson, "Between Two Wor(l)ds: Worldview and Observation in the Use of General Revelation to Interpret Scripture, and Vice Versa," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41, no. 1 (1998): 84.

97 Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Critical Reviews*, 10:481.

98 This is not a call for all theologians to master each controversial topic that arises in the church, for such a demand is impossible. However, the certainty with which Christians espouse their views should reflect their level of engagement with the subject matter. Ecclesial communities may also attend to controversial issues together, leveraging the strengths of the whole in order to advance the conversation and offer a unified voice.

Many Old Testament scholars, conservative and liberal, argue that the book of Genesis depicts an ancient understanding of the cosmos.[99] The author of Genesis did not write in a "cultural vacuum."[100] Along these lines, Bruce Waltke argues that since the Bible is not written to communicate science, it should not be used to critique scientific theories. Waltke explains, "This [science] is not the Bible's concern."[101] The upshot of this critique is that the book of Genesis does not speak *directly* to the truthfulness of evolution.

The direction of biblical studies cannot be ignored and interpretation of these chapters must reflect authorial intent. Nevertheless, while the Scriptures are not predisposed to answering the questions of science, their authority is confirmed in the projection of an inclusive metanarrative, which governs Christian reflection within and without the text. Warfield's engagement with the scientific community was never isolated from the fabric of the Scriptures. He softened his reception of evolutionary theory throughout his life with various addendums, such as a rejection of philosophical naturalism, because of his unwavering devotion to the authority of the Bible.

Conclusion

The presence of new and constructive Christian interaction with science is ever increasing. The church will reap the benefits of such engagement in the years to come. Warfield is an example of one who realized the possible interchange between God's two modes

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99 See e.g. John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 166; Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say about Human Origins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2012), xiii; John H. Walton, *The Lost World Of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2009), 16-22; John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2-3 and the Human Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2015), 35–4; Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1986), 25.

100 Harlow, "Creation According to Genesis," 167.

101 Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 75 fn. 80. See also C. John Collins, *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2005), 265–66; Gregory K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 161–218.

of revelation. Without the more developed evolutionary theories of the twenty-first century, he willingly assumed a courteous approach within his context. He celebrated the possibilities of adapting and integrating scientific proposals into his theological position.

Christians must faithfully engage the two books of God's revelation without losing the foundational authority of the Scriptures. God has spoken to us by the Word incarnate in the Word of Scripture. The Word of God, as special revelation, remains the authoritative guide for theologians of the church. God also speaks through his creation, as the locale of general revelation. These two books interact and converse, bringing us deeper into the knowledge of God.

Finding Confident Faith in Science

S. Joshua Swamidass*

Abstract

We live in a scientific world, one that looks to science as the only reliable path to public truth. In this world, where do people of faith look for confidence? In this moment, many look to scientific arguments for God, and scientific arguments against evolution. We hope these arguments will guard our faith and convince the skeptic. But is this confidence proper? Is it really secure? In the centuries preceding modern science, and to this day, Christians found confident faith another way, outside of science, in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. There is an opportunity, even in science, to take find confidence in this same way. We find that nothing in science diminishes Jesus; nothing here threatens Him. Here, we can find a proper confidence.

Introduction

How should followers of Jesus think about science? Often, this question collapses into a debate about our origins. But this debate is not just about the esoteric details of our distant past. No, the debate strikes much deeper, much more personally. We are searching for a confident faith.

Well-meaning efforts often assert that faith and science occupy different, non-interacting domains.[1] Perhaps science adjudicates facts, while religion instructs our values. Or maybe science is the

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1 For example, Stephen Jay Gould famously advocated the notion of non-overlapping magisteria (NOMA). For various approaches to faith-science dialogue, see chapter 1 of John Polkinghorne's *Science and the Trinity: The Christian Encounter with Reality* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

authority on the physical world, but religion is the authority on the spiritual world.

These well-meaning efforts, however, are misguided. The problem is that our faith makes unavoidable and important factual claims about what has happened in the physical world. We find that God reveals himself in history. According to Scripture, Jesus died and was buried. Three days later he rose again, and was seen by many. The Gospel is rooted here, in the Resurrection, a physical event in the material world that science does not and cannot affirm. We cannot, therefore, accept that science is the final authority of all things in the physical world. While we affirm the importance of science, we cannot accept it as a final authority.

Our entire faith hinges on the Gospel, which is rooted in a factual claim about this historical event in the physical world. This is the Gospel that began the Christian faith and sustained it through thousands of years of history. When we respond in trust to Jesus, the Gospel continues in us, and we too join the many who see him.

If Jesus truly rose from the dead, this rightly reorders how we see the entire world, including science. Our world looks to science, but we find our Truth in Jesus. So, at the center of the origins debate is a struggle for confident faith in a scientific world. Some look to scientific arguments for God and against evolution. These arguments attempt to affirm Christian faith using science, the authority of this world. This affirmation builds our confidence.

But should we trust science for our confidence? Is this even proper? Modern science itself has not been around until very recently. It arose just over a few hundred years ago. Yet even without science, Christians for over a thousand years maintained confident faith in Jesus. Why would our faith need science today?

Christians want to build their confidence on a solid foundation. In our scientific world, we are tempted to think this foundation should be formed from scientific arguments. The problem, however, is that scientific arguments are shifting sand; they are not solid ground. Even the strongest truth claims in science are only provisional, approximate, temporary, and always open to revision. The details are in constant flux and dispute. Scientists may one day agree that an argument for God or against evolution is compelling. Even then, scientists' acceptance of this argument would only be provisional,

and could evaporate with new evidence, a clever experiment, or a more appealing explanation. Still, in this world, science is the final authority, threatening our confidence, causing doubt, and tempting us from the Gospel.

As Christians, we should doubt that any human effort could bring us to God. Science does not speak of God, but only of physical things. Modern science is a human effort, using a set of very restrictive rules,[2] to explain the natural causes of physical things in the material world. Scientific discovery is strongly shaped by our biases, preconceptions, and technological barriers. It is restrained by a host of inescapable human limitations. Science is a human enterprise. It cannot bring us to God. Rather, it is the saving work of Jesus on the cross and the illuminating work of the Spirit in our lives that bring us into a right relationship with Christ and make it possible for us to know him. We cannot find Jesus on our own; Jesus reveals himself to us.

I am a practicing scientist at a leading university in Saint Louis and have been immersed in science from my youth. Science captured me with its beauty, mystery, and power. Even in science, I find that Jesus is my solid Rock; all other ground is sinking sand. This article tells my journey to proper confidence.[3]

Other Ground is Sinking Sand

I was born and raised in southern California by a Christian family of Indian immigrants. I chose to trust in Jesus very young, as a toddler, with a simple unquestioning faith.

As the story goes, I had a fever. I asked my mom, "What happens when we die?" My mother panicked. She thought I asked because death itself approached. Convinced this could be our last conversation, she fervently shared the Gospel story of Jesus, the Cross, and the Resurrection. I responded with trust. This belief was simple and genuine. I believed because my mother believed.

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2 For example, modern science does not ever consider God's action; this is often referred to as "methodological naturalism." Therefore, even clear evidence of creation cannot be identified as such within mainstream science.

3 In using the phrase 'proper confidence' I am alluding to Lesslie Newbigin's book, *Proper Confidence: Faith, Doubt, and Certainty in Christian Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

As I grew older, questions formed and grew alongside my simple faith. Even at a young age, I was drawn to science. I watched the Discovery Channel to learn about dinosaurs and sharks. The offhand remarks about the age of the earth and evolution in these shows were immediately recognizable as a challenge to my faith. They were inconsistent with the creation story I had learned from church. In a search for confidence, I settled on some simple arguments about the impossibility of evolution that I heard at church. These arguments were a safe place to which I could retreat when I encountered evolution in my exploration of science. I could cleverly reject these offhand comments about evolution as misinformed and wrong.

One afternoon, when I was about 10 years old, I was sitting at home at the kitchen table. A middle-aged man, a guest in our home, sat down across from me and struck up a conversation. Somehow, the topic drifted to evolution. The man was a Christian, and said that he thought evolution was scientifically possible but did not actually happen. I pressed him on this, and he calmly argued why the science behind evolutionary change made sense to him. At the same time, the Bible's account left him confident that life did not come about this way. Still, evolutionary mechanisms were feasible. This man did not even believe that evolution had happened, just that it was possible.

Into tears I burst.

This poor man was shaken, scrambling to comfort this suddenly incoherent and sobbing child. I recall him frantically trying to explain what had transpired to my confused parents. I cried at the kitchen table. My tears were uncontrollable and unexpected. Why?

When this man explained how evolution made scientific sense to him, he was not just expressing a harmless opinion. In my world, he was ripping to shreds a protective barrier between my insulated Christian world and the science that seemed to contradict my faith. How would I be a Christian now, without this security? As a child, I did not have the vocabulary to express my fear and confusion. I did not have the intellectual strength to harden my arguments, only tears.[4]

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4 I am aware that this article itself would have probably provoked this response in me as a child. I imagine that some are threatened by my message, on a deeply emotional level, even now. I understand. This is hard, but follow me a bit longer and we will see Jesus.

I was experiencing the consequences of building my faith on the sinking ground of scientific arguments. This sort of faith would always be at risk of encountering someone smarter, more informed, or more articulate than me. It would always be threatened by the progress of scientific understanding. This sort of faith is insecure, and does not have proper confidence.

For now, an unstable faith was my fate. I was a child, after all, surrounded by Christians building confidence from science in our scientific world.

Encountering Jesus and Junior High

In junior high, someone asked me why I was a Christian. I responded that I believed that Christianity was true. He suggested that the only reason I thought this was because my parents told me so. Would I follow Jesus if my parents were not Christians?

This question haunted me for years. Certainly, I could not have trusted Jesus as a toddler had my family not been Christian. In this hypothetical world, perhaps with Hindu parents, would I have the wherewithal and courage to find and follow Jesus? Who could know? I turned the question around. If I found that my faith was senseless, would I be willing to part ways with my family and leave it? I resolved the answer had to be "yes," and that I needed to know for myself if Jesus was worth following. Yes, my parents believed, but that was not enough for me. Not anymore.

In many ways, my Christian faith was senseless at the time. I was surrounded by Christians at a private school, but was very lonely. I was the only Indian kid in my classes, and none of us understood the cultural conflicts that constantly arose. I was awkward and did not have many friends. Church was no better. Knowing most of the facts in the Bible already, Sunday school was mind-numbingly boring; I knew all the stories. I did know Jesus too, and felt his presence when I prayed at night. Still, I was lost, sad and alone.

I was silent with my doubts, unsure of how my family would respond. My doubts drove me inward and I read voraciously. My search continued for over a year. Somehow, a turning point came when I picked up *More than a Carpenter* by Josh McDowell. In this book, McDowell starts with his personal story. In college, he met a curious group of Christians.

> They challenged me to make a rigorous, intellectual examination of the claims of Jesus Christ—that he is God's Son; that he inhabited a human body and lived among real men and women; that he died on the cross for the sins of humanity; that he was buried and was resurrected three days later; and that he is still alive and can change a person's life even today.[5]

This challenge sent him down a path of study, so much like my own. It consumed him for months. In this study, McDowell encountered Jesus, finding him to be more than a carpenter. Jesus was all he claimed to be. As McDowell puts it:

> I want to share with you the core of what I learned in my months of research so that you, too, may see that Christianity is not a myth, not the fantasy of wishful dreamers, not a hoax played on the simpleminded. It is rock-solid truth.[6]

McDowell learned that the Gospel story makes sense through the lens of history. Jesus inhabits a singular, unique moment. After his execution, belief in Jesus should have died for good. Instead, the Resurrection inspired and sustained his previously terrified and scattered followers. This moment is confirmed by prophecy from centuries before. It is confirmed by the testimony of all believers over thousands of years and across many cultures. And it is confirmed in McDowell's search, when he discovered Jesus' presence in his life. Here, I saw and trusted Jesus too.

As a timid, lonely eighth-grader, I responded again to the Gospel, thus marking the beginning of my independent faith in Jesus. My faith was not rooted in scientific arguments against evolution. It was not rooted in clever philosophy or worldly intelligence. And it was not rooted in my family. Instead, with proper confidence, my faith was rooted in the real person and work of Jesus.

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5 Josh McDowell, *More Than a Carpenter* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2009), 5.

6 McDowell, *More Than a Carpenter*, 7.

That summer I went to a weeklong camp. Arriving in the mountains, I was dismayed to discover that the program was full of Bible studies and church services. I expected to be bored out of my mind. I was wrong.

A "short, fat, bald man" (as he introduced himself) took the stage in an outdoor amphitheater. He opened with a ridiculous story about a defecating cow, and then set in to explaining from Jeremiah how God shapes us as a potter shapes clay. My eyes were opened. I saw God's hand at work in specific details of my dark loneliness. I saw him hold my past and my present. I saw hope in my future, as he held my life to mold and use me. The moment was anointed, channeling something otherworldly. Words are inadequate to describe this moment. It was worshipful. I had gone to church before. I had sung the songs. I had prayed. I had read the Bible. Somehow, up in the mountains at this camp, God opened the heavens and revealed Himself to me.

I struggle to understand my experience to this day. Though not illogical, it was not driven by logic. I cannot scientifically prove it. I do not fully understand it. Something mysterious is here. Nonetheless, Jesus encountered me; he silenced my doubts.

The Gospel's Sameness

The Gospel story is haunted by a mysterious power that reaches people from all times, cultures, statuses, and personalities. I understand this as evidence of a living God, continuing his infallible work in history. The Gospel is an ancient story through which a living God reveals himself. The unflinching sameness of the Gospel through millennia should encourage confidence.

This same Gospel echoes through thousands of years of Jewish and Christian thought and experience. It is found in prophecy, centuries before Jesus' birth. This is the same Gospel of which Isaiah writes around 700 BC (Isa. 52:13-53:12). I would read his songs in junior high, about a suffering servant that bears the sins of the world. Jesus is this servant. This is the same Gospel of which Daniel spoke around 600 BC. In high school, I would read his 70-weeks prophecy that foretold the year an anointed prince would come to bring everlasting righteousness. Jesus is this prince (Dan. 9:24-26).

In Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, this same Gospel turns the course of history. Tearing in two, from top to bottom, the dividing curtain that separates us from God (Heb. 10:20; Mt. 27:51), he reorders our world and becomes our cornerstone.

In the early church, this is the same Gospel of which Paul writes in his letters. He declares that Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures; he was buried, but then arose three days later, and was seen by many (1 Cor. 15:4-5). This is the same Gospel that, without political power, spread with unreasonable success in the first few generations across the globe. This is the same Gospel that St. Augustine wrote about in his *Confessions* in 400 AD. I read his witness of Jesus during my first year of college and recognized my own faith to be one with his.

In our modern world, this is the same Gospel of which the great scientist Pascal wrote in the 1650s. In high school, I read Pascal's *Thoughts*, his version of *More than a Carpenter*, and saw my future as a Scientist-Christian. This is the same Gospel of which C. S. Lewis wrote in 1950. In elementary school, I read *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, recognizing the great lion Aslan as Jesus incarnate, working out Narnia's redemption. This is the same Gospel of which Lesslie Newbigin wrote in 1995. As a professor, I would read his *Proper Confidence* and see again that Jesus is our only path to confident faith. This is the same Gospel of which Dr. Francis Collins wrote in 2006. I would read his story, *The Language of God*, in graduate school and recognize his path to Jesus as the same as mine. This is the same Gospel that my mother recounted to toddler me, so many years ago. And yes, this is the same Gospel that continues to be compelling in our scientific world.[7]

Seen clearly in history, the mystery of the Gospel's sameness is a prophetic wonder, inviting us to rest and trust. It does not seek approval from this world's shifting authorities. This sameness, too,

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7 The works to which I refer include: Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts*, ed. W. F. Trotter, Mary L. Booth, and O. W. Wight (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1910); C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994); Lesslie Newbigin, *Proper Confidence: Faith, Doubt, and Certainty in Christian Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); and Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York: Free Press, 2006).

we doubt. Threatened by a world that trusts in science, will the same Gospel be enough, or should we make it new?

Arguments and High School

I entered public high school the next fall. In a secular school for the first time, I wanted to support my faith with scientific evidence and scientific proof. I started reading scientific books about creation. The allure is obvious. There is scientific evidence demonstrating that the Bible explains the world better than science? (Let's pause for a second to let that irony sink in.) If such evidence existed, I needed to find it and use it among my classmates. These books delivered exactly what they advertised. They convinced me that the science I was learning in biology was wrong.

There was only one problem. My friends did not find this evidence convincing. One of my friends was an atheist. I will be always thankful for his patience with me. He listened to all of my arguments and looked at all the evidence I found, and then methodically explained why he remained unconvinced. I would study more, come back, and try again. The same pattern would play out: he would listen, then explain reasonable reasons why he remained unconvinced. He was calm and unthreatened by my arguments. He thought about them and offered nothing but reasonable, logical resistance.

I was stumped. Honestly, I was threatened. Perhaps these arguments were correct; perhaps the evidence did point to God. Yet, none of the arguments and evidence were definitive. They could not convince a reasonable skeptic.

The two best arguments were the origin of life and the fine-tuning of cosmological constants.

Science is quite far from understanding how the first living cell arose on earth. Professor Walter Bradley's *The Mystery of Life's Origins* is a study of this point. It is entirely possible that science will never understand how life began by natural processes; it may very well be impossible. This suggests a point in our history that God might have intervened directly.

Similarly, many cosmological constants are "fine-tuned," set precisely so life is possible. No mechanism that could have tuned these constants has been proven. This might suggest that a transcen-

dent God ensured the universe would be hospitable for us. Or, as alternative solutions, scientists offer either the multiverse theory or an unknown "unified theory" of everything. Theoretically, if correct, these solutions might solve the fine-tuning problem. However, neither of them has been proven scientifically.

As a Christian, I understand these arguments to be the most intractable parts of the scientific account of our origins that might require the direct, supernatural work of God. As an atheist, my friend understood them as wondrous mysteries that science might someday understand. There is, unfortunately, no scientific way to determine whether or not these puzzles required God's intervention. Science has an amazing track record of explaining things that initially seemed to be impossible. So, neither the argument from fine-tuning nor the origin of life is inescapable. The most to hope for is that these arguments might stimulate curiosity, but they cannot box the atheist into belief. Besides, belief in God is not trust in Jesus.

Even in the rare case that our arguments convince an informed skeptic, they do not usually lead to belief in Jesus. For example, the philosopher and prominent atheist Antony Flew found some of these arguments compelling in his final years. In 2001, he came to believe that God created the universe but is no longer involved. Essentially, Flew became a Deist. He died in 2010, and by all accounts he did not ever come to faith in Jesus.[8] His story is not singular, but very rare. Even if stories like his were common, belief in God is not trust in Jesus.

Our debate was so far from the Gospel. To this day, I still regret that I did not share more about my experience with Jesus. Sure, my friend might still walk away a skeptic, but Jesus is more compelling than any scientific argument I found. To be sure, we were just two high school kids arguing about things much greater than us. We were not well-trained gladiators in a sophisticated battle of logic and

8 Flew was a famous atheist who came to believe that God existed. He was convinced by the fine-tuning, the origin of life, and the existence of natural laws for science to discover. Of note, none of the arguments against biological evolution were helpful. Encouragingly, Flew's inclusion of an appendix written by N. T. Wright on the historicity of the Resurrection indicates he was considering Jesus, but he never publicly acknowledged him. Antony Flew, *There Is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind* (New York: HarperOne, 2007).

rhetoric. Though, even among the gladiators, these arguments are not decisive.

Scientific arguments that appeal easily to Christians are not nearly as convincing to reasonable skeptics and even many seekers. What good is scientific proof for God that only satisfies Christians? Why not start with the story and person of Jesus, and his work on the cross?

All Creation Declares His Glory

Our world looks to science, so we want God to be revealed there. Some look to science to prove God and affirm the Bible. We find this proof in scientific arguments that logically use scientific evidence to point to God. We justify this effort from Paul's 'natural theology,' citing for example his words from Romans 1:20: "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."

We should know from Scripture, it would seem, that there is strong, scientific evidence of God's design, even before we actually find that evidence in the world. Now, from the outset, we engage science certain that strong, clear evidence for God exists that science can demonstrate. We only have to find it. Now, faced with science's silence about God and creation, we wonder if a dedicated conspiracy of scientists has hidden and confused the message in nature (Rom. 1:18), and thereby suppressed the Gospel in our world.

Let us remember that this same passage teaches that human wickedness successfully "suppresses the truth" that God reveals to us through nature. However, the Gospel of Jesus cannot be overcome by darkness (Jn. 1:5). Unlike nature, no human conspiracy can stand against the Gospel, and it is through Jesus that we turn from idolatry to see him correctly in our world.

Let us also remember that modern science did not exist when Paul wrote: "since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities have been clearly seen." Science as we know it did not arise for at least another 1500 years. Paul was writing something that made sense within the context of his own time, when belief in God or gods was pervasive. What Paul refers to as "clearly seen" is not the fine-tuning or the origin of life arguments as explained by Christians

in our scientific world. He cannot be speaking of irreducible complexity either. Whatever these arguments are, they are not "clearly seen" by all people from the "beginning of creation."

No, Paul is not speaking of scientific arguments. Rather, he writes of the awe and wonder we all experience in nature's beauty, mystery, power, and vastness, and how this declares an encounter with something transcendent: the grand, the invisible, and the eternal. Nothing in science dampens nature's declaration of these immortal qualities. It is so startling that we invented deities to explain its origin. It is so clear that it does not require scientific arguments to amplify its voice. Poets and artists from all times and cultures sing of it. It is so startling that it can, and should, and does guide us into worship.

Is there a clear, strong, and convincing evidence or argument *in science* that will convince skeptics that God exists? Maybe, but the Bible itself does not tell us that this evidence exists. Academic efforts to argue for God can continue, but even if we found strong evidence for God, would this even draw us to him? Paul explains that, even seeing God in nature, we still turn to idols. Just after writing of nature's declaration, Paul goes on to say:

> For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. (Rom. 1:21-23)

Even recognizing God in nature, we all still turn to idols. Our world sees the beauty and power that science uncovers in nature, declaring an immortal Glory. Nothing in science dampens this declaration. Now, in response, our world trusts instead in human science. We exchange the immortal God—who put nature's laws into place—for a science idol. Without the Gospel reordering how we think about all things, we cannot respond rightly to the God we find in nature. No, Paul's 'natural theology' is not a path to God. In context, it is an

explanation of why we all are held responsible for idolatry, why we are left "without excuse."

I am not alone in making this point. In 1660, at the dawn of modern science, Francis Bacon wrote of misguided attempts to understand God from nature: "this unwholesome mixture of things human and divine there arises not only a fantastic philosophy but also an heretical religion."[9] More recently, the theologically trained scientist, George L. Murphy argued, "What Paul says is that the natural world offers material from which God's 'eternal power and divine nature' could be known, but that people uniformly refuse to know God and instead construct idols."[10]

This pattern of idolatry explains why scientific arguments for God easily convince Christians and many seekers, but do not convince most skeptics. According to Paul, the problem is not evidence or logic, but idolatry. Our arguments are not convincing because nothing in nature, nothing in science, shines light on the darkness of idolatry. For Christians, scientific arguments for God work because we already want to worship. The arguments place us in view of nature's beauty and mystery to worship in awe and wonder. We encounter God. Seekers also sometimes meet us here. Our arguments, for them, can be an invitation to worship with us, and they want to worship too. Our arguments enlighten those that already want to worship, but nothing in our arguments, nothing in nature, overcomes the tendency to idolatry.

This pattern of idolatry also explains why Christians are so drawn to scientific arguments for God, even when they are not convincing. Even faulty, illogical arguments can encounter us correctly with the Creator. Even in bad arguments, we can encounter nature and rightly worship God. This is an authentic, life-altering experience with the immortal God. He is capable of meeting us even when our knowledge is misguided and our arguments are faulty. Sometimes we then wrongly build our confidence in the arguments themselves, expecting them to convince the skeptic and guard our faith.

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9 Francis Bacon, *Novum Oragnum*, trans. R. Ellis and James Spedding (George Routledge & Sons, 1920), 2, 65.

10 George Murphy, "Reading God's Two Books," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 58, no. 1 (March 2006), 65.

We resist leaving bad arguments too, especially when they played a role in bringing us to Jesus.

This can be a type of idolatry. Of course, God can use anything, including both good and bad scientific arguments. We should continue to let nature guide us into worship, but build our confidence in the One to whom our arguments point, the One who actively and personally reveals himself, the One who is greater than all arguments.

Taking the full meaning of Paul's 'natural theology' seriously (Rom:18-23), I doubt that any scientific argument could be a "sign" to skeptics. Instead of signs, our arguments are better understood as explanations of how we, as Christians, see and understand nature in light of Jesus. As explanations, rather than signs, they do not need, necessarily, to disprove or debunk other accounts of nature. Rather, they only need to explain why belief in God is sensible and warranted. As explanations 'in light of Jesus,' they direct attention to the real reason we have confidence that God exists, is good, and wants to be known. Perhaps the hallmark of Christian thought in science could be a loose commitment to scientific arguments. With our confidence in God's work to reveal himself through Jesus, we do not expect science to reliably bring us to God. We do not find our confidence in science.

And to our unbelieving and scientific generation, what sign does Jesus offer? When they ask for proof of God and his work in this world, how does God respond? Even now he offers the "one sign" as proof of his authenticity. According to Scripture, Jesus died, was buried, then rose again on the third day, and was seen by many, including us.

Curiosity and College

In 1996, I entered the University of California, Irvine, to study biology as an undergraduate student. Following in my mother's footsteps, I wanted to be a physician. I liked science and wanted to help people, so medical school made sense to me. I liked math and computers too, but this was just a distraction from my studies. Organic chemistry, molecular biology, and physics—these are what I thought should occupy my mind.

I studied for medical school, but time, and time again, science

would grab me, gripping my attention with awe and wonder. These experiences were startling and unexpected, jolting even. I would be studying for a class, with clear expectations of what was needed for my test. Then a detail from a book would grab me with its beauty, and seduce me from my study. The more I learned of science, the more I encountered beauty, and the more I experienced awe.

At the time, growing excitement about the sequencing of the human genome inspired everyone. The year I graduated, in 2000, the draft genome would be published. The story told and retold was that of Watson, Crick, and *The Double Helix*. These unlikely, sometimes unethical, scientists elucidated DNA's role and structure in 1953. In a very human adventure, driven by competition and curiosity, they encountered the double helix. Elegant and beautiful, the double helix is poetry in atoms. It inspires tearful awe, and we still wonder how it came to be. This structure solved some of biology's deepest mysteries. How are traits inherited? What is a gene? How is biological information stored, copied, and transmitted? The double helix's structure immediately answered these questions, and guided us into even deeper mystery. This beauty guides me, still, into worship.

Immersed in science's beauty and mystery, my scientific arguments against evolution became less necessary for my confidence. These arguments all centered on open questions in science. However, these open questions also point toward mystery. Maybe the fine-tuning argument and the origin of life are scientifically unsolvable. The scientist in me, though, grew a curious desire to explore, test, and see. If science solved the mystery, a new beauty would emerge, and unveil new mysteries too. Scientific arguments became invitations to join in and to discover more. As I slowly left my arguments, my confidence stayed strong. Science constantly guided me into worship. Here, I encountered God, and so grew my confidence. This was inspired by evidence, but transcended it. It was found in nature, but pointed beyond it.

Eventually, in 2000, I did go on to medical school, but also to get a Ph.D. in computational biology. I decided to become a scientist in order to see, firsthand, the beauty of the human genome, and how it might be used in medicine. Like all great discoveries in science, this beauty leads to greater mysteries and greater beauty. Science

brings us into close, deep contact with God's natural world. To those who want to worship, this world makes known his invisible and eternal nature.

Proper Confidence

In 2005, five years later, I was studying to be a computational biologist. I was halfway through a Ph.D. program in Information and Computer Sciences at the University of California, Irvine. Science education at this stage is an apprenticeship. I worked closely with my advisor, a scientist and an atheist, on our scientific projects, and when we could we would write papers together to publish our results.

This was a dark time in science. In 2005, efforts to challenge evolution in public school curricula escalated. Local boards of education in Kansas and Dover, Pennsylvania, drew on the Intelligent Design movement to challenge the teaching of evolution in public schools. Ultimately, this ended up in federal court in Dover, where the court ruled that Intelligent Design was outside the scope of mainstream science. It was a difficult time to be a scientist and a Christian. As a consequence of the conflict, it was impossible to identify as a Christian without inviting the scorn of everyone.

In this moment, a leading scientist from another university came to share his work on the origin of life, trying to understand how life might have arisen on earth. Both my advisor and I attended. I was skeptical. We are still so far from understanding a natural mechanism for this monumental milestone in history. My advisor, on the other hand, was animated and excited about the possibility of making a contribution to this fundamental question.

As we walked back to our offices around the campus' ring road, my advisor quickly shot off several ideas concerning how we might try to make progress in understanding the origin of life. We were using machine learning and computational methods to understand chemistry. Perhaps there was a way to use our work to gain insight into this larger problem. Suddenly, my advisor stopped walking and looked at me. He smirked, "Can I really put you on this project? You are a Christian. Are you going to try to sabotage this?"

I paused fearfully, "Of course you can put me on this project. Christians are about Truth. So as a Christian, I want to know what

really happened." My advisor sniffed, chuckled, and we walked the rest of the way to our office and back to work. I do not know for sure, but I think that he found this expression of faith compelling, that he found my confidence real.

I admit, I was bracing at the risk that this cherished 'proof' of God would fall. At the same time, I rested in confidence that even if science could someday explain the origin of life, my faith would remain unchanged. My confidence no longer rested on this scientific question. Perhaps the origin of life required God's intervention. But my confidence was in Jesus—his death and resurrection—and my experience of him.

If science one day offers a credible explanation of how life arose, it will draw on information gleaned from hundreds if not thousands of experiments, in a highly technical undertaking. It will make headlines and earn someone a Nobel Prize. Some Christians might defensively fear that their arguments against science here would evaporate, taking their confidence with it. But not much will change for my faith. Identifying such natural mechanisms would simply indicate to me the way that God could have created life. The beauty and mystery of this first life would remain a proper place of worship, a place to stand in awe and wonder of his work. I would invite seekers here to see and join in. I would continue to worship. I would still be confident.

Oh how far I have come from the sobbing child, so many years ago, building his faith on sinking sand. As goes the hymn, "in Christ alone my hope is found. He is my light, my strength, my song; this cornerstone, this solid ground."

A Professor's Confidence

I am frequently asked why I follow Jesus. I answer with the story of my search for a faith independent of my parents. I recommend *More than a Carpenter* or *Mere Christianity* and retell the historical arguments for the Resurrection. For the more academic, I point to N. T. Wright's masterpiece, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*.[11] I explain the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled, which confirm that he

11 N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003).

was truly the Messiah. I explain that Jesus, in this way, comes to us through history, not through science.

All this is true, but there is more. I still struggle to explain this. Somehow, there is this presence that pervades my life. My awareness of it developed slowly over the decades. It is not unique to me and it is not controlled by me. I cannot scientifically prove it. I do not understand it. Some may write this off as unverifiable and unscientific babble. I understand that this all may seem simple minded, and not nearly sophisticated enough to explain a professor's faith. I do not have an intellectual argument to offer that might compare with Jesus. I agree, this is not science, but it is an invitation to come, taste, and see. I myself do see him.[12] I see his hand, shaping me as a potter shapes clay, in my past, my present, and my future. I follow Jesus because He is alive. He is real. He is good.

Here, the Gospel's prophetic voice in science is most clear. Our world sees science as the most trusted source of truth. In this scientific world, scientific arguments are esteemed above all others. But what can science say about the Resurrection? What can science say about God? What can science say of the darkness in this world? What can science say of our destiny? No experiment can guide us here. Science is silent on these most important questions. All my scientific training is meaningless. All my scientific arguments are shifting. All my scientific evidence is fading. All my wise and persuasive words are inadequate. Thus, at the cross, my idolatry of science comes to die. As science fades away, I am left with an effortless, proper confidence. I am brought back to the same Gospel that my mother shared with me as a toddler. I see Jesus, and he silences my doubt.

Still, my younger self puzzles me. An insecure faith, building on science's shifting sand, puzzles me. An impoverished Gospel in want of scientific assurance puzzles me. A threatened Gospel needing our

12 For those that want a philosophical defense of personal experience as an important source of knowledge, I point to the philosophy of science expressed by Michael Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958) and Alvin Plantinga's trilogy: *Warrant: The Current Debate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); *Warrant and Proper Function* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); and *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

defense puzzles me. Even deeply embedded in science as a professor, I do not need scientific arguments to follow Jesus.

The seeker asks, "What is the reason for the hope that lies within you?" In our scientific world, we are tempted to answer with misdirection by offering scientific arguments. I meet advocates of these scientific arguments for God all the time. I ask them why they themselves follow Jesus. Usually, I find that they had somehow experienced Jesus and came to trust him. Then, he reordered their world, and they came see him clearly in nature too.[13] Their argument turns out not to be a scientific argument, *per se*, but an explanation of how they now see the world in light of Jesus. Correctly, if their argument were to fall, their faith would go on unencumbered. And so it should. Proper confidence does not rest upon scientific arguments. The arguments are the consequence of certain faith, not the cause. So how do they come to think that scientific arguments are the reason for "the hope that lies within us?"

As for scientist me, the reason for my hope is Jesus, the solid Rock. I stand on the Resurrection. In this witness, I am joined by many others today, by the prophetic witness of the Old Testament, by the testimony of the Apostles and the early followers of Jesus, and by a great "cloud of witnesses" throughout the church's long history. As goes the hymn, "All other ground is sinking sand."

Jesus Completes Science

Despite our doubts, Jesus can still be compelling in science. Proper confidence in Jesus is not rooted in scientific arguments. This is clear in my own faith, and also in the way scientists, seekers, and skeptics come to follow Jesus in the scientific world. They are usually driven by curiosity, not personal or scientific deficiency. They do not usually come to Jesus by rejecting or doubting evolution. Instead,

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13 There are some examples where people first experience God in nature, and scientific arguments were important to their journey. In my view, they are still responding to encountering Jesus here. The attention should to turn to him, rather than the arguments themselves. This is particularly clear in cases where the arguments are flawed and wrong. We can encounter God correctly in bad arguments, and our correct response to Him does not justify or validate bad arguments. Rather it testifies to God's grace in our weakness.

they come to follow Jesus for the same reasons as the rest of us. They encounter Jesus, he illuminates their world, and they trust him.

They encounter Jesus in the Bible, seeing his life, teachings, death and resurrection. They encounter him in great Christian classics like C. S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*, Josh McDowell's *More than a Carpenter*, and Augustine's *Confessions*. They encounter him in surprising moments with Christians, as he seeps through from deep within. They encounter him in loneliness and pain, when he meets them in their storms. They encounter him at home and on holidays, when families share their unvarnished journeys to faith. They encounter him in colleagues and students, those who follow Jesus in the scientific world. They find that Jesus is compelling. He is beautiful. He is unique. Nothing in science compares with him. Nothing in science diminishes him.

I like to tell the story of how Dr. Francis Collins came to faith. Collins is now the head of the National Institute of Health, one of the most influential and significant positions in science. Scientists know him as one of their own, and they trust him. Collins is also a Christian. He tells his colleagues this story in his book *The Language of God*. Like me, he spent nearly a decade in graduate school in a combined MD and Ph.D. program. This included four years in medical school and an extended apprenticeship in science. He was an atheist and believed in evolution. He was in his late twenties, doing well, and in his last years of medical school. He was entirely unimpressed by scientific arguments for God. Most would assume he was entirely beyond the Gospel's grasp.

Then, in a rotation in medical school, he encountered a patient. She had cancer and was dying. But in her Collins encountered an otherworldly peace. She explained her faith in Jesus and asked Collins, "What do you believe?" He did not know, and from that moment Jesus haunted him.[14] Collins was confused and struggled to understand. A Methodist minister he met smiled and said to him,

14 I use the word "haunt" in a way that echoes James K. A. Smith in *How (Not) to Be Secular* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014). Our secular age is "haunted" with awareness of the spiritual that is not often understood or named. There are "thin places" were we are more aware that there is more to our world than secularism acknowledges.

"I think you'd learn a lot if you'd read this book on my shelf. It was written by somebody who has traveled the same path—a scholar who was an atheist at Oxford and tried to figure out whether there was truth or not to religion." The minister pointed Collins to C. S. Lewis' classic *Mere Christianity*.

In *Mere Christianity*, Collins was struck by two specific truths. First, even if science turns out to be correct about evolution, Lewis explains that a scientific description of the world would still be incomplete. For example, we all know that ethics is important and speaks to a type of truth; racism, genocide, and eugenics are all morally wrong. But nothing in science can reliably derive moral statements and principles, or even make sense of why these things are wrong. Science, therefore, is not a complete understanding of the world. This argument from morality is not a scientific argument against evolution, but a clear explanation of why the science-only worldview of "evolutionism" is incomplete.

Lewis also explains the Gospel. Jesus is the embodied message of an immortal God from beyond our understanding, beyond our science. God proves Jesus is his messenger by raising him from the dead. God offers his sign through this act in our world, and not through science. The Gospel resonated with Collins, and explained the cancer patient's hope. Jesus completed his view of the world. Soon after, immersed in nature's beauty, Collins also responded with trust. Now in him the Gospel continues.

Scientists hear Collins' story and puzzle over it. His path follows no scientific logic. It makes no scientific sense. His story is like a movie missing its key scene. It is like seeing an answer without knowing the question. How could one interaction with a dying patient be so significant? We, as Christians, understand. This was an encounter with the infinite, a transcendent thing, when eyes were opened. Collins encountered Jesus.

Nonetheless, Christians hear Collins' story and they too puzzle over it, because Collins continues to believe in evolution. Yet Jesus is undiminished by his belief in evolution. For Collins to come to faith, no scientific arguments were needed. We do not understand, but we should. We trust Jesus because the Resurrection reveals an unimag-

inably good God, not because evolution is right or wrong. Nothing in science can overcome the light of Jesus.

Collins is not unique. Science is secular in the sense that it does not consider spiritual things, but it still is 'haunted.' A living God is here; he is found by those who seek him.

One of my colleagues, an atheist professor, recently came to trust in Jesus. While she is not a scientist, she lives in a scientific world and believes in evolution. Reading about the faith of others, she was curious. She started reading the Bible, and there encountered Jesus.[15] As she puts it, Jesus was so clearly real and a person of his own time, but he also spoke from outside of it. He could not be only a product of first century Palestine. He was attractive. He was "gripping." In this person, she put her trust. Of course, she believes he died and rose again, but not because she could find no better explanation. Rather, knowing Jesus made easy her belief.

I asked, "Do you believe the Bible because of Jesus, or Jesus because of the Bible?" After some careful thought, she explained that she did not start reading the Bible believing it was true. It is not as if she read "Jesus was God," and then therefore believed "he is God." No, she encountered Jesus in the Bible, and came to trust in Jesus. Her trust in the Bible followed, because this is where she found him. Just as the true, infallible, useful, and authoritative Bible teaches, the Bible itself is not the foundation of the Gospel; only Jesus is the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 15:14; Acts 17:31).

In both of these stories, two atheists trusted in Jesus, without first believing in God. Of course, they believe in God now, but they do so because they trusted Jesus and he made easy their belief. The most that scientific arguments can do is encourage theism, but belief in God is not trust in Jesus. The Gospel is different and stands alone. It does not depend on arguments for God; Jesus Himself unsettles atheism. He Himself is proof enough that God exists. As the great scientist Pascal writes,

> We know God only by Jesus Christ…All those who

15 She read the Gospels, the four books in the Bible that tell the story of Jesus' life, including Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

> have claimed to know God, and to prove him without Jesus Christ, have had only weak proofs. But in proof of Jesus Christ we have the prophecies, which are solid and palpable proofs. In him, then, and through him, we know God…through Jesus Christ, and in Jesus Christ, we prove God, and teach morality and doctrine.[16]

The light of Jesus overcomes the darkness in our scientific world. Even evolution, even atheism cannot dim it. He is our proper confidence.

The Skeptic's Sign

The skeptic, from his perch in science, taunts us, "Show me a sign, a proof for the hope that lies within you. Show me science." This challenges our confidence. We are tempted to doubt the power and relevance of the Gospel that began and sustained our faith. Our scientific world trusts scientists and believes scientific explanations, and we begin to place our confidence in science too.

The skeptic taunts, "Show me a sign!" Jesus answers,

> A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.
>
> The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here.
>
> The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and

16 Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts*, Section 7, ed. W. F. Trotter, Mary L. Booth, and O. W. Wight (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1910), 547.

> now something greater than Solomon is here. (Matt. 12:39-42)

The skeptic wants science. Jesus offers only Himself. The skeptic is haunted. In the current moment, this answer haunts us too, and beckons us to proper confidence. The seeker knows that something greater than our arguments is here.

Now, we face a choice. We tried arguing science. The skeptic is not convinced. The scientist is angry. Our faith is unstable. Do we still look to scientific arguments over Jesus? Jesus waits; will he again be enough, with the Resurrection, his one true sign?

Jesus is our confidence in science. He waits. Like the first disciples with their nets, let us leave our arguments and follow him.

Guests and Hosts in Academia: Creating Hospitable Learning Spaces

Elfrieda Lepp-Kaethler*

Abstract

This article explores the idea of a learning community through the lens of a language teacher educator, with a frame of welcoming spaces. Beginning with a theology of hospitality guided by Christine Pohl, Henri Nouwen, and Waldemar Janzen, the article invites scholars and faculty to create welcoming learning climates in higher education. Central to the idea of hospitality is Henri Nouwen's notion of converting 'hostis' to 'hospis.' Pervasive societal ambivalence towards strangers in increasingly multicultural student bodies threatens to escalate hostility. The article suggests ways of seeing that invite both faculty and students (international and domestic) into carefully structured learning relationships. The hospitality metaphor is extended to classroom communities that include nurture, warmth, vulnerability, and the risk that comes with hosting prophets, strangers, and other angels.

In a graduation address at Providence University College a few years ago, Emöke Szäthmáry, then president of the University of Manitoba, spoke of the value of small faith-based universities from the perspective of a large secular university.[1] She emphasized that all universities are tasked with the following three functions: "(1) to preserve knowledge, (2) to advance knowledge, and (3) to disseminate knowledge."[2] Beyond these basics, she highlighted the ways in which small schools such as Providence are better equipped to

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1 Emöke J. E. Szäthmáry, "The Importance of Religious Colleges: A Secular Perspective," *Didaskalia* 22 (2011): 105-15.

2 Szäthmáry, "The Importance of Religious Colleges," 113.

"educate the whole person."[3] And indeed, Providence aspires to more than the basics to which Szäthmáry referred.

Long before institutional vision statements became vogue, the writer of Proverbs reminded his readers that "without vision, the people perish" (28:19). As a Christ-centered university, we have a vision statement that articulates what it is that we hope to achieve. The school's vision statement describes *"a learning community that transforms students into leaders of character, knowledge, and faith, to serve Christ in a changing world*."[4] In this article, I would like to explore the vision of our university, in particular the idea of a "learning community," from the perspective of not only my discipline, which is language teacher education, but also from the perspective of a theology of hospitality.

I will begin by outlining a theology of hospitality guided by Christine Pohl, Henri Nouwen, and Waldemar Janzen. I will then examine how the frame of hospitality can inform our work as scholars and educators. In conclusion, I will give some practical examples of what this might look like in the work of faculty in a faith-based university and theological seminary.

My own introduction to the intersection between teaching and hospitality came through a critical incident with a Laotian refugee family in our local church many years ago. Aelan and Bane were a couple with five children, refugees from Laos who arrived in our church in the late 1980's. As my husband and I greeted them, Aelan did not let go of my hand. There was something in that prolonged hand shake that became a pivotal point in my life as an educator. As is so common with immigrant and refugee families, it is the woman who is last to learn English. Despite our weekly informal lessons in her kitchen or in mine, she made little progress (this was before I had any TESOL[5] training, which likely contributed to the problem). Our paths took us to different cities but after several years, our family returned for a visit. I phoned my friend to make a date for tea. As I arrived at their small house the next morning, I realized that they had

3 Szäthmáry, "The Importance of Religious Colleges," 113.

4 Providence University College Vision Statement; online: http://www.providenceuc.ca/college/about_us/ (accessed July 11, 2016).

5 Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

expected our whole family of five, and not for tea but for a meal. In fact, after his shift at a local manufacturing company the day before, Bane had made a special trip into the city to purchase supplies for a rather elaborate Laotian meal (well beyond their means) that they wanted to serve us. I felt terrible at the misunderstanding, but overwhelmed and humbled at the generous, extravagant hospitality they extended.

Hospitality across Cultures

Many cultures give a much higher value to hospitality than what most North Americans are accustomed to. For us, perhaps the image that first comes to mind is of cozy meals shared with friends and family. However, beyond our intimate domestic circles, hospitality is sooner related to the 'hospitality industry' where only those with money are welcome. Our contemporary thinking requires significant revision if we are to rediscover and appreciate hospitality as a major theme in the Scriptures and in Christian tradition. The German word for hospitality is 'Gastfreundschaft,' which means friendship for the guest. In some German cultures there is a strong obligation on the part of the guest to accept hospitality that is extended. Failure to do so is viewed as an affront to the host. The Dutch use the word 'gastvrijheid,' which translates as 'freedom for the guest.' Here we can see that "hospitality wants to offer friendship without binding the guest and freedom without leaving him alone."[6]

Hospitality in the Old Testament

Though the term 'hospitality' is not used in the Old Testament and only a few times in the New Testament, the relationship between God and human beings is frequently presented as a host-guest relationship.[7] There is also a call to humans to extend God's own hosting towards others and back to God. Some of the essentials of hospitality in the ancient Mediterranean world are worthy of note. Guests were generally outsiders, either travelers or fugitives. Before being offered

6 Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 71.

7 Waldemar Janzen, "Biblical Theology of Hospitality," *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology* 3/1 (Spring, 2002): 4.

hospitality, the stranger needed to pass some test, then be accepted by the host, who was the male leader of the family. Obligations of the host were to provide food, lodging, and protection in a spirit of generosity. Once having embraced the guest, the host would often be willing to incur inconvenience and cost, even danger on behalf of his guest. Guests were expected to accept with gratitude what was offered, refrain from demanding behavior, and not overstay their welcome.[8]

It is within this understanding of hospitality that the stories of the Hebrew Bible must be heard. From the very beginning, many texts have undertones of host and guest dynamics. The first chapter of the Bible relates how God, the ultimate host, creates a hospitable world in which he receives his creaturely guests. Human beings are offered the responsibility of caretakers and tenders of the garden. Sadly, the host-guest relationship soon goes sour. Genesis 3 recounts human rebellion against God. Janzen suggests that Adam and Eve's disregard for their host's boundaries indicates a sense of entitlement to unlimited ownership and control of the world.[9] As a result, the perfect paradise is no longer open to them. With the call of Abraham, human beings experience a new invitation, the hope of a promised land, a refuge within the often-hostile world. God extends hospitality once more. In Exodus, through the long desert trek, the tabernacle becomes a symbol of God's hospitality and manna a symbol for God's role as host.

Having arrived in the promised land, there is need to remind the people of their status as landed immigrants in a country not their own.[10] "And remember, the land must never be sold on a permanent basis because it really belongs to me. You are only foreigners and tenants living with me" (Lev. 25:23). We find this reminder in the context of laws relating to the Jubilee, a land reform that was to take place every 50 years. This reform was a safeguard against the human tendency to become owners rather than guests. The Old Testament poets often express Israel's status as guests. "Hear my cry… for I am

8 Janzen, "Biblical Theology of Hospitality," 5.

9 Janzen, "Biblical Theology of Hospitality," 5.

10 Janzen, "Biblical Theology of Hospitality," 6.

a passing guest, a traveler passing through, like my ancestors" (Ps. 32); "you prepare a table before me…surely goodness and mercy will follow me and I will live in the house of the Lord forever" (Ps. 23). Isaiah draws a picture of the ultimate banquet table to which God invites all people. "The LORD Almighty will spread a wonderful feast for everyone around the world. It will be a delicious feast of good food, with clear, well-aged wine and choice beef" (Isa. 25:6).

God's hospitality extends a call for human hospitality to one another. Human beings are fellow guests in the host's house, the created world. The Levitical laws direct Israel to show concern for strangers and aliens. "Do not exploit the foreigners who live in your land. They should be treated like everyone else, and you must love them as you love yourself. Remember that you were once foreigners in the land of Egypt" (Lev. 19:33-34). Other Old Testament texts praise hospitality and illustrate how hosts receive more than they give. This becomes apparent in the example of Abraham and Sarah, who extend hospitality to strangers and receive the promise of a child. In Job's litany of all the sins he did not commit, neglecting to host strangers figures prominently (Job 31). The hospitality thread through the Old Testament reinforces the idea that God, the great host, invites humanity to be his guests in his created world. God expects these guests to follow his example by sharing their abundance with their fellow guests. As a result, both hosts and guests are blessed.

Hospitality in the New Testament

The New Testament begins with stories of Jesus as guest and refugee. He arrives in the world his Father created but is not received hospitably. While still very young, he becomes a refugee in Egypt along with his parents. As an adult, he appears to be homeless, dependent on the hospitality of his friends. He hosts the last supper in a borrowed hall; his dead body is hosted in a borrowed tomb.

Hospitality is a recurring theme in Jesus' speeches. His stories revolve around eating, drinking, parties, banquets, and feasts. His reputation suffers because of too much partying with the wrong kind of crowd. The only miracle recorded in all four gospels is the feeding of the five thousand. Whenever I struggle with hosting too many

people in our home, I think of Christ's spur-of-the-moment picnic to which he invited 5000 people – with no grocery list.

The epistles and the letters articulate more direct calls to hospitality: "…you should make hospitality your special care" (Rom. 12:13); "Welcome each other into your houses without grumbling" (1 Pet. 4:9); "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it" (Heb. 13:2). The apocalyptic writings of John invite readers to a scenario of the final banquet scene at the end of the age: "Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, ….: "Come! Gather together for the great banquet God has prepared" (Rev. 19:7).

The host-guest roles encountered in the Scriptures are symbiotic. They belong together and sometimes flow seamlessly into one another. Those who invite Christ to be their guest unexpectedly find themselves guests at his table. As Zacchaeus hosts Christ in his home, such an unanticipated role reversal occurs: Zacchaeus becomes a guest in the kingdom (Lk. 19). The disciples at Emmaus invite the unrecognized Jesus to have supper with them. He enters their home as a guest, yet as he breaks bread they recognize him as their host and Lord (Lk. 24). In Revelation 3:20, Jesus appears as the guest knocking at the door. "Look! Here I stand at the door and knock. If you hear me calling and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal as friends." Notice that Jesus respects the host's boundaries and does not enter uninvited. As people open themselves to his 'knock at the door' of their lives, they become hosts and guests. Christ's way of extending hospitality compels people to continue his mission as sojourners, on the way to that ultimate banquet table (Rev. 19).

The hospitality Jesus embodies is good news, but it also gives offence.[11] Christ invites all to his table and if any are to receive special treatment, it is those who are most vulnerable. In Jesus day, as in our own, hospitality is often regulated by social status, wealth, and power. As already mentioned, the hospitality industry welcomes only those who can pay. Martha Stewart-style meals with family and friends are mainly extended to those who are like us in status and

11 Christine Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 193.

wealth. Jesus broke such rules, dining with sinners and prostitutes. Some praised him, others found such behavior offensive. Furthermore, it may be disconcerting that hospitality becomes a way of measuring the extent to which believers have incorporated their beliefs and show them in action (Mt. 25; Rev. 3:20; Jn. 13:20).

God is the ultimate host and creatures are his guests, yet as God becomes our guest and we his hosts, we are the ones blessed. We are made capable of hosting others to become guests in his kingdom. Dorothy Jean Weaver summarizes the thrust of God's welcome as follows:

> In God's welcome project all comes down to the big celebration! …For Jesus this is the meaning of welcome: the big party God is throwing for humankind. At this celebration God welcomes home the one who has been lost and is now found; God kills the fattened calf; God leads the guests into singing, dancing, and uninhibited rejoicing over the return of the lost child (Lk. 15:11-32). This image sums up what God wants to do with all people everywhere.[12]

Creating a Welcoming Place for Strangers

Offering hospitality has long been an essential characteristic of the Christian tradition since the first centuries.[13] Christians' hospitality shown to strangers distinguished them from the surrounding societies. Eventually, this work gave rise to hospitals and hospices (take note, lest we miss the root '*hospis*' in these words), which were eventually institutionalized.[14] While bringing numerous benefits, this institutionalization also removed the care of the needy from integration into Christian communities. Thus, the meaning of hospitality moved into the private sphere of the home.[15]

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12 Dorothy Jean Weaver, "The Welcome Year of the Lord," *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology* 3/1 (Spring, 2002), 23.

13 Pohl, *Making Room*, 34.

14 Shirley Du Boulay and Marianne Rankin, *Cicely Saunders: The Founder of the Modern Hospice Movement* (London: SPCK, 2007), 10.

15 Pohl, *Making Room*, 68.

Contemporary urban life is characterized by fractured families and highly mobile individuals. Henri Nouwen describes the urgency of creating space for strangers.

> In our world full of strangers, estranged from their past, culture and country, from neighbors and friends and family…we witness a painful search for a hospitable place where life can be lived without fear and where community can be found.[16]

Nouwen is speaking about the needs of many ordinary people in North American society who have lived here all their lives. How much more do his words apply to those who are immigrants, refugees and international students? He challenges his readers to a vocation of converting "*hostis* to *hospis* – the enemy into a guest."[17] Nouwen ponders the story of Abraham and Sarah receiving the angels. "When hostility is converted to hospitality then fearful strangers can become guests revealing to their hosts the promise they are carrying with them."[18] Nouwen encourages us to expand our understanding of hospitality beyond hosting strangers in our homes, to embracing hospitality as a metaphor that can be integrated into all of life. Hospitality can be a fundamental attitude towards others which can be expressed in a variety of ways.

Nouwen's pattern of '*hostis*' to '*hospis*' can be retraced in the prison experience of Paul and Silas in Acts 16. Ponder for a moment the jailor as 'host' and Paul and Silas as 'guests.' The situation is quite the opposite of the Dutch spirit of "freedom for the guest,' but note that Paul and Silas, even as prisoners, seize the opportunity to extend hospitality. They host a midnight praise and worship concert with the other prisoners as their guests. A divine earthquake cracks open the jailor's coercive pattern of hospitality. This sudden exposure threatens to end badly for the jailer were it not for Paul's quick-thinking suicide intervention. In a manner that is utterly counter-intuitive,

16 Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 58.

17 Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 66.

18 Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 66.

Paul converts '*hostis*' to '*hospis*,' resulting in the jailor and his family being graciously ushered into the kingdom. The jailor's experience of God's hospitality radically transforms his own manner of hosting. No longer prisoners, Paul and Silas are now honored guests that are served dinner in freedom and with respect.

Ambivalence towards the Stranger

Despite affirmation of the concept of hospitality in our society, feelings towards strangers are at best ambivalent. News headlines are relentless in their display of the many forms of hostility rampant in our society. Stories of mass shootings and terror attacks infuse fear and anxiety that make it easy to rationalize our resistance to welcoming strangers into our world. Anti-immigration sentiments stoke fear of those who are different,[19] whose clothing and religious symbols evoke suspicions of not measuring up to so-called "shared Canadian values."[20] Airport security lines become ever longer, especially for those with higher levels of pigmentation in their skin. Children from immigrant backgrounds are framed with deficit perspectives.[21] We fear for our jobs and the safety of our neighborhoods.

Let us consider the stranger from several other vantage points. First, we do well to ponder the question: what is a stranger? Sociologist Georg Simmel draws attention to the odd paradox of the stranger who is both distant and near.[22] People who are far away from us are

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19 Renowned psychologist Howard Gardener describes how human beings come up with powerful intuitive theories of life and mind that are often simply nonsense. For example, "I have a mind; you have a mind. If you look like me, then your mind is like mine and you are good. If you look different from me, then your mind must differ as well, and we are enemies." *Changing Minds*: *The Art and Science of Changing our own and other People's Minds* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School, 2006), 55.

20 Canadian Conservative MP Kellie Leitch has suggested that potential immigrants should be screened for "anti-Canadian values." Online: http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/anti-canadian-values-bernier-1.3750217 (September 6, 2016).

21 For example, when referring to immigrant children who are learning English, columnist Shelley Fralic uses a tone and word choice that is overwhelmingly negative ("trouble," "learning problems," "disabilities," "disinclined to learn," "pesky conundrum"). See Shelley Fralic, "The Trouble with Our Schools," *Vancouver Sun* (September 15, 2014).

22 D. Smith and B. M. Carvill, *The Gift of the Stranger: Faith, Hospitality, and*

not strangers. They are simply people we do not know. It is only when unknown persons enter our realm of closeness and our group that they become strangers.[23] Members of a mainstream society can choose to receive strangers with either friendliness or suspicion.

Second, we would do well to ponder the difficulties of being a stranger. Even if immigrants and international students make the effort of learning the language of the host country or community, the nuances of communication are not easily mastered. Unintentional violations of norms result in cultural clashes and misunderstandings. To more fully appreciate what hospitality can mean, we may need to first become strangers ourselves.[24] My own experience as a stranger has been excellent training ground for my work as a language teacher with immigrants and international students. I left Canada in my mid-teens and became an immigrant and international student in Paraguay. Several years later, I returned to Canada as a young woman with an immigrant husband and an infant daughter. My husband and I went through the difficulties of establishing ourselves in a culture that was entirely new to my husband and had become unfamiliar to me in my years of absence. Both of us went through the arduous, often humiliating hoops of having international credentials recognized. Being on the receiving end of charity Christmas baskets in our church involved an uncomfortable shift in my sense of self-sufficiency. Later we returned to Paraguay to work in rural economic development where our children often faced the challenges of being the only non-indigenous children in their class. Even though these were difficult experiences, they have become invaluable in lending me the perspective of a foreigner and stranger.

Characteristics of Free and Friendly Learning Environments

Our concern here is to explore how hospitality can be a guiding metaphor for our work as faculty in higher education. As I mentioned earlier, my field is language teaching and teacher education, and I will use illustrations from this realm. But the concept of hospitality

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Foreign Language Learning (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 58.

23 Smith and Carvill, *The Gift of the Stranger*, 58.

24 Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 68.

can apply to a broad range of relationships that entail teaching and learning of many kinds. In fact, the metaphor can also be extended to the relationship of doctors to their patients, and parents to their children.[25] To these relationships, I would add counselors to their clients and pastors to members of the congregation. These relationships are all forms of teaching and learning. I will use the words 'teaching' and 'learning,' but you can substitute equivalents from your own area of expertise.

Perhaps the first characteristic to note is that such hospitality does not set out to covertly change people. Hospitable spaces can be conducive towards changes in both guests and hosts, but manipulation has no place in a welcoming environment. Nouwen reminds us that creating such a space is far from easy. "It requires hard concentration and articulate work."[26]

Hospitality can be a frame for creative interactions between teachers and learners. Hospitable learning environments have scaffolds in place for supportive communities in classrooms, in staff and faculty lounges, in offices, meeting and boardrooms. They offer a positive, caring atmosphere where students, staff, and colleagues are welcomed as whole people in safe and open spaces, where they can be free to express their hopes, desires, fears, anxieties, and difficult experiences in a way that facilitates learning. Within this context, for example, I aspire to use my skill as an instructor and teacher-trainer to facilitate learning of language, teaching skills, knowledge of linguistics and language pedagogy, and life skills geared towards the reality and needs of the learners under my sphere of influence. As educators of adults in higher education more broadly, we aspire to use our skills and knowledge to call forth gifts within each student, and to affirm and equip them to find their place in the world. We are in

25 When I first read Nouwen's ideas on hospitality and parenting when my children were quite young I found the ideas revolutionary. To this day hospitality is my guiding metaphor in my role as a parent. In terms of relationships between doctors and their patients see Harvey Max Chochinov. "Dignity and the Essence of Medicine: The A, B, C, and D of Dignity Conserving Care," *British Medical Journal* 335.7612 (2007): 184–87; and "Health Care, Health Caring, and the Culture of Medicine," *Current Oncology* 21.5 (2014): e668–e669.

26 Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 72.

privileged positions of leadership, in my case in the field of TESOL and Adult Literacy, from which we are able to extend hospitality to immigrants, international students, and adult learners in general.

Hospitality is one of the foundations for good dialogue.[27] This includes an atmosphere in which students are given the opportunity to share about themselves, where they feel invited to participate, to take risks and to reveal strongly held opinions. As a part of the dialogue, teachers lead by example in presenting their own views, which are then followed by critique. Hospitality implies a mutual receptivity to new ideas and perspectives, a willingness to question assumptions. Palmer speaks of 'circles of trust,' communities with "clear limits, skilled leadership, open invitations, common ground and graceful ambiance."[28] There is nothing soft about hospitality. It does not mean standards are lowered. Hospitality does not make learning easier or less burdensome, but Palmer suggests it can take the edge off the sometimes-painful processes of learning,[29] which includes "things like exposing ignorance, testing tentative hypotheses, challenging false or partial information, mutual criticism of thought."[30]

Nouwen, whose own ample experience with teaching in higher education (Notre Dame, Yale, and Harvard) points to the difficulties in creating these hospitable spaces as a part of a teaching and learning environment.

> Teaching, therefore, asks first for the creation of a space where students and teachers can enter into a fearless communication with each other. …Is it possible to become hospitable to each other in a classroom, in the counseling office, in the church? It is far from easy since we all are part of a very demanding, pushing and often

27 Parker Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 81.

28 Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness*, 73.

29 This idea runs counter to the current trend on university campuses where students increasingly demand protection from being confronted with ideas they do not like. See Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt "The Coddling of the American Mind," *The Atlantic* (September 2015): 13.

30 Palmer, *To Know as We are Known*, 7.

> exploitative society in which personal growth and development have become secondary to the ability to produce and earn not only credits but a living. Our professions are increasingly driven by economic factors.[31]

I began my career as a language teacher with altruistic motives of service and ministry to the "the stranger" (Mt. 25:43). In English-speaking countries, teachers who teach English to immigrants, refugees, and international students are generally serving those at the margins of society. However, at the first international TESOL conference I attended,[32] I was surprised to find that in many places in the world teaching English is big business. English is the largest global language and it is becoming increasingly essential for people in almost any well-paid job.[33] When we teach in workplace situations, for instance, teaching factory workers the English they need for their jobs, we face increasing pressure to demonstrate that our teaching is economically viable, that it makes sense from a business perspective. Obviously, we need to be concerned with the effectiveness of our efforts, but the conditions conducive towards language learning and service are not always compatible with immediate economic expediency.

As mentioned earlier, as *hostis* is converted into *hospis*, the distinction between host and guest becomes somewhat fluid, and at times interchangeable. In terms of the relationship between teachers and learners, these dual roles can flow into one another. Carvill and Smith suggest that "being both a host and a guest in the ESL/EFL classroom make up the heart of language teaching."[34]

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31 Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 85.

32 Professional Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages; online: http://www.tesol.org/about-tesol (Date accessed Dec. 15, 2016).

33 Tsedal Neeley, "Global Business Speaks English," *Harvard Business Review* (May 2012): 32.

34 D. Smith, and B. M. Carvill, *The Gift of the Stranger: Faith, Hospitality, and Foreign Language Learning* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 58. ESL/EFL means English as a Second Language/ English as a Foreign Language.

Teacher as Host; Learner as Guest

It is not difficult to see how teachers in an English language classroom in English-speaking countries are hosts to international students, immigrants, and refugees. The learners are guests who visit our classrooms, hallways, and libraries. One task of the hospitable teacher is to help learners gain awareness of the gifts they carry with them. Students are sometimes treated like containers whose role it is to absorb information and to regurgitate it. Hospitable teachers can help learners see the gifts they bring to the learning process. Learners' stories, experiences, convictions, and insights are worthy of serious attention. A mature host is one who knows that her guests carry promises that are revealed when someone expresses genuine interest. If teachers can detach themselves from their need to impress and control, they can become receptive for the gifts their students bring. Nouwen outlines some parameters of a welcoming space.

> Teaching … means the commitment to provide the fearless space where basic life questions can be raised without fear of competition, rivalry, concerns about punishment or rewards and not by prefabricated answers, but by an articulate encouragement to enter them seriously and personally.[35]

Hospitable teachers know that students are unlike beggars at the feet of sages, but rather guests that honor classrooms and hallways with their presence. Host teachers know that these guests will leave their own significant contribution. The weight of teaching can become unwieldy when it is imbued with excessive importance. Taking our own role too seriously can evoke an imposter syndrome, this fear that at any moment our inadequacy and limited knowledge will be uncovered.[36] Framing our teaching as hospitality can remove some of that heaviness, reminding ourselves that our students have visited many classrooms before ours and will visit many afterwards.

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35 Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 86.

36 Stephen Brookfield, *The Skillful Teacher: On Technique, Trust and Responsiveness in the Classroom* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2006), 24.

Like wayside hostels, we offer a warm meal and a dry bed, metaphorically speaking, trusting our contributions will infuse our guests with a measure of strength and clarity as they continue on the road of building their lives. It is a matter of learning how to hold our offerings lightly.

Learner as Host; Teacher as Guest

As noted earlier, the roles can be reversed. Learners can also be hosts and teachers guests. Heartfelt hospitality evokes gratitude which often takes the form of reciprocating with hospitality. At a recent event on our campus in rural Manitoba, a group of Punjabi students hosted an evening of storytelling, dancing, singing, and food. The event included a speech of gratitude for a warm reception far away from home. A lunch conversation with students in the cafeteria ended with a playful invitation to be the guest of honor at a student's wedding in some remote imagined future. At the end of the teaching season in a local English program for adult immigrants, learners' contributions of savory stew and elaborate cakes are a way for learners to express appreciation to their teachers. As staff and faculty, we are privileged to be guests in the lives of our students. At a deeper level, when students enter the learning community, there is an expectation that they will engage with new ideas in a 'hospitable' fashion.

Gifts of Hospitality

Carvill and Smith name three gifts that both teachers and learners, both guests and hosts, can offer one another.[37] I will touch briefly on each one.

1. The Gift of Seeing

This gift refers to our capacity to see one another as members of other cultures, but not in a superficial kind of tourist-sightseeing way. Erich Fromm makes the distinction between looking and seeing.[38] He describes tourists taking pictures, that is, looking with the hope

37 Smith and Carvill, *Gift of the Stranger*, 64.

38 Smith and Carvill, *Gift of the Stranger*, 67.

of seeing later. Looking is not seeing. Seeing requires activity, inner openness, interest, patience, and concentration.

2. The Gift of Questions

As teachers, counselors, and health care professionals, we depend on questions. Questions are often the first tools we employ in order to enter into one another's lives. In western cultures, questions are signs that the speaker takes initiative and responsibility for the encounter. Questions reveal our assumptions and our ignorance. Language teachers are familiar with the linguistic challenges learners face in the task of question formation and in responding to questions. Sociolinguistic appropriateness surrounding questions is varied. In some societies, questions are perceived as intrusive and impolite. Awareness of these differences creates the challenge of finding other respectful ways to enter the unexplored territory of relationships. Silence and observation can be added to the toolbox.

3. The Gift of Hearing and Listening

These skills involve more than fine-tuned linguistic and cultural listening skills. The host and the guest must have 'ears to hear.' Perhaps the Chinese character for 'to listen' can clarify the concept. The character consists of five elements that separately stand for ear, eye, you, undivided attention, and heart. This character gives an image of attentive listening, with one's ears and eyes focused on the other, while hearing with the heart. As a language teacher, I am frequently reminded not to understand too quickly. The cultural and language distance is not as easily crossed as mere translation.[39] We do well to be aware of the perils of understanding and explaining the other as simply cultural products. "Understanding comes only when the process of communication leads us to experience the other as a subject, a center of consciousness different from our own."[40]

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39 I am not only referring to the language of international students here. I recently found myself in the role of a language learner under the tutelage of my young adult children as they explained the nuances of vocabulary coinage among generation Y.

40 Smith and Carvill, *Gift of the Stranger*, 73.

Hospitality as Pedagogical Framework

When describing interrelated pedagogic elements in language teaching, the model frequently used is referred to as "Approach, Design, Procedure."[41] *Procedures* refer to what happens practically in the classroom. These could include a lecture, a small-group discussion, a quiz, or a group project. Anyone dropping in to observe a class will see primarily procedures at work. Procedures do not occur randomly. They are organized, patterned, and sequenced with an overall consistency that flows out of *design*. It is at the level of design that teachers clarify their objectives. They decide how to structure the syllabus and what kinds of teaching and learning activities will best help achieve the identified goals. They decide what role learners are to have, what the role of the teacher is, and what kinds of materials they are going to use.

Design is, in turn, dependent upon an even wider framework of assumptions and beliefs: *approach*. It includes teachers' beliefs about the nature of language and language learning. For example, what are the psycholinguistic and cognitive processes involved in language learning? What are the conditions necessary for these learning processes to be activated? Examples of approach might be the humanistic belief that an individual's emotions should be given priority. Or, a teacher with a behaviorist approach will view language and language learning as habit formation. An approach constitutes a point of view, a philosophy of teaching and learning, a theory that cannot necessarily be proven.[42]

Hospitality as Metaphor

In recent decades there has been increased attention to the role of metaphor in language and in pedagogical reasoning.[43] Metaphors are not simply decorative language or colorful figures of speech. "An approach can be shaped by particular metaphors through which

41 Jack C. Richards and Ted Rodgers, "Method: Approach, Design, and Procedure," *TESOL Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (1982): 155.

42 Richards and Rogers, "Method: Approach, Design, and Procedure," 162.

43 George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), xi.

we think about pedagogical matters."[44] According to Lakoff and Johnson, we live and understand our world according to a system of metaphors; metaphors are fundamental to the way we interpret life.[45] Teaching and learning are complex activities and the process of learning to teach is life-long. Sauve explores numerous metaphors from which we draw language to describe teaching.[46] Other studies explore the relationship between metaphors teachers use and their linguistic, cultural, and pedagogic belief systems.[47] In the language teacher education course that I teach, I have my students explore the metaphors they are drawn to, which represent their teaching. Metaphors are effective tools for reflecting on one's teaching because they illuminate dimensions and features otherwise unnoticed.

It is at the level of approach that the metaphor of hospitality fits in. Carvill and Smith argue that, for language teachers, approach constitutes more than just our beliefs about language and language learning. There are many more factors giving shape to our approach, including "our personality and character qualities, the spirit of the age and our professional socialization."[48]

Hospitable Learning Communities

What difference does the metaphor of hospitality make in the classroom? How does it affect what we do with our learners in an everyday kind of way? What constitutes a hospitable place in the classroom in a practical sense? I will extend the hospitality metaphor to some hands-on examples.

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44 Smith and Carvill, *Gift of the Stranger*, 168.

45 Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors*, 172.

46 These include mail carrier metaphors (program delivery, learning packages, rates of learning), military metaphors (target groups, learning strategies), sports metaphors (team, goal, rules of play, coach), among others. Viriginia Sauve, *Issues, Challenges, and Alternatives in Teaching Adult ESL* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 56.

47 Thomas Farrell, "The Teacher is an Octopus," *RELC Journal* 37, no. 2 (Aug. 2006): 236-48.

48 Smith and Carvill, *Gift of the Stranger*, 167.

Food For Thought

When I ask a group of teachers what first comes to mind upon hearing the words 'hosts and guests,' inevitably the first word is 'food.' Frequently, I see my colleague hurrying to class, coffee-maker tucked under one arm and a basket of cups in the other. Students and colleagues alike need only to follow to find high quality, fair-trade coffee. Other colleagues regularly invite students into their homes for meals. The student development department in our university has a cookie jar that is always refilled. There is something wholly basic and yet profound about sharing food and drink with other human beings. Sharing food, both literally and metaphorically, is a basic ingredient in a hospitable space.

Taking Off Our Coats

Some language learners accustomed to warmer climates will keep their warm coats on even in Canadian summers. When teaching English, I employ an activity called 'Small Talk' using question cards that promote fluency on everyday topics such as the weather and the news.[49] This activity can also be expanded upon to promote an interest in learners as persons where they can speak and listen to one another in ways that build relationships and friendships. Even mundane classroom routines such as taking attendance can lend themselves to fostering a climate of friendship. Learners begin by pondering an opening question I have written on the board. After a moment of silence and a 'buddy buzz," each learner answers the question as their name is called. One morning my question is: If you could study anything you wanted, what would you study? My eyes widen as people who are primarily trades workers speak of studying engineering, medicine, pharmacy, and architecture, if given a chance.[50] Their language level is quite low and they can barely pronounce the words they are saying. The atmosphere in the room suddenly changes as

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49 Small talk is informal discourse about uncontroversial matters. It is a unique conversational pattern, common in North America, but not shared by all language and cultural groups in the world. Language learners often struggle with its apparent superficiality and its illusive nature.

50 Chances are generally quite slim as most immigrants in middle age have sacrificed their own aspirations in order to give their children better options.

I realize the learners have spoken from some hidden depths. They have articulated aspirations that in their lives as immigrants with large families have never been spoken, at least not publicly, not in an English speaking environment, where non-English speakers are often treated as somehow impaired, dumb, and childlike. The fact is, they are 'dumb' – not stupid, but 'dumb' – rendered voiceless because of their lack of language. Teaching language makes room for these voices to be heard, for these learners to gradually feel enough warmth to take off their coats.

Across The Table

A welcoming learning space invites learners and teachers to sit across the table from one another and talk about real life questions and concerns. At times, residues of an enlightenment mentality that raise cognition above affect leave us suspicious of too much overlap between the academic and the personal. In an English language classroom, for example, a unit on food and drink routinely treats these as items of consumption purchased in grocery stores and restaurants. Of course, it is imperative that we offer our language students the linguistic tools necessary to carry out the tasks of buying and selling. However, Smith and Carvill wonder if this is the only or even most educationally interesting and necessary way to deal with this vocabulary.[51]

> Even the simplest word – bread, for instance – involves all sorts of connotations. When the word BREAD is pronounced, I cannot help but think of the millions of people who have none … The communion service comes to me; the breaking of bread at the Last Supper … the lesson I learned as a child that it is a crime to throw away a piece of bread, since it is a sacred substance…[52]

51 Smith and Carvill, *Gift of the Stranger*, 196.

52 Jacques Ellul, as quoted in Smith and Carvill, *Gift of the Stranger,* 197.

Venues such as weekly theology lunches hosted by the Biblical and Theological Studies department invite the academic and the personal to sit across the table from one another.

A Room On The Roof

Second Kings 4 tells the story of a woman in the ancient Israelite village of Shunem who models hospitality to Elisha by offering him meals when he passes through. Taking a step further, she initiates a 'home reno' project: building a room on the roof for the itinerant prophet. Readers are even treated to a glimpse of the simple interior decor: a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp (2 Kings 4:10). In light of the topic at hand, my question is: which learning community inspired this woman to become an exemplary leader of character, knowledge, and faith?

A hospitable disposition towards strangers may be something students learn in their homes or church communities. Carvill and Smith lament that hospitality is not often explicitly taught in schools.[53] In my TESOL Practicum class I have a routine called 'I was a stranger' (from Mt. 25). Every week I read aloud a story to my group of aspiring teachers about an individual or family, telling of their experiences as refugees, immigrants, or international students. My purpose here is to foster compassion and a hospitable disposition towards strangers as a part of this learning community and the learning communities they will host in their future career as language teachers. Given that student bodies in Canadian higher education are increasingly diverse, we may do well to find ways to build 'a room on the roof' of our classrooms to welcome prophets, strangers, and other incognito angels that may be passing through.

Conclusion

A recent issue of *Essential Teacher*, a publication of TESOL, focuses on the theme of community. "Teachers who contribute to *Essential Teacher* show that we create communities among our learners within the classroom and beyond."[54] In a series called "Communities

53 Smith and Carvill, *Gift of the Stranger*, 82.

54 Kathy Weed, "Editorial," *Essential Teacher* 2, no. 1 (2005): 1.

of Practice," I was particularly struck by Judie Haynes' description of her early years as an ESL teacher with children of Haitian migrant workers in a school in the United States. She describes how in her isolation and lack of supportive school environment she took on far more than preparing ESL lessons across the curriculum. "I was overwhelmed…. Unknowingly, I had taken on the job of ESL teacher and part-time social worker. Nothing in my Master of Arts in TESOL had prepared me for the crushing demands of this undertaking."[55] As language teachers of immigrants, refugees, and international students, that may sound familiar to us. I am not advocating that we all become social workers. As faculty we need to guard our energies and be clear about our roles, but in many ways, whether we acknowledge it or not, we are giving more than subject matter. We are creating hospitable spaces for the 'foreigners and strangers' in our communities and in our world. Haynes ends her article voicing her hopes that practices in current teacher education prepare teachers more effectively for "the affective aspects of their jobs."[56]

The biblical metaphor of hospitality is one framework available to us for our work, be that as teachers, as counselors, as parents, as pastors, or as other professionals. Hospitality is not so much something we do. Rather, it is a way of living our lives and a lens through which we see our lives and those around us as guests in God's Kingdom and as co-hosts with him as we invite our fellow human beings to God's banquet table.

55 Judie Haynes, "Communities of Practice," *Essential Teacher* 2, no. 1 (2005): 7.

56 Haynes, "Communities of Practice," 7.

Talking Straight in Education: Letting our Yes Mean Yes

Ken Badley and Kris Molitor*

Abstract

Educators introduce ideals in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and the overall purposes of education, often by introducing new phrases or assigning new meanings to familiar language. Attracted to those ideals, other educators begin using this language, sometimes simply because it has grown popular, but without reflecting on it and without altering their educational practice, thus reducing the language and the ideals to slogans. This article offers both strategic and principial reasons for educators, and especially Christian educators, to use educational language carefully. One's colleagues and students notice when we fail to practice what we preach, landing us in an easily-visible irony. Scripture calls all of us to truth-telling and to plain speech. In view of the potential for irony and of God's norms for language use, we need to align our language use with our practice, by adjusting one or both.

Introduction

Being Christian in the academy implies many things. It has implications for what and how we conduct our work in the core components of education: curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Being Christian scholars—as opposed to simply being scholars—implies purposes and motivations for our research that differ somewhat from those of non-believing members of the academy. Among the many other implications of being Christian in the academy, we believe that it will affect our language usage, notably that we will be careful to say what we mean and to live what we claim.

Educators, like those who work in all fields of human endeavour, have our own technical language. We employ phrases such as *differentiated instruction* and *inquiry learning* as if they are natural

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language, in the same way that cabinet makers use *sacrifice fence*, theologians use *atonement*, and doctors use *presenting symptom*. Indeed, in these respective fields, the phrases we have mentioned actually cease to function as recognizable technical terms and simply work as ordinary language, offering insiders to the respective fields degrees of both precision and economy that expedite their work in those fields.

In what follows, we want to examine some of the language used by educators, focusing our efforts on the professional discipline of education. We recognize that many educators who are not professors of education use this language as well, and so we do not write as if our discussion applies only to professors of education. We are concerned especially that some educational phrases, used initially to express worthy ideals, become slogans and that educators sometimes repeat those slogans without reflection and without actually implementing practices meant to achieve the denoted ideals. We offer this small list of phrases that have achieved a sufficient level of popularity among educators in recent years that we consider them slogans. We include in our list phrases used by Christian educators in both K-12 and in higher education. Some of these phrases originated at specific times and in the work of specific individuals whose names we have noted. Others migrated into educational language from the general English lexicon and we have not traced the respective dates of their arrival.

multiple intelligences[1]	learning styles[2]
brain-based[3]	student engagement
teaching for critical thinking	distributed leadership [4]

1 Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic, 1983), and *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century* (New York: Basic, 1999).

2 David Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984).

3 Eric Jensen, *Brain-Based Learning: The New Paradigm of Teaching* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin/SAGE, 2008).

4 James P. Spillane, Richard Halverson, and John Diamond, "Investigating School Leadership Practice: A Distributed Perspective," *Educational Researcher* 30 (2001): 23–28.

inclusive classroom
collaborative learning
science-based
differentiated instruction[7]
Christ-centred
biblical integration
best practices
direct instruction
growth mindset[10]
safe and caring classrooms
data-driven[5]
reflective practice[6]
inquiry learning[8]
faith learning integration
student-centred
constructive feedback
mastery learning[9]
assessment for learning / assessment of learning[11]
formative assessment / summative assessment

Each of the phrases appearing on our list had its origin in a specific educational context. In each case, the first user or users of these phrases envisioned a particular educational ideal. For example, Frank Gaebelein first used *faith learning integration* in 1954 while he was principal of Stony Brook School in New York state.[12] The vision Gaebelein meant to catch in this then-new phrase was that being Christian had everything to do with every part of the educational program of any college or school that operated in Christ's name. Gaebelein was not against chapel services and prayer (for many, the

5 W. Popham, K. Cruse, S. Rankin, P. Sandifer, and P. Williams, "Measurement-Driven Instruction: It's on the Road," *The Phi Delta Kappan* 66, no. 9 (1985): 628-34.

6 Donald Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic, 1983).

7 Carol Ann Tomlinson, *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2005).

8 Joseph Schwab, *Inquiry, the Science Teacher, and the Educator* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960).

9 Robert A. Slavin, "Mastery Learning Reconsidered," *Review of Educational Research* 57, no. 2 (1987): 175-13.

10 Carol Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (New York: Ballantine, 2007).

11 Sally Brown, "Assessment for Learning," *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* 1, no. 1 (2004-05): 81-89.

12 Frank Gaebelein, *The Pattern of God's Truth: The Integration of Faith and Learning* (New York: Oxford, 1954).

two paradigmatic indicators that Christian education was underway), but he was for recognizing that the history class, the biology class, and the mathematics class (and every other class) would be transformed in Christian education worthy of the name. Other educators who shared Gaebelein's vision for thoroughly and deeply Christian education began using the phrase. Six decades later it has become a slogan and—for many Christian educators—comfortable ordinary language. All the phrases on our list share that status; over time all of them have become slogans.

Many of our readers would sound an alarm if post-modern, post-structuralist, French philosophers declared that educational language is meaningless because all language is nothing more than the endless play of signifiers and that individual words and phrases bear no real relation to reality. In response to exactly those kinds of claims, alarms have been sounded since the 1980s at least, not about educational language in particular but about all language and what it may amount to. In short, many alarm-sounding people (including us) still want to be believe that words can convey meanings. We admit that language has limitations and that readers and listeners rarely can determine exactly what writers and speakers mean. But we believe that all is not lost, that readers and listeners still intend meanings and that communication still remains possible. Our point here is that most professors of education would stand with us if the challenge came from the radical deconstructionists. But what if the effect were the same—if educational language were to become largely empty—not for deep philosophical reasons but simply because educators constantly adopt the latest jargon without actually adopting the practices implied by the jargon?

In the following section, we look at a few educational slogans in some depth, attempting to understand how they work, what people mean by them, why they have become popular, and what drawbacks may accompany their use. In the subsequent section, we will suggest that Scripture offers two different but overlapping guidelines for our talking: truth-telling and plain speech. In that section, we also review briefly some of the scholarly conversation about educational slogans. Before drawing our conclusions, we include several suggestions. Since our purpose is constructive, not condemnatory, we want to

encourage our readers to reflect more carefully on their speech and to adjust their speech and practice as necessary so that their yes can consistently mean yes and their no mean no.

A Landscape Littered with Slogans

All the phrases in our list deserve scrutiny. We will examine just a few here to illustrate our concern, beginning with the now-popular *differentiated instruction*. At its simplest, differentiating requires that instructors understand the level at which their students are functioning academically (especially in their language development and capacity), and that they then respond to their students' varied needs by offering both multiple approaches to learning and a variety of means for students to demonstrate their understanding. Differentiation thus requires that instructors know their students and their students' needs and that, in response and based on that knowledge, they routinely adjust how they plan and execute instruction. Finding and welcoming alternative ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge is essential to this process.

Extensive research has demonstrated the value of "differentiating instruction," and the phrase has now achieved the status of an educational slogan.[13] Despite the popularity of the phrase, however, many educators—including some who give lip service to the ideal—still give the same assignments to their whole class and offer no alternative structures or framework by which students can demonstrate their learning. In this scenario, in the three parts of what we called the core cycle of instruction—curriculum, instruction, and assessment—there is no tailoring to suit different students' needs; rather we find a one-size-fits-all mentality. We believe differentiated instruction to be a worthy ideal, one which we both attempt to realize in our

13 See Amy Dee's doctoral dissertation, *Differentiated Instruction in the Work Sample: A Study of Preservice Teacher Practice* (Newberg, OR: George Fox University, 2009). She offers a very capable review of the literature on differentiated instruction, and draws the conclusion from her research that most pre-service teachers do not know how to implement differentiation. Also see K. Molitor's doctoral dissertation, *The Impact of Instructional Models on Implementation of Effective ELL Practices* (Newberg, OR: George Fox University, 2012). This research confirms that teacher effectiveness to differentiate instruction for ELL students improves with additional coursework centered around such instruction.

practice as teacher educators.[14] To our point here though, differentiated instruction has become a slogan; in some circles giving lip service to differentiated instruction is rewarded with the approbation of one's colleagues and supervisors. Yes, we (personally) know that some educators who use the slogan make no attempt to implement it (or at least have no success). We will not speculate here about the motivations and intentions of such users, but we must be clear at this point that we believe there are more layers to this usage than simple false claims or bad intentions.

Another example relates specifically to assessment. In recent years, many K-12 educators and some higher educators have begun to use the distinction between *formative assessment* and *summative assessment*, also expressed as *assessment of learning* and *assessment for learning*. Recognizably, this distinction is important. If assessment's sole purpose is to find out what students have learned (or even simply to provide a grade to the registrar) but does not influence what professors or teachers do the next day or the next year, then it is more like an autopsy than a biopsy. Those who use the summative/formative distinction are aiming at a richer, more careful kind of assessment. In this vision, we assess so that we can revisit those elements of the curriculum that students did not understand and thereby help them understand what they missed. That is important but it is only the first step. In the second step, we recalibrate how to teach this material the next time around. We ask how we could have approached those curriculum contents differently and we plan the necessary adjustments. In this account, assessment as biopsy helps the students we have this semester and, if we do the recalibrating and make the adjustments, it will help the students we teach next semester or next year. Thus, it forms; it is formative. So far, so good.

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14 If we view Paul's lists of the spiritual gifts (in Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12 and 14, and Eph. 4) analogously, we may take more seriously the idea that the students in our classes do not all come to us with the same strengths, an idea quite compatible with the work many have done on learning styles (for example, David Kolb, "Learning Styles and Disciplinary Differences," in A. W. Chickering et al. (eds.), *The Modern American College* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985), 232-55), and multiple intelligences, an idea advanced by Howard Gardner in such works as *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic, 1983), and *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century (*New York: Basic, 1999).

We expect that almost all our readers will agree substantively with our brief exploration of this distinction. And that wide agreement becomes central to what we want to ask about here. We know that for many educators these phrases have become natural language. Saying *formative assessment* is as natural to us and those in the circles in which we work as saying *enjoy the weekend* is for most people. But, like our readers, we know of people who work with this assessment language while failing to notice that they themselves mainly—or even only—use summative assessment. They neither identify for themselves nor make clear to their students their students' strengths and weaknesses in a particular area in order to pinpoint areas for focused effort. They do not review with their students to help the stragglers catch up. They do not revise their tests or assignments before giving them again. And they do not revise their curriculum or instruction before the next time around. In short, they use the phrase without reflection and without a set of practices meant to achieve the ideal. For them, it is empty verbiage. Meanwhile, others for whom formative assessment is a key part of their vision for continuous improvement of instruction also use the phrase. They do so because it catches part of their very understanding of education. That different people use the same phrase but have such different practices is, for us, part of what makes slogans so complex and interesting.

This brief discussion of assessment connects to another popular slogan: *data-driven instruction*. We have claimed that effective instruction requires both formative and summative assessments. To put it simply, if educators or a whole college engage in mid- to long-term assessment and they keep accurate records, they will end up with a body of data. Such data can be used to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of individual instructors and of whole institutions, leading to strategies for improvement. Used rightly, assessment facilitates analysis and leads to action. Used rightly, data-driven (or as some put it, *data-informed*) policies and data-driven change can benefit our institutions and ultimately our students. No wonder that the phrase has become a slogan!

However, data are not always used in ways that increase human flourishing. Used wrongly, data-driven policies can have the opposite effect than what is intended. In the United States, K-12 educa-

tors have come to dread what new uses for data policy-makers will mandate next. The *No Child Left Behind* Federal Mandate currently requires the use of data to distribute school improvement grant funds to those schools demonstrating the lowest achievement scores. However, in order to receive such funding, districts must choose one of four options: school closure, restart, transformation, or turnaround, each having severe ramifications for schools and staff members. For example, the turnaround model requires schools to replace the administrator and 50% of the staff.[15] In Britain, funding of public universities has, for a decade already, been based partly on research output as described in the Research Excellence Framework (using a formula involving department-by-department page counts, prestige of publication venues, and citation frequencies).[16] With that system well in place, Britain is proposing a similar Teaching Excellence Framework in its Higher Education White Paper.[17] This data-driven scheme will allow those universities receiving higher ratings of students' university experience to charge higher tuition.

Thus, data can be used for good or ill. But as we note in our discussion of the logic of slogans in the next section, slogans have the power to limit or even shut down reflection. Data-driven may function that way. Who can argue against a plan or policy that is driven by data? It sounds so scientific. On the other hand, we need data about our students' progress and, implicitly, about our teaching. Funding agencies or tenure-promotion committees need data to make

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15 *Federal Funding and the Four Turnaround Models — The School Turnaround Field Guide*; online: http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/federal-funding-school-turnaround-field-guide.aspx (Date accessed Dec. 15, 2016).

16 Department for Employment and Learning, Government of the UK (London, 2014); online: http://www.ref.ac.uk/ (Date accessed Dec. 15, 2016).

17 Department for Business Innovation and Skills, *Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice* (London: Government of the UK, 2016); online: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-success-as-a-knowledge-economy-white-paper. Commentary on this initiative is available in British newspapers. A May 16, 2016 article, "Higher Education White Paper: Success as a Knowledge Economy," from the *Times Higher Education Supplement* is a good starting point; available online: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/higher-education-white-paper-success-knowledge-economy (Date accessed Dec. 15, 2016).

important decisions about the work of professors. The stakes are high.

We end this section with a brief exploration of the slogan *best practices*. We have tried to imagine a faculty meeting, dean's report, or college brochure that used the phrase *second-best practices*. Perhaps the next line could be along the lines of "… where good enough is good enough." Our point is that the language offers no handy phrase expressing an alternative ideal; of course we want to follow best practices. The difficulty we see with this phrase is that some educators who simply do not teach well use the phrase in ways that indicate a lack of reflection on their own practice. To be charitable, perhaps their practices are the best practices they know of and they use the phrase innocently, albeit somewhat misleadingly. This charge could be laid against users of many of the items on the list with which we began this article. For that reason, we will now make a brief but important excursus into the logic of slogans.

Without opening up any more examples for inspection, we will conclude this section, first by summarizing and then by pointing to three possible ironies. First, we summarize. These phrases catch important ideals but once they become slogans, they gain the power to hide things from their own users (and possibly from others). Educators, and we include ourselves here, may sometimes be guilty of careless language use, or talking someone else's walk. In our view, the key lies in implementation. If educators are going to use a phrase, their practice should match. If educators say they are doing something, this something should be evident to students, to colleagues, and to supervisors.

Second, we note two ironies in which such educators may trap themselves. The first of these ironies is that among all professors, professors of education tend to be the dominant users of most of the phrases on our list and especially of those we examined in detail. That is not itself problematic. It is problematic—and highly ironic—if education professors do not themselves practice what they teach in their courses. On some college and university campuses, education professors take some pride in being the ones who understand teaching better; after all, so their thinking goes, they study good teaching professionally and they know its characteristics. They

draw from a broad repertoire of methods rather than simply transferring the contents of their hard drive onto students' hard drives by the most inefficient means possible: lecturing. They assume that the campus teaching-learning committee or the teaching development centre should take their advice seriously. Ignoring those assumptions for the moment, we (the authors) see this irony driven home regularly at education conferences where, in session after session, presenters—mostly education professors—use direct instruction, ignoring the broad repertoire they apparently have at their disposal and presumably tell their education students they need to use in their classrooms.[18]

The second, and perhaps more painful irony is this: education students see their professors using direct instruction despite regularly advocating the use of alternative methods. But given the asymmetrical power relationship between our students and ourselves, they do not say anything (perhaps pointing up another irony, if the class where they hear about but do not see formative assessment is also a class where they hear about *distributed authority*). In a classroom where authority and leadership are truly shared among professor and students, students should be able to register their concern about professorial overuse of direct instruction.

With all these ironies in the fire, one might suspect that as education professors we would want to bring our performance up to our advertised standard, to walk our own talk. However, rather than to seem to dish out guilt, we want to frame this usage in the scholarly discussion of slogans as well as view it in light of two related biblical principles.

Framing Unreflective Usage

Slogans

Slogans present a conundrum to anyone who, in the name of Christ, would call for plain speech. The noun, *slogan* often explicitly

18 We know many education professors who are outstanding teachers, but we call on our education colleagues to recognize that outstanding teaching can occur in any corner of the campus. Members of The Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (whose purpose is to examine and improve instruction in higher education, https://www.stlhe.ca/), for example, represent all academic fields.

or implicitly takes the adjective *empty*; that is, its connotations tend toward the negative. The word took on its negative connotations over time, in part because of ubiquitous advertising. We know that the internet package the other company offers will not be *blazing fast*. We know that the airline ticket advertised on the side of our Facebook screen will not really be *80% off*. And we know that the click-bait headlines at the bottom of a news screen are called click-bait for a reason; number 17 will not really *blow you away* (regardless of the number of exclamation points). In a world—and especially a digital world—where we assume that truth is in short supply, what do we do when we see that key technical terms from our field have become slogans? We actually need these terms because they offer us precision and economy for our specialized work. If they become slogans do they become empty? Do they lose their meaning and become useless to us for our work?

From the 1960s through the 1980s many philosophers of education focused on educational language, using the tools of linguistic analysis to clarify the meanings of educational terms.[19] For our purposes here, the fruit of this effort includes two landmark discussions of educational slogans.[20] The essence of those discussions is somewhat liberating for educators who have seen important technical concepts become slogans. But those discussions are also cautionary.

On the accounts of the philosophers of education, slogans still convey meaning despite their status as slogans. They achieve their status in the first place because wide numbers of people are attracted to a particular vision. After all, who could be against formative assessment, faith and learning integration, or 80% savings on airline

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19 Linguistic philosophy of education rooted itself in analytic philosophy generally, following on the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, especially the *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1953). R. S. Peters and P. H. Hirst were major British figures of this movement and Paul B. Komisar (whose work we use here) the best-known American.

20 B. P. Komisar and J. E. McClellan, "The Logic of Slogans," in *Language and Concepts in Education*, ed. B. O. Smith and R. H. Ennis (Chicago: Rand-McNally, 1961), 195-214; I. Scheffler, "Educational Slogans," in *Philosophical Essays on Teaching*, ed. B. Bandman and R. S. Guttchen (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1969), 107-16. More recent works on slogans continue to appear but these two truly are the landmarks in this field.

tickets? Our brief retelling of Gaebelein's use of *faith-learning integration* illustrates this point well. In the decade following World War II, with American evangelicals wanting to realize a wider cultural vision, one educator expressed the view that Christian education should imply much more than chapel services and prayer at the start of classes; it should transform curriculum and instruction. Other educators who agreed with Gaebelein latched onto the phrase. At the time of our writing, it is a slogan, used both by people who still share what Gaebelein envisioned and by people who have no wider vision for a cultural embrace and are quite content to glue a Bible verse onto any lesson and call it integration. Arguably, those with no broad or deep integrative vision could be said not only to use the phrase but to misuse it. To them, we could argue that it is nothing but a slogan, an empty slogan. But such use or misuse does not imply that the phrase has lost its meaning for those with a thorough and deep Christian vision for education. Despite its status as a slogan, the phrase still conveys meaning. This adds complexity to the question of using in-house, technical language that has reached slogan status. As we will note when we make suggestions for speech and practice, the ways slogans function in actual speech may require us to query their users as to their implied meanings and their practices. Still, with that caution in place, we want to defend phrases that have become slogans for the very reason that so many people have embraced the vision of the person or persons who used the phrases in the first place.

However, the good news on slogans comes with bad news. A slogan (*Christ-centred education*, for example) can shut down thinking or foreclose on certain lines of thinking if, on hearing or reading it, hearers or readers assume they know what the speaker or writer means. When seminary professors read *pastoral formation* or when education professors hear *best practices*, they give a kind of internal nod of approval, perhaps unconsciously and unreflectively. Perhaps they even give an external nod. But we want to ask how often seminary or education professors stop to (re)examine, (re)define, or (re)agree on the respective key phrases. This is our key concern with the phrases we listed in our introduction: people tend to use this language without sufficient reflection or care.

A second problem with slogans, one that we have already hinted at, is that people with no vision for what a given slogan implies use it falsely. Perhaps they simply want to recruit ("we offer Christ-centred education"), or get a grant ("data-driven research"), or even persuade themselves that they are on track ("my classes are all about critical thinking"), but their practice does not align with their language. We will not assume bad intentions here, for such usage actually illustrates the power of slogans (and one of the problems with slogans): they seduce language users into using them.

To conclude this brief discussion of the logic of slogans, we note their complexity, their tendency to attract users, and the possible range of density of meaning (from empty to rich). For one simple reason, we will not call for educators to stop using slogans: it would be useless to do so as long as people keep articulating new and attractive visions for education. But we do call for caution, and we will make several suggestions for practice after we explore strains of biblical teaching about language use. At the same time that we call for caution we also want to recognize that when whole segments of our culture have been seduced into using a particular slogan, we should not have to carry the guilt—as Christians, as professors, or as education professors—of thinking that we are bad people.

Biblical Perspectives

As are our readers, we are well aware of one principle that arguably runs throughout the Christian Scriptures: that we should tell the truth. To put things at their simplest, we could argue here that thoughtlessly using language is the equivalent of lying, that lying is condemned in Scripture, and we therefore ought to refrain from such usage.[21] However, this approach, while it would yield a shorter (one-page) article, would fail on two fronts. First, usage of these slogans is more complex than that approach allows; we already noted that we

21 There is no shortage of treatments of lying. D. Goleman's *Vital Lies, Simple Truths: The Psychology of Self-Deception* bears directly on our topic (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985). Worthwhile recent titles include M. C. McEntyre's *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009); Paul Griffiths' *Lying: An Augustinian Theology of Duplicity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010); and David Nyberg's *The Varnished Truth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

consider this usage quite complex. Slogan use is not a form of lying. Second, that approach fails to attend to the nuances of Scripture.

We distinguish two themes, obviously overlapping, in the Scriptures: telling the truth and plain speech. We begin with truth-telling, aware that most of our readers will not require much review of this principle. The topic of truth and lying appears early in Scripture, with the temptation story in Genesis. Here, the serpent lies to Eve, claiming that God lied about the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:4). The ninth commandment (Ex. 2:16; Deut. 5:20) prohibits bearing false witness. Several other Old Testament passages repeat or generalize the commandment (such as Lev. 19:11 and Zeph. 3:13). Lying and the virtue of truth-telling appear at several points in the book of Proverbs as well (for example, Prov. 12:22; 13:5; 14:5; 17:7).

The New Testament affirms the Old Testament on this question. If anything, in fact, Jesus raises the standard (in the "you have heard that it was said …" sayings in the Sermon on the Mount) by making specific reference to the ninth commandment and then demanding that those who would follow him not make oaths at all but simply let their words be their oath (Mt. 5:37, repeated in Jas. 5:12). At other points, New Testament writers associate lying with the devil (Jn. 8:44; Acts 5:3), with non-Christian character (Col. 3:9), with hypocrisy (1 Tim. 4:2), and with sorcery, fornication, and murder (Rev. 22:15). In short, the biblical writers had some strong things to say about lying.

We shall employ Jesus's nuancing of the Old Testament standard as our segue to viewing Scriptural teaching about language use as advocacy of forthright and uplifting speech, rather than simply as condemnation of lying. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul wrote, "Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear" (Eph. 4:29). Note the dual emphasis here: a prohibition followed by an exhortation. We believe that Paul's exhortation applies to the matter of educational slogans. With no interest in condemning anyone for using the slogans that seem to be in the very air we breathe, we are still in want of a way to use educational language carefully and reflectively. Could we use Paul's criterion

here as a standard? Could we measure our language against the idea that it should always build up and give grace? For us, part of building up implies our not using slogans that might lead others to misjudge the quality of our teaching program. We should avoid unreflective language use that implicitly or explicitly overstates the quality of our own teaching program.

Plain language has a second benefit. As we have already noted, the technical language in any field facilitates communication by allowing insiders to speak with precision and economy. But that same language acts as a barrier to those from outside the respective field. From time to time, especially when non-specialists are present, our use of plain language might act more like a door or a window to those outside our fields, this becoming invitational instead of putting out an unwelcome mat.

Taking Steps: Suggestions for Usage

First, we need to reflect on our language use and be more careful about what words we choose, especially when those words imply commitment to educational ideals that we may not actually be committed to or ideals that will never be realized with our current classroom practices. This is not a stand-alone suggestion but goes with our next suggestion.

Second, we need to examine our practice and adjust either the practice or the language that we use. We suggest that all teachers and professors engage in a practice that we use as an assignment: identify the most important ten ideals or qualities that you want to characterize your teaching. Next, identify where in the details of your daily work—in curriculum, instruction, and assessment—you have taken specific steps or built in specific practices to realize those ideals. As we become more conscious of the specific reasons we go to work in the morning we may be better positioned to use our language carefully (besides reminding ourselves of our vocations). If teaching for critical thinking, for example, does not appear on the list of ten ideals I produce during active reflection then I may, perhaps, get a slight jolt when I find myself using that phrase as if it were one of the bedrock components of my teaching program. If I have not given effort to learning about and adopting new teaching methods since the

first day I taught, then perhaps when I hear the phrase best practices coming out of my own mouth I'll be led to stop for a moment and reflect, about my language use, yes, but also about my teaching skills and my repertoire of teaching strategies. I may take note of the steps I am taking to change my actual practice. This implies doing one's own self-assessments, noting the actual points in my curriculum, instruction, and assessment where I have changed my practice in view of the new concerns expressed in this or that phrase.

Third, we suggest that when someone uses one of these slogans, and we suspect they may not themselves practice what the phrase implies, we ask, "What do you mean? Can you illustrate?" We suggest this not as a way to trap our conversation partners, although they may be prompted to identify gaps between their language and their practice; rather, we suggest it as a step on the road to clear communication and as a means of learning so that we might improve our own practice. School districts, schools, accrediting associations, colleges, and seminaries sometimes introduce new language as part of their adoption of some new educational ideal or accreditation standard, but some people affected by the adoption, to put it simply, do not understand. In these circumstances, there should be no embarrassment is asking, "What do you mean?"

Fourth, we suggest speaking in plain language despite the important work that technical terms and phrases do. Still, we believe that adopting the discipline of using plain language may force some of us to reflect more carefully on what we believe and do.

Fifth, and very practically, we believe we should give our students opportunities for feedback on specific teaching and learning strategies that they are observing. Can they identify the practices we are using? Are these approaches helpful in their learning? If students report that they find our daily reading of our PowerPoint slides not helpful, will we look for more engaging means of instruction? To recall our example discussion on summative and formative assessment, we ask if we are using our evaluation tools wisely. What if our evaluations included specific language as to the verbiage and strategies that we are presenting? What if our students were to rate the effectiveness of our strategies so that we could be accountable not

only for doing our teaching but for the effectiveness of our teaching? We believe these are some of the areas where slogan use lands in the classroom.

Conclusion

We began our article by asserting that educators sometimes use language unreflectively, even carelessly. When we use language this way we often affirm popular ideals that our own practices may or may not match. We called for Christians, who we assume have a declared interest in telling the truth, to take this problem seriously. We noted, as well, that education professors need to address this gap between language and practice because their use or misuse of language lands them in a sad irony, one that will likely be obvious to their students.

At least two biblical principles bear on the questions we have raised: outright lying and the virtue of plain speech. We place more weight on the second because we do not believe using slogans is a form of lying. Philosophical work on the use and power of slogans also illuminates the pattern of usage we have identified. We included the suggestions in the fourth section because we believe deeply that Christians and education professors who are Christian should use language with integrity.

Phrases meant to express high ideals become slogans for good reasons. We need ideals, and as educators we need to articulate our ideals and review them regularly. Some of our ideals will be widely shared (*critical thinking*, anyone?) and become slogans. That achievement should not stop us from using the best language to denote a respective ideal. At the same time, we need to be careful not to use language that does not reflect our ideals or our achievements. In all our talk about our work as educators, God help us to let our yes mean yes and our no mean no.

Shadow of Oz: Theistic Evolution and the Absent God

by Wayne D. Rossiter. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015. ix + 177 pages. Paperback; $24.00. ISBN: 9781498220729.

Wayne Rossiter, Assistant Professor of Biology at Waynesburg University, is a Christian professor of biology at a Christian institution of higher learning. He claims that countless students find the implications of Darwinism to be fatal to traditional belief. Rossiter believes that a blind and chance process (read Darwinian evolution) is incompatible with theism, and that that theistic evolutionists hold a position that is therefore incoherent. In fact, this entire book is one long argument against the plausibility of theistic evolution. He contends, for example, that there is only a one-sided push: science is exclusive in its pushback toward theology, while theology does not reciprocate. His main point is that there is no distinguishable difference between theistic evolutionism and atheism when it comes to physical reality (p. 25).

Rossiter also contends that various theistic evolutionists, John Haught and Kenneth Miller for example, hold to a faith that hardly resembles traditional Christianity. He is very forthright: one cannot have a Darwin and a God at the same time. Pointedly, I find this and other of Rossiter's claims to betray faulty reasoning.

Rossiter finds himself at various times coming to the defense of Intelligent Design (ID) advocates at the expense of evolutionists. This is unusual for a practicing biologist. He notes that something cannot be both intended and unintended at the same time, so the viewpoint of theistic evolution is incoherent. Rossiter claims that both the theology and the science of theistic evolutionists is in error, but his expertise does not qualify him to adjudicate the theology of theistic evolutionists. He comes down hard on people like Teilhard de Chardin for attempting to reach a contemporary audience, yet demonstrates his own confusion on theological matters when he stipulates that the basic view of theistic evolution is that of process theism (p. 69). He assumes that theistic evolution indicates that human-

kind is in a state of upward mobility toward perfection, rather than a state of continual decay. He also believes that it forces one to deny the historicity of Adam and Eve. Admittedly, this is an issue with which both scientists and biblical scholars are wrestling today. Given the growing genetic evidence on human origins, it is difficult for a biologist to believe in a historical Adam and Eve. It seems much more likely that we recapitulate "the fall" in each of our lives as we choose selfishness above and before the corporate good of others.

Rossiter claims that Darwinian evolution is not the only game in town, that the theory has no predictive power, and is therefore insufficient (p. 126). Instead of taking Gould's criticisms of the just-so stories in evolution as a necessary corrective to the basic Darwinian core, Rossiter seemingly throws the proverbial baby out with the bathwater. Rossiter is bold in claiming that whereas natural selection is completely intuitive, it is no longer clear that it can get the job done in the real world. The first problem, he says, is the power of selection.

In countering his claims, I stipulate that he merely states the issue, instead of actually demonstrating it. He claims that "the preponderance of evidence" now suggests that selection pressures are weak, ephemeral, and diffuse, and that therefore adaptionist stories have become increasingly difficult to swallow (p. 147). I disagree with this contention. Natural selection, though supplemented by various research programs in the twentieth century, is now, just as much as in the nineteenth century, the predominate explanation for the derivation of species. It seems that Rossiter cannot reconcile himself with the notion that evolution did not have him, in particular, in mind. Charles Sanders Peirce gives us a way in which to affirm the reality of evolution and the coexistence of teleology. Indeed, Peirce avers that it is possible to have a generalized telos that is at once non-specific but nevertheless effective in bringing about God's intentions. Rossiter is apparently unaware of his proposals (and others like it).

In sum, one will find a miss-mash of confused biology and con-

fused theology within this title. It contends that there is no possible veracity within the tenets of theistic evolutionism, and it imports into its own advocated theology key insights of ID theory. Read it with care.

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VERITAS
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