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## EDITORIAL:

Welcome to the Spring 2015 issue of the *Midwestern Journal of Theology*. In this, the first of two issues examining the theme of Preachers and Preaching, we will seek to remember, reflect and learn lessons from some of the many commemorations and anniversaries in Christian history that 2015 will celebrate. To that end, we are introducing a new section in this issue, which will seek to gather reflections and comments from various scholars on related themes. Again, I would like to put on record my sincere thanks to all who have given so sacrificially of their time and talents to produce this Journal.

We begin this issue with a very interesting piece from Brian Albert, who reveals in detail, the discovery and significance of the discovery of one of Charles Spurgeon's sources for his monumental *The Treasury of David*. This is followed by *Midwestern's* own Robin Hadaway's very helpful and practical encouragement and challenge to be as sensitive as possible, in our attempts at cross-cultural mission. We are then honored to have the first of two 'outside' contributions. The first consisting of a very timely challenge from Steven Smith, Vice President for Student Services and Communications at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, on seeking recapture God's voice when we preach, thereby preaching God's Word in God's way! Smith's Article is adapted from his forthcoming monograph, *Recapturing the Voice of God, Sermons Shaped like Scripture* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015), and from papers presented at the annual meetings of the 2013 Evangelical Homiletics Society and the 2014 Evangelical Theological Society respectively.

It is at this point in the journal that we include the first of what is hoped to be a regular feature, a forum of reflections and comments from a variety of scholars on issues relevant to the theme of the journal. Having mentioned already that 2015 is a year of many commemorations, Drs. Finn and George are asked to reflect on those that are of particular interest to them. The present editor also reflects on the life and ministry of Jan Hus. Our second 'outside' article that we are honored to publish is from the pen of Greg Scharf, and was a so-winner of the Wilhite Award of the Evangelical Homiletics Society. Scharf is currently both a Professor of Pastoral Theology and the Chair of the Pastoral Theology Department at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He too has a very timely challenge, that of the nature, history and use (or maybe lack of use) of what he terms, the 'Pulpit Rebuke'. We conclude the Article section with a piece

from the editor, examining the journaling and reading habits of the British Baptist, Andrew Fuller. 2015 is the bicentennial anniversary of Fuller's death and for that reason, he figures earlier in the Reflective Forum section.

As always, the issue concludes with a number of relevant and thought provoking scholarly book reviews.

Spurgeon's Psalter and *The Treasury of David*<sup>1</sup>

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Introduction

“The delightful study of the Psalms has yielded me boundless profit and ever-growing pleasure. . . . that I have nothing better of my own to offer upon this peerless book is to me matter of deepest regret. . . . I have done my best, but, conscious of many defects, I heartily wish I could have done far better.”<sup>2</sup> These were the words that Charles Spurgeon (1834—1892) penned in the opening lines of *The Treasury of David*. Compiled over a period of twenty years (approximately 1865—1885),<sup>3</sup> *The Treasury of David* was a seven volume commentary on each chapter of the Psalms. Spurgeon's purpose of his magnum opus was for “the divine glory [of God] and the good of the church.”<sup>4</sup>

The writer of this article recently discovered a Psalter in the Spurgeon Library at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. As this article will describe, this Psalter is believed to be one of many resources Charles Spurgeon and others used to help draft *The Treasury of David*. This article seeks to provide background in the composition of *The Treasury of David*, the relationship that the Psalter has with *The Treasury of David*, methods of analysis used to determine this relationship, and vital hints one can extrapolate from the Psalter concerning the Bible study methods Spurgeon used in framing *The Treasury of David*. The desire would be that the modern scholar would

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<sup>1</sup> For further information please see <http://www.mbts.edu/psalter-used-treasury-david-commentary-discovered-midwestern-seminarys-spurgeon-library/>

<sup>2</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, Vol. I (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887), v. Hereafter *TOD*.

<sup>3</sup> *TOD*, Vol., VII, vi.

<sup>4</sup> *TOD*, Vol. II, v.

pursue study in the Psalms for “the divine glory [of God] and the good of the church.”

### Background to *The Treasury of David*

In a similar state when he wrote *Morning by Morning*,<sup>5</sup> Spurgeon composed much of *The Treasury of David* while sick and suffering.

It may be added, that although the comments were the work of my health, the rest of the volume is the product of my sickness. When protracted illness and weakness laid me aside from daily preaching, I resorted to my pen as an available means of doing good. I would have preached had I been able, but as my Master denied me the privilege of thus serving him, I gladly availed myself of the other method of bearing testimony for his name. O that he may give me fruit in this field also, and his shall be all the praise.<sup>6</sup>

Apparently he spent such a voluminous amount of time working on *The Treasury of David* that he did not believe his remuneration would be proportionate to the labor he put into writing the material.<sup>7</sup> Like most writers, he was not always satisfied with the work he was drafting. Commenting on the composition, Spurgeon admitted, “There is more work in it, but less to show for the effort. . . . But now that the supply is scarce, what we have discovered after much hunting is not always of the highest value.”<sup>8</sup> In his drafting of volume five, he complained that he did

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<sup>5</sup> “Much labor have I spent upon it [*Morning by Morning*], and if the Lord shall bless it to his people, my toil will be well rewarded. I have written much of it out of my own experience of the Lord’s sustaining hand in trouble, sickness, and depression of spirit, and therefore hope it may meet the cases of the Lord’s tried people; yet my life has been a very cheerful one, and therefore the joyous will not find it sick lied o’er with melancholy.” *The Sword and Trowel*, Vol. I (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1996), 193.

<sup>6</sup> *TOD*, Vol. I, vi.

<sup>7</sup> “I cannot hope to be financially remunerated for this effort. If only the expenses are met, I will be well content.” *TOD*, Vol. III, v.

<sup>8</sup> *TOD*, Vol. V, v.

not have much quality material to work with due to many commentators who were “sloppy” and “lazy” by “referring to a parallel passage in a previous Psalm” or “worse . . . falling into the habit of repeating what they had previously said.”<sup>9</sup> But the greatest problem, according to Spurgeon, was “the expounders are partial. They spend all their love or at least their energies, on favorite parts of the sacred volume, passing over other passages with scarcely a remark, as if all Scripture were not equally inspired. Why should so much be written on Psalm 116 and so little on Psalm 118?”<sup>10</sup> Because of this neglect of material, Spurgeon was committed to drafting a balanced and complete exposition of every chapter of the Psalms.

In his own lifetime, Spurgeon was not without criticism as to the contents in *The Treasury of David*. Believing Spurgeon's titled sections, “Notes to the Village Preacher,” was a slight against country pastors, a reader accused Spurgeon of being sectarian. Spurgeon replied to the contrary, “A critic has so greatly mistaken my meaning that he found human vanity in the title to the sermon notes. I am amazed. I do not pretend to be entirely free from that vice, but no trace of it is discovered by my keenest and most conscientious inspection.”<sup>11</sup>

For Spurgeon, compiling *The Treasury of David* was a deeply personal venture that was motivated by a pastoral calling for God's people to experience His benefits. Spurgeon's counsel as to these benefits could have been written in the modern era.

In these busy days, it would profit Christians spiritually to become more familiar with the Book of Psalms. It contains a complete armory for life's baffles and a perfect supply for life's needs. Here are both delight and usefulness, consolation and instruction. For every condition, there is a Psalm that is suitable and elevating. This book supplies the babe in grace with penitent cries and the perfected saint with triumphant songs. Its breadth of experience stretches from the jaws of hell to the gates of heaven. Those who are acquainted with the marches of the Psalm country know that the land flows with milk and honey,

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> *TOD*, Vol. V, vi.

<sup>11</sup> *TOD*, Vol. IV, vi.

and they are delighted to travel there. To such, I have aspired to be a helpful companion.<sup>12</sup>

### The Spurgeon Psalter: Our “Helpful Companion”

Spurgeon desired to be a “helpful companion” in his reader’s pilgrimage through the Psalms. Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary owns another “helpful companion,” Spurgeon’s Psalter. In analyzing this Psalter, we can get an “up close and personal” view of how Spurgeon constructed *The Treasury of David*. We are able to draw certain conclusions about Spurgeon’s research methods and style. What follows is the method of analysis I used in reaching the conclusion that this Psalter was owned and used by Charles Spurgeon in part for drafting *The Treasury of David*.

#### Step 1: The Psalter

This Psalter is a thin book numbering less than 200 pages yet filled with personal notations. The Psalter includes chapter subheadings, and was published in 1864. Many copies of this Psalter were printed annually by the British and Foreign Bible Society (1804—1900) for public purchase. This Psalter was not a family heirloom Bible but was much more “useable.” Both the content of this Bible (on the Psalms) and the time of publication (within Spurgeon’s lifetime) established the first step in the relationship with *The Treasury of David* (1865—1885).

#### Step 2: Personal Notations

The second step in the process was deciphering the notations and proving their authenticity (many I believed were Spurgeon’s) and significance. The Psalter has several notations (approximately one hundred), and most were used in *The Treasury of David* (see table below). Dr. Christian George, curator of the Spurgeon Library at Midwestern

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<sup>12</sup> *TOD*, Vol. VII, vii.

Baptist Theological Seminary and Dr. Malcolm Yarnell, director of the Center for Theological Research at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, verified that a majority of the notations were Spurgeon's. In addition to Spurgeon's handwritten notes, the amount of notations was significant. This piece of data pointed to this Psalter being a "working Bible."

### **Step 3: Other Sources in the Spurgeon Collection**

Upon further observation of the Psalter's notes, I detected that many of the sources noted were also in the Spurgeon collection. This led me to step three of the discovery process. When I checked these cited sources, I noticed that many of them (well over half) had personal notations of the specific Psalm passage. For example, on Psalm 68:19 in the Psalter there is a notation, "Spalding 246." This refers to John Spalding's *Synaxis Sacra*. On page 246 of *Synaxis Sacra* there is a notation next to the text which is inscribed "Ps. 68:19." This indicated to me that at least Spurgeon's personal books were used for some of the source material noted in the Psalter.

### **Step 4: Treasury of David**

These three steps eventually led me to *The Treasury of David*, and when I began to compare the text of Scripture with the notation in the Bible next to the text with what appears in *The Treasury of David*, the data was conclusive. (See chart below). This Bible belonged to Spurgeon, was noted by Spurgeon (in part) from much of Spurgeon's personal books as a tool in drafting the 20 year work *The Treasury of David*.

### **The Spurgeon Psalter: Our Hint in Spurgeon's Methodology**

When one examines the Spurgeon Psalter and resources used from the Spurgeon collection with the final draft of *The Treasury of*

*David*, one can extract certain elements related to Spurgeon's research methods that will serve as a helpful aid to modern scholars.

### Hint 1: Personal Observation Prior to Commentaries

Spurgeon claimed "originality" of his exposition. He stated, "the exposition here given is my own. I consulted a few authors before penning it."<sup>13</sup> He had most of his material written and then consulted secondary sources.<sup>14</sup> The majority of the notations in the Psalter are by Spurgeon which seem to confirm his claim. Modern students of the Scriptures would do well to learn from Spurgeon here. The best Bible scholar begins with the Bible or else will be "at mercy to the commentaries."<sup>15</sup>

### Hint 2: Consult Various Scholars

While Spurgeon's exposition of the Psalms was "original," it was not solitary. Throughout the two decades of composition, he did depend on John L. Keys, one of his personal assistants, for research from the British Museum, Lambeth Palace, Williams Museum, and Sion College; David Gracey, classic tutor at the Pastor's College, for assistance in deciphering the Latin authors; George Rogers who provided many "hints" and sermon outlines that Spurgeon used for pastors; E.T. Gibson who assisted in the translation of the German authors; and W. Durban, assisted in the Latin translations.<sup>16</sup> By doing this, Spurgeon admitted that his "original" thoughts may need to be refined, and he submitted his work to others who may have been more skilled in a particular discipline.

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<sup>13</sup> *TOD*, Vol. I, v.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> This statement may be attributed to my former Greek and New Testament professor, Dr. F. Alan Tomlinson whose witticisms are legendary.

<sup>16</sup> *TOD*, Vol. I, v; Vol. III, vi; Vol. VII, vi.

With each volume, Spurgeon relied more on “the Latin writers” due to the lack of commentators.<sup>17</sup>

This volume has taken more labor than any other because no great writers have explored this section of the Psalms. Some six or seven Psalms are exceptions and have been expounded and preached on, but the rest remain almost unplowed ground. Thus research has required a wider range of reading and far more laborious research. When one author writes on a portion of Scripture, all write, but other passages remain almost untouched.<sup>18</sup>

Spurgeon was not particularly impressed by these “Latin writers” believing the work was greater than the reward. He and Mr. Gracey endured, “huge folios, full of dreary word-spinning, yielded here and there a few good grains.”<sup>19</sup> Spurgeon provided modern students of the Bible another valuable lesson that exhaustive scholarship may and should take the researcher beyond his resource “comfort zones.” Those who turn merely to their favorite authors may limit the vast array of sources that awaits. To comb the Spurgeon Psalter is illustrative of this point. There are approximately fifty different sources across four centuries made up of various theological thought. But this does not mean that Spurgeon endorsed all their theology, to the contrary he was aware of their shortcomings.<sup>20</sup> The “Prince of Preachers” was no pauper of sources. Holding firm to his own theological convictions, he nevertheless knew that others of a different age and of different doctrinal positions could in fact be involved in *The Treasury*.

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<sup>17</sup> *TOD*, Vol. II. Spurgeon cited his “Latin writers” in Volume III. “Venema, LeBlanc, Lorinus, Gerhohus, Musculus, Martin Geier, Mollerus, and Simon de Muis, with occasional notes from Vitringa, Jansenius, Savonarola, Vatablus, Turrecrematta, Marloratus, Palanterius, Theodoret, among others.” Vol. III, vi. Spurgeon also noted that with each successive volume, he depended more heavily on the Latin writers, Vol. VII, vi.

<sup>18</sup> *TOD*, Vol. III, v.

<sup>19</sup> *TOD*, Vol. III, v.

<sup>20</sup> *TOD*, Vol. I, v.

### Step 3: Study the Psalms to Know the Shepherd

Spurgeon affirmed that the Bible in general and the Psalms in particular could be rightly interpreted only by those to whom the Scriptures were intended, namely the people of God. Therefore, students of the Psalms are to be led by the Holy Spirit to the “green pastures and quiet waters,” and in doing so they would experience the ultimate aim of the Psalms, God Himself.

The Psalms flow with milk and honey, but not to strangers. They are only fertile to lovers of their hills and valleys. None but the Holy Spirit can give you the key to *The Treasury of David*, and even He gives it more to experience than to study. Happy are they who know the secret of the Psalms.<sup>21</sup>

The modern scholar would do well to learn this advice, “more to experience than to study.” The one who exegetes the Psalter without an eye on experiencing the Shepherd fails in their labor.

### Conclusion

Spurgeon confessed about the Psalms, “if I had nothing else to think of, I would have thought of nothing else.”<sup>22</sup> He described the Psalms like going to a “royal banquet. Feasting on its contents, I have seemed to eat the food of angels.”<sup>23</sup> This was not a stretch for Spurgeon. In the Spurgeon Library there are 159 commentaries on the Psalms, more than any other book in the Bible. From the New Park Street Pulpit and the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit we discover that Spurgeon preached on the Psalms at least 335 times during his thirty-eight year ministry in London. No other book of Scripture earns this distinction in Spurgeon’s preaching. This averages to nine Sundays on a text of the Psalms each year, or roughly six and a half of the thirty-eight years of sermons would be on the Psalms. This data is most impressive when one considers that

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<sup>21</sup> *TOD*, Vol. II.

<sup>22</sup> *TOD*, Vol. VI, vii.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*.

Spurgeon did not preach consecutively through books of the Bible. When one factors that *The Treasury of David* was a twenty year project, Spurgeon's comments about "if I had nothing else to think of [the Psalms], I would have thought of nothing else," was not hyperbole.

Spurgeon commented concerning the reader approach to the Psalms:

No one needs better company than the Psalms. There, you may read and commune with friends human and divine with friends who know the heart of man toward God and the heart of God toward man, with friends who perfectly sympathize with us and our sorrows, with friends who never betray or forsake. Oh, to be shut up in a cave with David, with no other occupation but to hear him sing and to sing with him!<sup>24</sup>

Spurgeon aficionados may come to Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and research for themselves Spurgeon's company with the Psalms. Augustine's *Finis Christus* in the Psalms influence on Spurgeon, Spurgeon's allegoric hermeneutic in the Psalms, and the Psalter's usage for Spurgeon's depression are some of the worthy research projects yet to be thoroughly examined. In doing so, the student may find, as Spurgeon did, that the Psalms are indeed a treasure.

### Complete Findings from the Psalter and the Relationship with *The Treasury of David*

Psalm Reference	Notation in Psalter	<i>The Treasury of David</i>
16:1	(1)	Spurgeon alludes that this is the first of the Golden Psalm in his commentary.
56:1	(2) This inscription is beside the title of the	Spurgeon says after providing the title, "Michtam of David. This is the second

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

	psalm "Michtam of David"	golden Psalm, we had the first in Psalm 16". This corresponds to his citation in 16:1.
57:1	Title "To the chief Musician, Al-taschith, Michtam of David when he fled from Saul in the cave."	Spurgeon cites this title verbatim several times in his commentary.
57:1	(3) This inscription is beside the title of the psalm "Michtam of David"	" <i>Michtam of David</i> . For quality this Psalm is called golden, or a secret, and it well deserves the name."
57:1	Inscription above the Be that begins verse 1, Inscription is "miserere 3"	"This is the second of the Psalms beginning with the miserere; the fifty-first being the first of them." This is to me the one source of all my expectations, the one fountain of all promises: <i>Miserere mei, Deus, miserere mei</i> .
58:1	(4) this inscription is beside the title of the psalm "Michtam of David"	" <i>Michtam of David</i> . This is the fourth of the Psalms of the Golden Secret"
59:1	(5) this inscription is beside the title of the psalm "Michtam of David"	" <i>Michtam of David</i> . This is the Fifth of the Golden Secrets of David: God's chosen people have many such."
68:19	"Spalding 246"	That they speak broken language and half sentences in their songs, when they are deeply loaden with the deep sense of his love, as Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits; there is no more in the original but Blessed be the Lord, that loadeth us. John Spalding, in <i>Synaxis Sacra</i> , 1703.
70	Next to the heading Psalm LXX is the inscription, "See XL. 13-17"	The Reader is referred for full Exposition and Notes to Psalm 40:13-17, in <i>Treasury of David</i> , Vol. 2, pp. 267-268.
73	Next to the heading Psalm LXXIII is inscribed, "Parry's David Restored"	<i>David Restored; or, And Antidote against the Prosperity of the Wicked and the Afflictions of the Just, shewing the different ends of both. In a most seasonable discourse upon the Seventy-third Psalm.</i> By the Right Reverend

		Father in God Edward Parry. Late Lord Bishop of Killaloe, 1660.
73:18	"Jon. Edwards 7. (with a check mark)"	"There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell but the mere pleasure of God." Jonathan Edwards.
73:26	"Sheffield 276"	And if there be more in the conclusion than in the premises, it is the better; God comes even in the conclusion. John Sheffield, in <i>The Rising Sun</i> , 1654.
74:10	"Brooks VI 214" check mark	Every habituated sinner would, if he were let alone, be such a monster, perpetually growing worse and worse. Thomas Brooks.
76:10	"Cragge's Cabinet 8-8" check mark	By sending out his wrath, that it wounds like arrows; angry, in pouring it out, that it drowns like water; angry, in kindling of it, that it burns like fire; a consuming fire, but you tell me such a fire may be quenched; an unquenchable fire, but since that may cease to burn, when it lacks matter, it is in one word an everlasting fire, that never goes out. That, that's it; such anger as is never fully shown, but in punishment of reprobates; in no punishment, but that in hell; in none in hell, but that eternal. John Cragge's <i>Cabinet of Spiritual Jewells</i> , 1657.
78:34	"Brooks II 425" check mark	No burden to the burden of sin. Lord! says the believing soul; deliver me from my inward burden, and lay upon me what outward burden you please. Thomas Brooks.
81:12	Unclear inscription followed by "M. Ex. 604" check mark	For "as we behave ourselves to him, so he will behave himself to us." "Ita nos tractat, ut a nobis tractatur." Thomas Jacombe, 1622-1687, in <i>Morning Exercises</i> .
83:13	"Thomson, L & B II. 358" check mark	I have seen nothing in the country to suggest the comparison. W. M. Thomson, in <i>The Land and the Book</i> .
83:13	"Frank 471" check mark	The Holy Spirit is a spirit that will sit still, and be at peace, continue and abide. Mark Frank.

84:7	"Swinnock I. 42" check mark	"They go from company to company." As they went up to Jerusalem they went in troops and companies. Possibly we translate it strength because much of our safety consisteth in good society. George Swinnock.
85	Next to title, "Pennington 452 some copied"	In an old quarto volume of 788 pages, containing <i>Expositions of several passages of Scripture</i> , is a short Exposition of this Psalm (pp. 452-64) entitled <i>A Taste of the Breathings, Pantings, Waitings, and Hopes of Israel after the true Saviour, and his effectual Redemption</i> . There is no author's name, but some previous owner has written, 'John Pennington', on the title page, 1656.
85:8	"Durham" check mark	For that is folly, even in folio, to speak so. James Durham, in <i>The Unsearchable Riches of Christ</i> .
85:8	"Fuller" unclear annotation that follows. check mark	God may change his voice, and turn his peace, formerly spoken, into a warlike defiance to their conscience. Thomas Fuller.
86	At the title-unclear inscription followed by "marked Goodwin VIII. 25"	In Psalm 145:1-21, he brings them in as they are an eulogium or celebration of the glorious nature and excellencies of God, to excite the sons of men to love and praise him. Thomas Goodwin.
86:15	"Goodwin VIII. 53" check mark	Thou, O God, givest all thy attributes up to thy children, to serve their advantage, as well as to serve thy own glory; give me thy strength! Thomas Goodwin.
89:2	"Goodwin VIII. 42" check mark	Comparing them to an house built not on earth, or upon a foundation of earth, which thieves break through, and violence destroys, but in heaven, whither they cannot reach. Thomas Goodwin.
89:7	"Bur Hosea Vol I. 738" check mark	Surely, when the saints shall be raised in their holiness, when every one of them shall have their hearts filled with holiness, it will cause abundance of fear even in all hearts of those that converse with them. Jeremiah Burrows.

89:14	"Booth Vol III". This inscription is crossed out	So that were not the Most High to administer impartial justice in his moral government, he might be considered, if it be lawful to use the expression, as abdicating his throne. Abraham Booth, 1734-1806.
90:10	"G.R. 278" check mark	What it is to all. "It is soon cut off", etc. G.R.
91:11	"Spencer Smart Song 268" check mark	And is there care in heaven, and is there love In heavenly spirits to these creatures base, That may compassion of their evils move? There is, else much more wretched were the race of men than beasts. But oh, the exceeding grace Of highest God, that loves his creatures so, And all his works with mercy doth embrace, That blessed angels he sends to and fro, to serve us wicked men, to serve his wicked foe! How oft do they their silver bowers leave, to come to succour us that succour want! How oft do they with golden pinions cleave the flitting skies, like flying pursuivant, Against foul fiends to aid us militant! They for us fight, they watch and duly ward, And their bright squadrons round about us plant; And all for love and nothing for reward. Oh, wily should heavenly God to man have such regard! Edmund Spenser, 1552-1599.
91:11	"M. Exc III. 341" check mark	May be sufferers for Christ, you shall not be losers by him. Samuel Sletter, 1704, in <i>Morning Exercises</i> .
92:10	"Lewis 25" check mark	Christian illumination, consecration, gladness, and graces, are all of them the anointing of the Spirit. William Garrett Lewis, 1872.
96:8	"Manton (unclear inscription following) 175" check mark	Why? For "God is glorious in holiness", Exodus 15:11. This is that which God counteth to be his chief excellency, and the glory which he will manifest among the sons of men. Thomas Manton.
97:2	"Slater. M. Ex III. 314 whole ps." Check mark	They shall then be perfectly reconciled to all providence, and see that all were worthy of God, and that in all he acted

		<i>theoprepos</i> , “as did highly become himself.” Samuel Slater, 1704, in <i>The Morning Exercises</i> .
101	Above verse 1 “R. Erskine I 96 or 86” check mark	The word hath a great deal of elegance and emphasis in it; I will sing of mercy, I will sing of judgment; O, I will sing, O Lord, I will sing; and I will sing unto thee. Ralph Erskine.
103:3	“Quiet Hours”	Thou art a bad tree, and a bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit. John Pulsford, in <i>Quiet Hours</i> , 1857.
104:10	“Byron C.H. 125” check mark	All things are here of Him; from the black pines, Which are his shade on high, and the loud roar Of torrents, where he listens, to the vines Which slope his green path downward to the shore, Where the bowed waters meet him, and adore, Kissing his feet with murmurs. Byron.
104:25	“W. of Sea 16” check mark	There is joy in its waves, there is happiness upon its shores, and heavenly blue everywhere. Moquin Tandon, in <i>The World of the Sea</i> , translated and enlarged by H. Martin Hart, 1869.
104:26	“Hartwig’s Harmonies of Nature L 22.” Check mark	With the growth of commerce civilization also spreads athwart the wide cause way of the ocean from shore to shore; it first dawned on the borders of the sea, and its chief seats are still to be found along its confines. G. Hartwig, in <i>The Harmonies of Nature</i> , 1866.
Psalm 105	Above the title, “the first of the Hoder Psalms” Delitzsch . Spurgeon then highlights each Psalm respectively Hoder the Hebrew term for “give thanks”.	This is the first of a series of <i>Confitemini Domino</i> Psalms, “O give thanks unto the Lord” (Psalm 105:1, 106:1, 107:1, 108:1, 136:1.)
105:30	“Shute”	Now when they are not within the compass of human reproof, God strikes them. Josias Shute, in <i>Judgment and Mercy: or, the Plague of Frogs</i> , 1645.
106:3	“Brooks 14:14”	“Blessed is he that doeth righteousness at all times”, he presently recollected himself, and upon better thoughts gave

		his judgment quite contrary. Thomas Brooks.
106:13	"Lawrence, 477" check mark	He leaps before he looks, before he hath eyes to see his way; but a believer is quiet and confident, and silent and patient, and prayerful, and standing upon his watch tower, to see what God will answer at such a time. Matthew Lawrence, in <i>The Use and Practice of Faith</i> , 1657.
106:15	"Lawrence 22"	It is but equal and just that such should grow. We do not wonder to see lean sheep upon bare commons, but when we see sheep continue lean in fat pastures, we think their meat is ill bestowed on them; and therefore let us strive to be on the growing hand. Matthew Lawrence.
109:21	"Massillon"	My cause, therefore, becomes thine, it will be to thy glory to declare thyself on my side, lest the impious should take occasion from my sufferings to blaspheme thy holy name, as if thou hadst not the power to deliver, or wert utterly indifferent to those who, renouncing all human help, have put their confidence in thee. Jean Baptiste Massillon.
110	Above the title "Edersheim"	On his stirrup is engraven, "I will make thine enemies' thy footstool," and upon his diadem, "Thou art a priest for ever." Alfred Edersheim, 1873.
110:3	"M. Ex III. 596" check mark	How injurious and invidious are the Popish writers in their traducing and calumniating of them, as if they asserted the Spirit, in this or any other act, to work with compulsion, or in a way destructive to man's essential liberty! It is a vile scandal! Thomas Jacomb, in <i>The Morning Exercises</i> .
110:3	"Hervey's Cont. 79 notes" check mark	Upon this supposition, the whole verse describes the willing subjection, the gracious accomplishments, and the vast number of Christ's converts. James

		Hervey (1713/14-1758), in <i>Meditations and Contemplations</i> .
117	Above title, "Central chapter and least in the Bible."	It may be worth noting that this is at once the shortest chapter of the Scriptures and the central portion of the whole Bible.
118:8	"Middle verse of the Bible."	It may perhaps be considered beneath the dignity and solemnity of our subject to remark, that this 8th verse of this Psalm is the middle verse of the Bible.
119:14	"Heywood Slate 145"	"Methinks it does me good at heart; it is the greatest nourishment I have", "I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches". Oliver Heywood, 1629-1702.
119:18	"John Ker 2"	Those who have given to the Bible thought and prayer will own that these are not empty promises. John Ker, in a Sermon entitled, <i>God's Word Suited to Man's Sense of Wonder</i> , 1877.
119:21	"Hall V 275" check mark	For God will make good his own word, one way; "A man's pride shall bring him low." Joseph Hall, 1574-1656.
119:30	"III. M. Ex. 75" with check mark	This choosing God speaks him to be ours: hypocrites profess God out of worldly design, not religious choice. Thomas Watson, in <i>The Morning Exercises</i> .
119:32	"Melvill Sec. 1856 chap" check mark	"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Henry Melvill, 1798-1871.
119:37	"Lawrence 184"	Be sure thy understanding and affection go along together in every ordinance, and in every part of the ordinance, as thou wouldst have it a quickening ordinance. Matthew Lawrence, in <i>The Use and Practice of Faith</i> , 1657.
119:52	"Mor. Ex II. 61"	Some can better remember a piece of news than a line of Scripture: their memories are like those ponds, where frogs live, but fish die. Thomas Watson in <i>The Morning Exercises</i> .

119:56	"Nalton 248" check mark	O the sweet satisfaction that a soul shall find in God, when he comes to appear before God! James Nalton, 1664.
119:59	"Swinnock Regen 207"	I considered that I was wandering like a lost sheep, and then I returned. George Swinnock.
119:66	"John Stephen" check mark	The principle of pleasing God may be within, and yet the mind may require to be enlightened in all duty; and again, though all duty be known, we may require spiritual discernment to see and feel it aright. John Stephen.
119:67	"Washbourne 100" check mark	"Though for the present stripes do grieve me sore, At last they profit more, And make me to observe thy word, which I Neglected formerly; Let me come home rather by weeping cross Than still be at a loss. For health I would rather take a bitter pill, Than eating sweet meats to be always ill." Thomas Washbourne, 1606-1687.
119:67	"Hopkins" check mark	These are all God's servants, and must obey his will. And to what end is all this, but that, seeing himself forsaken of all, he may at length, like the beggared prodigal, return to his father? Ezekiel Hopkins, 1633-1690.
119:71	"Spencer 161" check mark	It is very true that God's rod is as the schoolmaster's pointer to the child, pointing out the letter, that he may the better take notice of it; thus he points out to us many good lessons which we should never otherwise have learned. From John Spencer's <i>Things New and Old</i> , 1658.
119:72	"Heywood 11.14"	The sound Christian is the wise merchant, seeking goodly pearls; he tries what he reads or hears by the standard or touchstone of Scripture, and having found genuine truths he lays them up to the great enriching of this supreme and sovereign faculty of the understanding. Oliver Heywood.
119:73	"Stock of Knowledge 49" check mark	The Scriptures are not wanting to us, but we to ourselves; let us be conversant

		in them, and we shall understand them, when great clerks who are negligent remain in darkness. Richard Stock.
119:91	“Charnock, II. 496”	The hunger starved lions suspend their ravenous nature when so good a morsel as Daniel is set before them; and the sun, which had been in perpetual motion since its creation, obeys the writ of ease God sent in Joshua’s time, and stands still. Stephen Charnock.
119:92	“N.B. Catamys Godly Man’s Ark”	Melancthon saith that the Landgrave of Hesse told him at Dresden that it had been impossible for him to have borne up under the manifold miseries of so long an imprisonment, Nisi habuisset consolationem verbo divino in suo corde, but for the comfort of the Scriptures in his heart. Edmund Calamy, 1600-1666, in <i>The Godly Man’s Ark</i> .
119:117	“Vaughan” check mark	Sometimes by appearing to let you go, and forsake you, while at the same time - like the Syro Phoenician woman - he is giving you the wish to hold on that he may give you the more at the last. James Vaughan, of Brighton, 1877.
119:129	“Macgregors Shelf of Israel”	Study the Bible daily. (b) Pray for the Spirit to grave it on your heart with a pen of iron. (c) Practise it daily. D. Macgregor.
119:132	“Jays S.2s 111, 194” check mark	“I am content to keep the King’s high road. Be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name. I ask no more.” William Jay, 1769-1853.
119:133	“Manton XI 63”	Chrysostom’s observation is, the apostle does not say, let it not tyrannize over you, but, let it not reign over you; that is, when you suffer it to have a quiet reign in your hearts. Thomas Manton.
119:133	“Bruce, 255” check mark	Well said! There is hope in such a man’s condition as long as it is so. Michael Bruce, 1666.
119:136	“Gadsby I, 226.” Check mark	I have myself seen Arabs shed tears like streams. John Gadsby.

119:148	"Melvill Sec. 183"	"Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word." Henry Melvill.
119:158	"OOH13th 2. 473 Doddridge's Life of Col. Garainer" check mark	But feeble my compassion proves, And can but weep where most it loves; Thy own all saving arm employ, And turn these drops of grief to joy. Philip Doddridge, in <i>The Life of Colonel Garainer</i> .
121	"Edersheim"	At any rate, it will not be difficult to trace the same structure if each of the psalms "of Degrees", making allowance for occasional devotions and modifications. Alfred Edersheim, in <i>The Golden Diary, 1877</i> .
121	"S.E. Pearce Vol 1"	It has been said Mr. Romaine read this psalm every day; and sure it is, that every word in it is calculated to encourage and strengthen our faith and hope in God. Samuel Eyles Pierce.
121:2	"T. Fuller WC 79" check mark	Ever therefore lift up thine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh thy help, never viewing the deep dale of thy own unworthiness, but to abate thy pride when tempted to presumption. Thomas Fuller, 1608-1661, in <i>The Cause and Cure of a Wounded Conscience</i> .
132:2	"Heywood v. 275"	I think, I grudge the world any portion of my heart, and think not these temporal visible things worth a cast of my eye compared with things invisible and eternal: 2 Corinthians 4:18. Oliver Heywood, 1629-1702.
133:3	"Swinnock Reg 414"	The stream of regeneration, or a spiritual life, which shall never cease, but still go forward and increase, till it swell to, and be swallowed up in the ocean of eternal life, even life for evermore." George Swinnock.
127	"v 1-6 M'Cheyne 437"	He will look over all the pleasures of the world and the pleasures of sin, and say, "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand," "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her

		cunning.” Condensed from Robert Murray M’Cheyne, 1813-1843.
138:2	“J. Goodwin 222”	So that men need not fear that any of them shall at any time, or in any case whatsoever, move in the least contrariety thereunto. John Goodwin, 1593-1665.
139	“Fish Pulp. Elg. ii 550”	Lest in its unsounded depths there might be some lurking iniquity, lest there might be, beyond the present jurisdiction of his conscience, some dark realm which the Omniscient eye only could explore. Bela B. Edwards, 1802-1852, in H.C. Fish’s, <i>Masterpieces of Pulpit Eloquence</i> .
139	“Annesley 20” (marked out)	Therefore, Christians, do nothing but what you are willing God should take notice of; and judge in yourselves whether this be not the way to have a good and quiet conscience. Samuel Annesley.
139	“Addison iii 379” check mark	As a later writer could have no motive for prefixing the title, “To the Chief Musician”, it affords an incidental proof of antiquity and genuineness. Joseph Addison Alexander.
139:23	“Melvill 1856-9”	God that he would leave no recess of his spirit unexplored, that he would bring the heart and all its thoughts, the life and all its ways, under a most searching examination, so that no form and no degree of evil might fail to be detected. Henry Melvill.
147:8	“McMillan B. Te. Nature 58” check mark	It suits almost every soil and climate. Hugh Macmillan, in <i>Bible Teachings in Nature</i> , 1868.
149:9	“Tom Fuller. Abel Rev. Pref. Vol I.” check mark	The Papists brag that Stapleton, their great controversial divine, was born on that very day whereon Sir Thomas More was put to death; but Providence so ordereth it that out of the ashes of dead saints many living ones do spring and sprout, by following the pious precedents of such godly persons

		deceased. Thomas Fuller in <i>Abel Redivivus</i> .
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For Tropical Preaching:  
Proclaiming Biblical Truth Cross-Culturally

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The Gospel minister of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is often called upon to preach and teach to different ethnicities both at home and abroad. This can be quite challenging as the following story from my missionary career illustrates.

In the summer of 1991 while living in North Africa, I travelled down to East Africa with my family to visit Don and Mary Alice Dolifka, a couple ministering to the *Samburu* tribe near Maralal in northern Kenya. The nomadic *Samburu* wear traditional red robes, herd cattle and live in mud dwellings. Dolifka asked me to preach a message to a group of twenty men seated on boulders beneath a grove of trees on Sunday morning. I spoke in Swahili while a young *Samburu* college student translated into the local language.

Since these men had never attended a church service nor listened to a message from the Bible, I decided to speak on a simple passage - the woman at the well in John 4:3-42. I began the sermon by asking, "How would you like it if a man came to your village and asked for water from one of your women?"

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Surprisingly, the men rose from their rocks and began discussing my query in a small circle. Since the question was asked rhetorically I was not prepared for the interruption. The missionary and Seth, my ten-year-old son, observing my discomfort, watched with amusement. After five minutes the men resumed their positions. The oldest stood up and spoke for the group, "We would not like it. We do not want anyone speaking to our women, not even Jesus."

Surprised and perplexed, I realized this sermon was going to be more difficult than I had imagined. I decided to go a different direction. As the message progressed I made the mistake of asking another rhetorical question. As I presented the Gospel of Christ and spoke of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, I asked, "How many of you have ever heard of someone who died and came back from the dead after three days?"

Once again the men stood from their rocks and began discussing my question. I thought, "What could they be talking about this time?" After about five minutes everyone sat down again on the rocks. The oldest said with great gravity, "One man here knows someone who died and came back from the dead after two days, but none of us has ever heard of anyone who came back after three."

When this event occurred I had been a missionary for eight years. I believed I was fairly knowledgeable about cross-cultural communication. Although I thought I was clearly conveying Biblical truth, cultural barriers blocked a smooth transfer of meaning. This incident underscores the need for special care when speaking to other societies. Even though new technologies and ease of travel allow the modern minister to communicate globally, Hesselgrave claims, "The cultural barriers are the most formidable."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), p. 96.

## Introduction

Delivering oral presentations to other cultures is a subset of the broader field of communications. A couple of definitions are helpful going forward. Eldridge defines communication as “the transfer of meaning through the use of symbols.”<sup>3</sup> Cross-cultural communication refers to the process of conveying meaning across societal divides. The purpose of this article is to examine this procedure from a Christian perspective. Hesselgrave defines the missionary *problem* as “communicating Christ across cultural barriers to the various people of the world.”<sup>4</sup> Examining the messaging process will assist preachers in limiting their cultural missteps as they reach other societies for Christ.

The topic of this journal issue involves communicating the gospel orally through preaching and teaching. The ancients classified this field as the academic discipline of *rhetoric*. For them the art of public speaking was more highly esteemed than homiletics today. Hesselgrave states, “Rhetoric represented the highest of intellectual achievement because it entailed both consummate learning and persuasive skills.”<sup>5</sup> This combination of scholarship and oral presentation was prized above all else in the classical era.

In order to address the subject, this article uses a combination of models based upon Aristotle’s work. This philosopher subdivided the delivery of oral messages into three categories: (1) the speaker, (2) the speech and (3) the audience. Other writers throughout history have employed similar terms. These include (1) the source, (2) the message and (3) the respondent.<sup>6</sup> In a similar vein, Eugene Nida introduced a helpful model for understanding Christian cross-cultural communication he terms the three-culture model. This construct consists of (1) the missionary culture (source), (2) the Bible culture (message), and (3) the mission field culture (respondent).<sup>7</sup> I will present an analysis of communicating Biblical truth cross-culturally using this scaffolding.

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<sup>3</sup> S. Eldridge, In Hesselgrave, *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup>Hesselgrave, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 41.

<sup>7</sup> Eugene Nida, in Hesselgrave, p. 107.

These three parts of communication are interrelated, not sequential. The speaker influences the message, which impacts the hearers while the cultures of the three affect them all. Martin and Nakayama comment on this complicated process.

Communication is a symbolic process whereby meaning is shared and negotiated. In addition, communication is dynamic, may be unintentional, and is receiver oriented. The relationship between culture and communication is complex because (1) culture influences communication, (2) communication reinforces culture, and (3) communication is a way of resisting the dominant culture.<sup>8</sup>

I call this *Tropical Preaching* because societies on the mission field usually lie outside the temperate zones. Cross-cultural proclamation differs from its *monocultural* counterpart more in degree than substance. All communicators struggle to compose relevant messages to diverse audiences within their own societies. Accomplishing this task in another culture adds a further degree of difficulty. Hesselgrave presents Ralph Winter's useful model for describing how meaning transference can differ between cultures.

At Lausanne in 1974 Ralph Winter categorized cross-cultural evangelism as being E-1, E-2, and E-3 evangelism (Later, the category of the category of E-0 evangelism was added.) These categories denote differences based on the degree of "cultural distance" between the evangelist or missionary and respondents in another culture. The difficulty encountered in any particular instance of evangelism (or communication more widely conceived) is directly proportional to the degree of difference between the two cultures involved.<sup>9</sup>

These are helpful distinctions with application for communicators of all stripes. A pastor speaking in his own church would be an example of E-0

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<sup>8</sup> Judith N. Martin & Thomas K. Nakayama, *Experiencing Intercultural Communication*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2005), p. 53.

<sup>9</sup> Hesselgrave, p. 169.

evangelism. If the same pastor preached to a rescue mission or delivered a devotional at a service club, the E-1 category would apply. The E-1 evangelist works with those within his own culture. When a missionary from the United States speaks in Europe or a Korean pastor preaches in Asia, it is an example of E-2 missions. In other words, there is some cultural distance between the speaker and the audience but not much. The greatest communication challenges face a speaker when a wide cultural gap exists between himself and the hearers. This category, E-3 evangelism (or E-3 cross-cultural communication), represents the major thrust of this article.

### I. The Missionary Culture (Source, Speaker, or Preacher)

Mark Dever observes, there is “poignant symbolism at work when one man stands before a congregation to proclaim God’s Word.”<sup>10</sup> The preacher takes on the audacious task of speaking for God and proclaiming His truth to others. I served as senior pastor of two churches in California and Arizona. I always felt inadequate in the role of “herald of truth.” Who was I that a congregation would listen to my words? This discomfort increased exponentially when I arrived on the mission field. As a young missionary with a stumbling grasp of Swahili, Tanzanian pastors looked to me as the authority on Christian doctrine and practice. Often I did not understand their culture nor they mine.

When we arrived in Tanzania our children were small. Our house in the city of Mwanza was nestled at the bottom of a hill. Behind our dwelling we often heard the nighttime screech of leopards, mongoose and monkeys. Perched on top of the hill was an owl’s nest. One day my four-year-old son and seven year old daughter brought me an adolescent owl with a broken wing. My children pleaded with me to nurse it back to health. Like a good father, I carried the owl to a veterinarian who formed a cast for the wing. For several weeks we dutifully fed the owl its daily allotment of meat. One day some believers approached me and tactfully said

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<sup>10</sup> Mark Dever and Greg Gilbert, *Preach*, (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2012), p. 21.

it was not considered appropriate for a missionary to keep an owl as a pet. They explained that traditional *Sukuma* tribesmen believed owls summon sorcerers and witches to their coven meetings.<sup>11</sup> Some wondered if their missionary was a sorcerer instead of a man of God.

Every cross-cultural communicator, before preaching to another culture must first look in the mirror. A new visitor or missionary overseas will be viewed through the prism of age, gender, country of origin, education, position and family status. In the developing world, age is admired and respected while youth is not. Consequently, older speakers often command more of a hearing than younger ones. On the other hand, a young missionary or foreign visitor possessing a high education or prestigious position can also command a hearing. Many missionaries and pastors who travel abroad are relatively young. Their educational credentials and ministry positions, however, command a hearing despite their youth. As the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but *rather* in speech, conduct, love, faith *and* purity, show yourself an example of those who believe."<sup>12</sup>

Other factors also come into play. Married men and women are more respected, generally speaking, than their single counterparts. In addition, strict gender separation frequently prevails in the third world. In the Muslim world females will conduct almost all gospel communication among women. Despite the ambivalence of much of the developing world towards the West, a foreigner often gains a hearing by virtue of his country of origin. This advantage can further the Gospel. A few years ago when I directed our mission's work in E. South America, I visited Paraguay. As a visiting dignitary, I was invited to a private luncheon in the home of the president-elect of the country. In America this would not have occurred.

Such openness to foreigners, however, is not unlimited. Hesselgrave warns, "Let us remember that although missionaries have been commanded by Christ to preach the gospel, they cannot command a hearing. They must win a hearing by demonstrating that they are

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<sup>11</sup> P. Van Pelt, *Bantu Customs in mainland Tanzania*, revised ed., Tabora, (Tanzania: T.M.P. Book Department), p. 74.

<sup>12</sup> II Timothy 4:12 NASB.

people of integrity, credibility, and good will.”<sup>13</sup> The foreign guest must be humble, kind, and absent of any hint of arrogance, condescension, or “know-it-all” attitude. The cross-cultural preacher should keep in mind the words the Apostle Paul to his young disciple Timothy; “The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged.”<sup>14</sup>

Despite these limitations anyone can achieve excellence in the field of intercultural communications. Dale Carnegie identifies only one requirement for good public speaking- a burning desire to communicate a message enthusiastically.<sup>15</sup> Robinson claims, “Sincerity, enthusiasm, and deep earnestness tear down barriers that allow the real self to break free.”<sup>16</sup> This human element overcomes many cross-cultural barriers.

When the missionary or pastor speaks to those of other ethnicities blind spots are inevitable. The speaker assumes the message is getting through but often this is not the case. The late pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas, W.A. Criswell famously delivered a sermon in Kenya while serving as President of the Southern Baptist Convention. His message contained repeated references to “the Board”, verbal shorthand for the Foreign (now International) Mission Board, the mission entity of the SBC. His translator rendered *board* as a piece of lumber. The Kenyans wondered why this esteemed pastor talked so much about building materials during his sermon.

On another occasion the president of one of the Baptist state conventions in America travelled to Africa on a mission trip. Harry Mwasanjala, President of the Baptist Convention of Tanzania translated for the visiting preacher. Harry was an older gentleman who spoke English well. Unfortunately, the colloquial expressions of the guest speaker were too much for him. When the pastor said, “Sometimes, you just wake up and have a ‘Blue Monday’,” Mwasanjala abruptly turned around, looked at the preacher and walked off the stage. Spotting a senior

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<sup>13</sup> Hesselgrave, p. 146-147.

<sup>14</sup> II Timothy 2:24, NASB.

<sup>15</sup> Dale Carnegie, *The Dale Carnegie Course in Effective Speaking and Human Relations*, 25<sup>th</sup> ed., (Garden City, NY: Dale Carnegie & Associates, 1968), pp. 64-65.

<sup>16</sup> Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), p. 195.

missionary, Harry said without hostility but with a good deal of frustration, "You translate."

The cross-cultural communicator has the responsibility to insure that the source culture (his culture) does not overwhelm the audience. Martin and Nakayama observe,<sup>17</sup>

Culture is often considered the core concept in intercultural communication. One characteristic of culture is that we may not think about it very much. Trying to understand one's own culture is like trying to explain to a fish that it lives in water. Often, we cannot identify our own cultural backgrounds and assumptions until we encounter people from other cultures, which give us a frame of reference.

This new frame of reference often occurs during one's first speaking trip overseas. The presenter knows he is in a different culture and understands he may have difficulty communicating but does not know why. The famous comments of former U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld ring true.

Now what is the message there? The message is that there are no "knowns." There are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say there are things that we now know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we do not know we don't know.<sup>18</sup>

This is very much the plight of the cross-cultural communicator. He is thrust into a foreign culture, not knowing how much he does not know. The cross-cultural communicator's goal is to proclaim a pure gospel message to an audience of a different society without tainting the sermon's meaning with his own culture. The preacher must divest himself of as many cultural accretions as possible so the message is the focus not the messenger.

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<sup>17</sup> Martin & Nakayama, p. 27

<sup>18</sup> Unlike Donald Rumsfeld, at a Press Conference at NATO HQ, Brussels, Belgium, June 6, 2002, Wikiquotes.

## II. The Bible Culture (the message, speech or address)

Jesus' command in Mark 16:15 summarizes the Christian message, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." Broadening the charge further, Matthew's Gospel includes making disciples of the nations, baptizing them, and "teaching them to observe all that I [Jesus] commanded you (28:19-20)." The Christian herald, therefore, possesses the entirety of God's word as potential texts. How does the messenger decide what to preach to the nations?

Unlike strictly secular intercultural interaction, the Christian communicator has an advantage. Composed in a non-Western setting, the believer's message, the Bible, is truly cross-cultural. Utilizing the Scriptures insures the preacher of culturally relevant sermons. Expository preaching best fulfills this objective because this kind of proclamation focuses more on the Scriptures than the ideas of the preacher. Robinson says

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, through him to his hearers.<sup>19</sup>

Expository preaching assists the proclaimer in avoiding many cultural errors because the Bible comes from a Middle Eastern context. The Western preacher must then first learn the Bible culture and in turn, interpret the Biblical meaning to a third world audience.

"Every sermon should have a theme and the theme should be the theme of the portion of scripture on which it is based," Robinson claims.<sup>20</sup> The Biblical text should provide both the content and the structure for the sermon. Ben Awbrey says, "An expository sermon is a text driven sermon and a text driven sermon must include a text driven

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<sup>19</sup> Haddon W. Robinson, p. 20.

<sup>20</sup> William Briggance, in Robinson, p. 34

structure for the sermon.”<sup>21</sup> When preaching cross-culturally the selection of theme and Bible passage are especially challenging.

In my opening illustration, I chose the “women at the well” passage from John 4 because my audience consisted of tribesmen whose women still drew water from wells. Although technologically sound, my application failed to take into account the gender restrictions (men speaking with women) in *Samburu* society. So what kind of scriptures and themes are appropriate in *tropical preaching*? The following passage in the Pastoral Epistles serves well in third world settings.

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. Also, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive the share of the crops (2 Tim. 2:2-6).

This passage fits most societies because soldiers, athletes and farmers are common roles everywhere. When I was teaching this scripture to a group of pastors in Myanmar recently, I asked, “Who here has been a soldier?” Only one pastor in the group had served as a soldier but eagerly shared his experiences. Then I inquired, “Who is an athlete here?” Everyone immediately pointed to the best soccer player in the room. A similar reaction transpired when I asked, “Who is the best farmer?” Everyone turned toward a middle-aged man who smiled at the compliment. Their enthusiastic engagement indicated I had selected a relevant passage for this agrarian society. Another text that suits farming societies is the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13:1-23.

If I were speaking in a coastal community, I might chose Matthew 4:19 where Jesus’ disciples are exhorted to become “fishers of men.” Seafaring societies might also identify with the “sorting the catch” parable in Matthew 14:47 where Jesus said, “the kingdom of heaven is

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<sup>21</sup> Ben Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2011), p. 31.

like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind.” Experiences like mine resonate with cultures that derive a living from the sea.

When I was 16, I accompanied my step-grandfather on a fishing expedition. “Blackie,” as he was known, was a commercial fisherman in West Bay, near Panama City, Florida. I soon learned that commercial fishing had little in common with the recreational variety. Grandpa’s 25’ diesel powered fishing vessel came equipped with a hydraulic net that was dropped from the stern of the boat. Blackie, two employees and I carefully lowered the net and repeatedly drew it into the boat. The backbreaking work began at 11:00pm and lasted until dawn. I accompanied my grandfather commercial fishing just that one time. After this experience Robin Hadaway decided he would go into another line of work.

The whole counsel of God must be proclaimed but the preacher should begin his international ministry with simpler passages until he gains more experience in cross-cultural settings. The wise preacher will avoid sermons with Western structures, American illustrations or folksy colloquial expressions. Expository Bible messages are always appropriate but selecting the proper one aids cross-cultural communication immensely. No Biblical passage is off-limits but the simpler the better is a good rule for a beginner.

### III. Mission field culture (Respondent, Audience)

The Apostle Paul was an amazing person for many reasons. Engel and Norton claim he “was both message- and audience-centered.”<sup>22</sup> Although the content of the message is of paramount importance to the process of communication, identifying with the audience comes in a close second. According to Hesselgrave, “The word *communication* comes from the Latin word *communis* (common). We must establish a

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<sup>22</sup> James F. Engel & Wilbert Norton, *What’s Gone Wrong with the Harvest?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), p. 24.

‘commonness’ with someone to have communication. The ‘commonness’ is found in mutually shared codes.”<sup>23</sup> The difficulty with cross-cultural communication is that the symbols are different. Even if the words are translated the meaning can be “lost in translation.” The gap between a speaker and an audience becomes a chasm when the respondents are of a different culture. Engels and Norton observe,

Jesus and His followers have provided a compelling example. They always began with a keen understanding of the audience and then adapted the message to the other person without compromising God’s Word. The pattern they followed is as pertinent today as it was two thousand years ago.<sup>24</sup>

Today this adaptation is called contextualization. Moreau defines the term, “Contextualization means that the message is defined by Scripture but shaped by culture”.<sup>25</sup> The speaker must craft the presentation of the Gospel so it is understood by a society. Culture should not dominate the message but only carry the Gospel content. I do not support the cultural relativist position that claims “any cultural behavior can be judged only within the cultural context in which it occurs.”<sup>26</sup> However, the study of societies assists the preacher in learning about his target audience. Skinner aptly notes, “Any speaker who assumes that his audience thinks and feels exactly as he does will always be wrong.”<sup>27</sup> This is even truer when addressing internationals. The following sociological insights have important implication for intercultural communication.

Martin and Nakayama observe that American culture places a high value on “doing”. For this reason productivity and busyness are admired in the United States. Central and South American, Greek and Spanish societies seem to value “being.” These cultures tend to live “in the moment” and prize self-actualization. A third orientation exhibited by some Asian countries is the “growing” mentality. These cultures seek

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<sup>23</sup> Hesselgrave. p. 46

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* p. 35.

<sup>25</sup> A. Scott Moreau, *Contextualization in World Missions*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2012). p. 35

<sup>26</sup> Martin and Nakayama, p. 19.

<sup>27</sup> Craig Skinner, *The Teaching Ministry of the Pulpit*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1981), p. 95.

spiritualistic and esthetic expression.<sup>28</sup> Often North American preachers craft “doing” messages for “being” or “growing” audiences resulting more in bewilderment than disagreement. My experience captures the cultural divide between Eastern and Western ways of thinking.

When I served as a missionary in Tanzania I had to go to the income tax office periodically for tax clearance. Without a stamp in my passport I could not leave the country, so it was quite important. During an especially long wait I struck up a conversation with a foreign aid worker from the Japanese consulate. I knew no Japanese and he no English so we spoke in Swahili, an interesting cultural experience in itself. I asked him what job he was performing in Mwanza, Tanzania’s second largest city. My new friend said he was a horticulturist and his job was planting flowers in the traffic circles all over the city. The Japanese worker informed me that one of the goals of his government was to beautify the country and thereby bring harmony and peace to the nation. Whereas, the American and European foreign aid programs concentrated on building roads, bridges, and port facilities, the Japanese spent their money on pretty flowers. Of course, when the aid worker completed his assignment and returned to Japan, I noticed the flowers all died because the Tanzanians care nothing about them.

This experience demonstrated to me how much my worldview differed from my Japanese friend. Our presuppositions, categories, and orientation to life had little in common.

Besides the “doing,” “being” and “growing” construct mentioned above, Roland Muller suggests another three-part model for analyzing societies. His paradigm proposes that whereas Western societies view the world from a *guilt-innocence* perspective much of the developing world holds to a *shame-honor* orientation, especially the Middle East and N. Africa. Muller also notes that cultures such as those in tropical Africa and Asia follow a *fear-power* perspective. He also allows for multiple mental constructs.

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<sup>28</sup> Martin & Nakayama, pp. 38-39.

When analyzing a culture, one must look for the primary cultural characteristic, then the secondary ones. As an example, many North American Native cultures are made up of both **shame**-based and **fear**-based cultures. On the other hand, much of North American culture has been made up almost exclusively of **guilt**-based principles, although this has changed in the last two decades. . . The mixing of worldviews is especially noticeable in South America where jungle tribes with **fear**-based cultures come in contact with **shame**-based cultures originating out of Southern Spain, and **guilt**-based cultures brought by western missionaries and western business. The goal of this book is to simply introduce the idea of **guilt**, **shame**, and **fear**-based cultures, and then to examine how the gospel is best communicated in its entirety [bold mine].<sup>29</sup>

As a young missionary in Western Tanzania, I selected Biblical texts and preached messages unconsciously aligning them with my Western guilt-innocence worldview. My sermons were fine but I did not know my *Sukuma* tribe audience feared the crocodile god in Lake Victoria and prayed to their ancestors for protection. I might have better touched the society's felt needs if I had preached initially from the Book of 1<sup>st</sup> John rather than from the Gospel of John. John wrote, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8)" and "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love (1 John 4:18)." Both of these passages speak to the fear-power worldview and could be used to good advantage by the missions speaker.

My seminary colleague Tom Johnston taught at a Baptist seminary in Togo, West Africa during a sabbatical a few years ago. His son Jonathan accompanied him on the trip. Jonathan told me his father was asked an interesting question during a class. The pastor asked, "What do you do when your church is full of sorcerers?" Such questions from a fear-power worldview are seldom asked in America.

Speaking about the Middle Eastern worldview, Patai says, "One of the important differences between Arab and the Western personality

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<sup>29</sup> Roland Muller, *Honor and Shame*, (Xlibris, 2000), pp. 20-21.

is that in Arab culture, shame is more pronounced than guilt.<sup>30</sup> In my opinion a Gospel presentation to Arabs should first be based on the many “shame” verses in the Bible before other passages are presented. In I Corinthians 1:27 [bold mine] Paul wrote, “but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to **shame** the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to **shame** the things that are strong.” Another instance surfaces in Luke 9:26 [bold mine] when Jesus says, “For whoever is **ashamed** of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be **ashamed** of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.” The following event occurred on a trip I took to West Africa a few years ago.

I travelled to a remote cluster of houses in a rural area of a West Africa country. Volunteers from an American church told stories from the “Creation to Christ” series of oral messages to a group of Muslim men. After a message delivered by one of Americans, the men were asked if they wanted to “accept Christ.” A number of the men indicated that they wanted to respond to the Gospel message. I politely asked if I could say a word. Turning to the men I asked, “how many of you want to accept Christ and show you mean it by taking down the family fetish hanging above you?” Only one young man raised his hand. His father, a leader in the village, said, “It’s hard.” The fetish had been passed down from generation to generation and not honoring the charm would shame his family and ancestors.

The Book of Hebrews is an excellent source of Bible texts that communicate with both shame-honor and fear-power societies. In fact, for the cross-cultural communicator, the Book of Hebrews presents as the most effective link between Western culture and the worldview of respondent audiences abroad. Hebrews 12:2 [bold mine] describes Jesus as “the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the **shame**, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 2:9 says [bold mine), “But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely,

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<sup>30</sup> R. Patai, *The Arab Mind*, revised ed., (New York: Hatherleigh Press, 2002), p.113.

Jesus, because of the suffering and death crowned with glory and **honor**, so that by the grace of God He might taste death of everyone.”

Although Muslims reject the historicity of the crucifixion and the possibility of the prophet Jesus dying, they understand the concepts of **shame and honor** implicit in these Biblical passages. Evangelists can use these Scriptures to communicate Christian truths to Muslims.<sup>31</sup>

Besides these broad sociological categories, there are a few additional aspects for the cross-cultural communicator to remember. Most nationals do not have cars, computers, dishwashers, or washing machines. References to one's affluent American lifestyle will increase the already large gap between the speaker and the audience. An illustration about a father buying a son or daughter a car would be incomprehensible to someone in the third world. Carefully choose one's words.

Of course, the career missionary living overseas should learn the local language. Visitors will have to use translators but must employ simple English, realizing most English overseas is usually of the British variety. The language barrier is only part of the problem. Even with the best of translators, the world-view of the hearer may be so different from the speaker, communication “misses” occur. Discover the paralinguistic foundations of preaching in your host country. These include pitch, pace, intonation, volume and inflection.<sup>32</sup> For instance, many cultures believe raising one's voice is rude.

Non-verbal communication such as gestures can also be problematic. I learned that when an index finger is pointed at someone in Tanzania one has hatched a plot to kill the indicated person. Conversely, some cultures point with their chins or lips rather than with their fingers. In Africa heterosexual men “hold hands” to demonstrate their friendship where in the West only homosexuals do so. The first time a Tanzanian pastor held my hand, my skin crawled. What he was

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<sup>31</sup> Robin Dale Hadaway, *Contextualization and Folk Islam: A Case Study in the Sudan*, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, (Pretoria: The University of South Africa, 2011), p. 231.

<sup>32</sup> Hesselgrave, p. 48

attempting to communicate non-verbally (friendship) was not what I was receiving (stark terror).

Carefully craft illustrations, weeding out examples unique to American culture. Audiences abroad have never heard of American college or professional sports teams. They follow Manchester United or Real Madrid soccer teams in the European league. References to and expressions from American football and baseball games will result in blank stares. In addition, steer clear of political comments critical of either American or foreign politicians or dignitaries. In Sudan nationals often tell Arabic jokes about their dictator whereas in Southeast Asia any negative remark about the King of Thailand by foreigner or national will result in a long prison term. Rather, find illustrations that harmonize with the host culture. While living in North Africa I related the story about the *Samburu* tribesmen and the "Woman at the Well." Although the event happened in East Africa the narrative communicated because the tale fit their culture.

Observe practices and habits unique to the society. For instance, Indians often wobble their heads when speaking. Eritreans take a deep breath as a way of acknowledging someone speaking in the flow of conversation. South Americans and Italians greet one another with air kisses on the cheek, one, two or three times, depending on the country. When I travelled often in Eastern South America, I had to remind myself when greeting others to kiss twice on the cheek in Paraguay and only once in Brazil.

The most important part of preparation is to carefully research the respondent culture, especially when the society differs greatly from that of the guest. Read a book about the nation and ethnicity of the audience. Become as much of an expert on the society as possible before one's arrival. By doing so the speaker will tailor an effective Biblical message unique to the audience thereby reaping rich rewards for the Gospel of Christ in the process. There is one additional fact about preaching abroad the Christian speaker will appreciate. Audiences overseas generally enjoy long sermons and are usually disappointed with messages lasting less than an hour.

## Conclusion

This article has sought to examine Christian cross-cultural communication. Hesselgrave says,

“Many educators have come to the position that cross-cultural communication is a *sin qua non* for citizenship in this new world. Missionaries now understand that much more than a microphone and increased volume is involved in penetrating cultural barriers.”<sup>33</sup> If the Christian communicator will research the culture and worldview of the respondent society and adjust the presentation accordingly, the timeless gospel message will be effectively conveyed across wide cultural chasms. Since the goal of the Christian communicator is to represent our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and in His words, “teach all things I have commanded you” to all the nations across the world, we can do no less.

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<sup>33</sup> Hesselgrave, p. 97.

Recapturing the Voice of God:  
Preaching God's Word, God's Way<sup>1</sup>

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Riding on the City of New Orleans,  
Illinois Central Monday morning rail  
Fifteen cars and fifteen restless riders,  
Three conductors and twenty-five sacks of mail.  
All along the southbound odyssey  
The train pulls out at Kankakee  
Rolls along past houses, farms and fields.  
Passin' trains that have no names,  
Freight yards full of old black men  
And the graveyards of the rusted automobiles.<sup>2</sup>

Steve Goodman's "City of New Orleans" was a pop hit for both Arlo Guthrie, and Willie Nelson. The song is a notable illustration of musicality providing a rhetorical dimension to lyrics, allowing the genre of folk song to drive, and therefore, *shape* the narrative. Goodman's intended *message* of the demise of the railroad is shaped by the *medium* of the folk song. In this way the songs move the listener; the listener is able to feel the rhythm of railroad as percussions mimic the train rolling over railroad tracks. The resonating whale of the rail whistle is mimicked

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is adapted from the author's forthcoming monograph, *Recapturing the Voice of God, Sermons Shaped like Scripture*. (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015); and from papers presented at the annual meetings of the 2013 Evangelical Homiletics Society and the 2014 Evangelical Theological Society respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Steve Goodman, "City of New Orleans, 1971," Steve Goodman, 1971, accessed August 10, 2013, <http://www.lyrics007.com/Arlo%20Guthrie%20Lyrics/City%20Of%20New%20Orleans%20Lyrics.html>.

repeatedly through the use of the harmonica. Instrumentation that was intended to layer the song with meaning actually influences the stories meaning. In this way, the meaning of the song is carried by the instrumentation as much as the lyrics.

It is hardly the exclusive domain of rhetorical research that intuits that the medium of the instrumentation is a medium that provides meaning to the words of the song. However, this has been a significant motif of research in rhetorical studies. Irvine and Kirkpatrick's landmark article published in the *Journal of Quarterly Speech*, "The musical form in rhetorical exchange" argues that the music itself is rhetorical. This is a departure from how rhetoric is commonly understood in homiletic conversations; rhetoric is understood to be the domain of the words of a speech act or sermon. However, in communication studies, rhetoric in the popular culture is understood as the culture's way of understanding itself; thus Barry Brummett's definition of rhetoric as "managed meaning."<sup>3</sup> So, in other words, the way we express something is a way of managing the meaning of it. In our previous illustration of "City of New Orleans" the message was managed by, and thus shaped, by the instrumentation.

The application of this rhetorical theory to preaching is somewhat obvious. Only the most naïve preacher would attempt to bifurcate the delivery of the sermon and the content of the sermon. This because the way we say something is its own message. Delivery is content. So, we know this intuitively. It's not just what you preach, it's how you preach it. Yet, here is the irony: many of us who are convinced as to the influence delivery and sermon structure has upon the meaning of the sermon, insist on ignoring the rhetorical function of the genre of a biblical text when we preach. In other words, what we expect of ourselves, in the explanation of a text, we do not anticipate in the text itself. We allow an exegesis of our audience to shape how we say things. Yet, we fail to allow the exegesis of the biblical text to be influenced by how God said something. Yet preaching is not just saying what God says. Preaching is saying God's words God's way. Preaching is the translation of the voice of God and the words of God.

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<sup>3</sup> Barry Brummett. *Rhetorical Dimensions of Popular Culture*. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press), 1991.

Consider the irony: We carefully craft rhetorical dimensions of the sermon: vocal production, hand motions, posture all in sermons that ignore the rhetorical dimensions of the text of which the sermon is to represent. This effect could only be caused from a belief that the meaning of the text is fully loaded in the words alone, independent of the structure of those words resulting from the genre in which the Holy Spirit inerrantly placed them. Which brings all of this to a fine point: The inspiration of Scripture includes the fact that the Holy Spirit inscripturated words into God chosen genres. This implies that Paul did not write in the epistle genre simply because he lived in first century Palestine, but because God chose that medium to communicate this particular message. With this view of inspiration running like a software program in the back of my mind, preaching becomes something very different than extraction of theological propositions from a text; preaching becomes the re-presentation of the words of God with careful attention to the voice of God. If there is meaning at the structural level of a text, then the preacher must pay attention to the structures that are provided to us by the genre. And then re-present them. This is preaching God's word in God's voice. This is re-presenting the word of God by recapturing the voice of God.

So, rhetorical theorists have long noted the relationship of the music proper to the lyrics of the song.<sup>4</sup> Yet, for those of us whose message is Scripture and whose medium is also Scripture, this relationship has often been ignored. Instrumentation is to a song what structure is to a sermon. Scripture is the medium of its own message.

Toward the end of the understanding the relationship of genre and the text of Scripture, this article will address three broad observations about the nature of genre: namely that they are limited, situational, and are moving; all in an attempt to demonstrate how and why the genre of a text should influence the sermon.

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<sup>4</sup> For example, see the important article by Irvine and Kirkpatrick "The Musical Form in the Rhetorical Exchange: Theoretical Considerations". *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 62.2 (1976): 157-166. See also, "The Synchronization of Spirituality in Elvis Presley's 1976 Live Performance of 'How Great Thou Art'"; the author's paper presented to North American Pop Culture Association, Toronto 2002.

A preliminary question to this discussion might be, why are evangelicals not naturally given to allowing the structure of the sermon to be our friend in carrying the delivery of the message? Before addressing features of genre, a brief introduction will serve to answer that question dealing briefly with the history of preaching.

### Sermon Structure

Yes, reduce your text to a simple proposition, and lay that down as the warp; and make the use of the text itself as the woof; illustrating the main idea by the various terms in which it is contained. Screw the words into the minds of your hearers. A screw is the strongest of all mechanical powers . . . when it has been turned a few times scarcely any power can pull it out.<sup>5</sup>

It is in the metaphor of the “Warp and Woof” that British divine Charles Simeon (1739-1836) helps us understand the structure of the modern sermon.<sup>6</sup> The word picture is textile in origin. A weaver lays down the thread in front of her vertically (warp). Then thread is woven through it horizontally (woof); ergo the warp and woof is the “whole thing”.

To Simeon a sermon was laying down the warp of a proposition. The woof of the text was woven through the proposition demonstrating how it illustrated the proposition. Those of us who are committed to letting the text speak may want to say, more precisely, that we extract propositions from the text and then demonstrate how the text supports that proposition. Regardless, those in the tradition of evangelical preaching owe a great deal to Simeon. It was Simeon who, influenced by Huguenot Jean Claude, developed a method that allowed the divisions of a text to be extracted from the text. Similar to the Puritan plain style of Perkins, Simeon has a high view of Scripture. Unlike the Puritan plain style, Simeon has more divisions in the sermon and is not holding to the

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<sup>5</sup> Hopkins, Hugh Evans. *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1977). Cited in Denny Autry, “Factors Influencing the Sermonic Structure of Jean Claude and his Influence on Homiletics” (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary), 2013.

<sup>6</sup> David Larsen’s “Taxonomy of Sermon Structure” demonstrates Simeon’s influence, reflective of Jean Claude, on the modern sermon structure. *The Company of the Preachers*. (Grand Rapids, Kregel, 1998), 857.

Text, Doctrine, Uses tri-chotomy of Perkins, et.al.<sup>7</sup> However, it is in Simeon and Perkins that we have a dual fountainhead for much evangelical preaching. A proposition is identified and then worked through a particular text.

In recent times, propositional preaching has been challenged by the New Homiletic; a homiletic that rejects propositional preaching for narrative preaching. However, those committed to the sufficiency of Scripture have balked at a homiletic which seems to freely build upon the sandy foundation of the New Hermeneutic.<sup>8</sup> However, there is a more practical criticism the New Homiletic in the spirit of this article: if propositional preaching misrepresented a text by melding every text into a proposition, then the New Homiletic erred by taking every text and turning into a story. Surely the critical knife cuts both ways. Both forms of preaching could be executed without attention to the genre of the text. In effect these sermonic templates transcend the text.

Perhaps this is one reason for a renewed interest in genre-sensitive preaching. Evangelicals have found themselves appreciating a desire to loosen perceived strictures of pure propositional preaching but leery of rejecting any form of propositional preaching. At the same time there is a rising interest in Christ-centered, Redemptive Historical preaching.

The train itself is a helpful metaphor. A train has many cars, all going in the same direction. The train cars are shaped in a way that

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<sup>7</sup> Compare William Perkins', *The Art of Prophesying* to Charles Simeon's redaction of Jean Claude's, *Essays on the Composition of a Sermon*, which Simeon included as the last volume of his multi volume homiletic commentary *Horae Homileticae*. Or, more to the point, compare the recently released sermon of Jonathan Edwards (*Sermons by Jonathan Edwards on the Matthean Parables, Volume I: True and False Christians - On the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins*. (New Haven: Yale, 2012) to the sermons in Simeon's *Horae Homileticae*. While Simeon advocated for more homiletic structure with points coming from the text, Edwards retained Perkin's homiletic template of Text, Doctrine, and Uses.

<sup>8</sup> For further study, see:

Allen, David. "A Tale of Two Roads." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43 (2000): 489-515.

Reid, Robert Stephen. "Postmodernism and the Function of the New Homiletic in Post-Christian congregations." *Homiletics* 20 (Winter 1995): 1-13.

accommodates their respective cargo and the situation in which they will be needed; thus the tanker is round to hold its fluid cargo; the engine more aero dynamic, etc. To understand the shape of the vehicle is to understand something of its content, which leads to a discussion of these individual cars. Toward a discussion of these genres, three features of genre will be explored: first, the genres are themselves limited; second the genres are situational; and finally, they are moving. Once these three features of genre are established, an attempt will be made to demonstrate how these features serve the message that they are intended to communicate.

## Features of biblical Genre

### *Genres are Limited*

The study of genres can be daunting. The preacher, or seminary student, who first understands that Scripture is composed of multiple genres, may be intimidated by the many genres and sub-genres.<sup>9</sup> If the structure of a sermon is to be influenced by the structure of a text, then how would one begin to appreciate all the different genres of Scripture? There are some helpful monographs intended to help preachers understand the influence of the major genres on the sermon.<sup>10</sup> And there are other works that teach homiletics as it is applied to each genre.<sup>11</sup> However many introductory homiletic texts give little specific instruction on the impact

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<sup>9</sup> See Thomas Long's metaphor of the "guessing game" in *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible*. (Philadelphia, Fortress, 1989) 14-21.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible*. (Seoul, Korea: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1995).

Also, see these examples:

Jeffrey Authors, *Preaching with Variety: How to Re-create the Dynamics of Biblical Genres*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2007).

Douglas Sean O'Donnell, *The Beginning and End of Wisdom*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Publications, 2011).

Craig L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012).

Craig L. Blomberg, *Preaching the Parables*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> A most notable example of this is: Sid Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*. (Grand Rapids, MI: WM B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988).

of individual genres on the sermon structure.<sup>12</sup> And this for the apparent good reason that the study of genre seems to be, at least academically, the purview of literary scholarship and biblical studies, not homiletics. To complicate things further, discussions about a genre do not take place among experts in genre per se, but rather they take place among scholars that are experts in one specific genre.<sup>13</sup>

However, here is some really good news: *there are not an infinite number of genres*. There are arguably at least nine discernable genres of Scripture: OT Narrative, Law, Psalms, Wisdom Literature, Law, Gospels/NT Narrative, Parables, Epistles, and Apocalyptic.<sup>14</sup> However, there is further good news: all of these genres are expressions of three basic structural forms. Meaning, the nine genres listed above fit under three macro structures: Narrative, Poetry, and Epistles. Everything in Scripture is story, poetry, or letter:

Narrative: *OT Narrative, Law, Some Prophecy, Gospels, Parables, Some apocalyptic*

Poetry: *Psalms, Wisdom, Most Prophecy, Some Apocalyptic*

Letter: *Epistles, Some Apocalyptic*

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<sup>12</sup> For example, at Southwestern Seminary, our professor's use *Power in the Pulpit*, by Vines and Shadix, Haddon Robinson's *Biblical Preaching*, and will supplement with chapters from other texts such as from Bryan Chappel's *Christ Centered Preaching*. These texts do deal with genre, but only slightly. There are notable exceptions to this rule among primers in preaching, notably is Cater, Duvall, Hayes, *Preaching God's Word*. One is also helped tremendously by the work of the Proclamation Trust and their series by David Jackman simply entitled *Preaching and Teaching Old Testament and Preaching and Teaching New Testament*. Jackman walks through each genre explaining how the genre influences the meaning of the text and therefore should influence sermon preparation.

<sup>13</sup> Among notable exceptions would be works such as Leland Ryken's *A Literary Introduction to the Bible*. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997). Of course the purpose of this book is to understand the genres more so than to help on preach the genres.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Long (*Literary Forms*) deals with five; Jeffrey Authors (*Preaching with Variety*) deals with six. The list here provides some sub-genres, of which there are sub-sub genres!

There is a lot to understand about genre. However, in terms of structure, one must at least understand narratives and their scene structure, poetry and its strophe structure, and epistles with their paragraph structure. Therefore, if the sermon reflects the text, at least three different *sermon forms* are needed: one that recognizes the moves of stories, one that reflects the verve of poetry, and one that can communicate with the directness of letters.

Imagine the relief of an MDiv student in his introductory preaching class who is told that 1.) the structure of the sermon should reflect the genre from which it is preached, 2.) that there are at least nine genres (some with multiple sub genres) in Scripture, but 3.) (*sola Deo gloria*) preaching those genres may be facilitated by understanding three basic macro level structures.

This is potentially reductionist. Admittedly preaching the poetry of the prophecy of Ezekiel is different than preaching the poetry of Ecclesiastes! However, understanding the structure of Hebrew poetry enables the student the macro template by which to preach both Psalms and the Prophets. And, at the same time, when using a macro-template they will then begin to realize the nuanced differences between the two.

One may fairly ask the question as to why God used *these specific* literary genres and why He used them in this measure. Of course, this is in the mind of God, but asking the question helpfully leads to the second important feature of the genres, namely that genre's themselves are situational.

### ***Genres are situational***

Humanly speaking, genres emerged from the needs of specific situations. The situation of angst and complaint calls for a Psalm. The situation of a struggling church calls for an epistle. The situation of the grand movement of God calls for a narrative. Understanding the situation to which, or from which, a text is written is itself instructive. Namely, it tells us what prompted the use of this particular genre. When Paul understood how far the Galatians were from Christ, he did not sing a song or give them a law. Rather, he gave them a stinging rebuke in the *form* of a letter.<sup>15</sup> The situation drove the genre. We know this. The

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<sup>15</sup> Gal. 1:6-10

situation of the writing of the text is helpful to understanding its meaning.

However, the knowledge of the situation can also be a distraction away from its meaning. This is because the knowledge of the situation can produce the latent temptation to preach the situation and not the text. This temptation to preach the situation and not the text is especially acute in the Psalms.

Take for example Psalm 51, David's Psalm of contrition. The Psalmist is lamenting for his sin. His contrition is deep ("for I know my transgressions" v.3) and wide ("and my sin is ever before me" v.3). The poem is the perfect medium for David's loathing. The poem allows the heartache and pain to seep through his porous soul in waves of theologically nuanced suffering. The medium is perfectly *situated* for the message. And here in lies the temptation. The temptation in such a Psalm is to reach back to the story and preach the story and not the Psalm. The narrative of II Samuel 11-12 is a fascinating, provocative, and heartbreaking narrative. The natural temptation therefore is to take as one's text Psa. 51, but use most of the time preaching the narrative of the sin and ignore the Psalm. In other words instead of preaching the meaning of the text to the immediate audience, we preach the situation of the text. Instead of preaching the text and its implications for today, the bulk of the sermon is what is behind the text.<sup>16</sup>

While this temptation is especially acute in the Psalms, the temptation can be an equally as great while preaching the words of Paul to the people of Galatia, the Sermon on the Mount from Jesus to the People, or the Revelation to John from Jesus to the seven churches. All of these texts are situational, and the situations are fascinating (at least to the inner nerd within every Bible student). The situation is in fact helpful. However, it is helpful as an interpretive guide to the text at hand. The preacher wants to avoid preaching the text that is behind the text (the situation) instead of preaching the text itself.

This is our theology of Scripture. We are not preaching the situations, we are preaching texts. Preaching the situation that is behind the text to the exclusion of the text at hand misrepresents the nature of

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<sup>16</sup> See: Abraham Kuruville. *Privilege the Text! A theological hermeneutic for preaching.* (Chicago: Moody, 2013), 33-67.

Scripture. Scripture is given to us “transhistorically”<sup>17</sup> to transcend time and speak to our situation. While we consider the historical context, a sermon that deals too much with the historical situation moves the preacher further away from the most important situation, namely the situation in which people find themselves: with the need to be aware, of how much they need to be aware, of sin. And this is the most important aspect of the situational nature of the genre: they are situational in an *anticipatory* way. The genres exist not just to facilitate the ancient situation, but as facility for our situations. The point is not that the genres capture the limited numbers of ways God chose to communicate, rather that the genres speak to the unlimited number of situations of all believers of all time. This is the point. They are situational, but again, in a transhistorical way.<sup>18</sup> And, in order to allow the text to meet the current situation, we must preach it in a way that addresses immediate needs.

Tending to a study of individual genres should make us more sensitive to present needs, not desensitized against present needs while being sensitive to the ancient situation. Understanding the ancient situation is an aid to understanding the text, a text which is given to meet the present situation.

This then leads to a question. Why exactly are the genre's able to meet the current situation? This is the question of relevance. Put more precisely, what makes an ancient text presently situational? It is important to note that this deference to ancient literature as *absolutely* trustworthy has little modern equivalent. In a day when baccalaureate science textbooks become out of date by the time they are printed and reach the market, it is a significant challenge for the evangelical to present an ancient text as the answer for contemporary problems. However, the reason that they are able to meet current needs is because they themselves have never been static, but have always been moving.

The text speaks to the present situation because the text itself is present. It is moving and it is moving in a very specific direction.

### *The Genres are Moving*

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<sup>17</sup> Kuruvilla, 44

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

The reason the text from any genre can speak to a contemporary need is because the genres are themselves moving. More precisely: they are situational because they are not static. Further, the moving nature of the genres should help one understand them as moving toward a very specific end goal.

The genres are literary devices. That is the way they function. However, if only viewed as literary devices, they may be seen as either flat or static. Both of these aberrant understandings of the text manifest themselves in the pulpit. Let's briefly look at both flat and static homiletic approaches to the text.

*Flat.* The flat approach assumes that a biblical text, is a text, is a text. The preacher is predisposed to a universal homiletic template, which is then transposed over any text regardless of the genre. In this way, the genre in which the text was placed has no consequence on the sermon. In this scenario the preacher chooses the homiletic template first. The sermon is a demonstration of how neatly a text can fit into this pre-chosen form.

The problem is that when genres are viewed arbitrarily, communication is itself flat. No life, no texture, no nuance, no color in the text. This is tragic for the reason that it does not re-present the text. What often happens as a result is that the text is presented as flat and "creativity" (i.e. supplementary material, visuals) is then needed to make the text compelling. Creativity is essential, and multi-sensory communication can be compelling. However, the text is creative. Therefore the breadth of the creativity should come from the depth of understanding the text. In other words, we are not bringing creative elements to the text as much as we are showing the creativity that is already embedded within the text. We are letting the text breathe. We are not suffocating it with our own thoughts. Exegetical work is mining the life that is already embedded in the text.

The deeper problem, as established above, is that the form of a text can influence the meaning. To ignore the shape is to risk missing a part of the meaning. So while suggesting that the communication will be flat may seem like a rant against creativity, one is pressed further to see that not paying attention to the genre is a matter of interpretation first, and communication second. There is meaning in the structure of a text.

*Static.* Like the flat approach, the static approach perceives that the genres are non-moving literary devices. In this way the genres, and the pericopes within the genres, function like a rhetorical artifact that can be studied independent of their setting in the within the canon. It's as if the pericope is found on a piece of paper on the ground. Each sermon from such a pericope is a one volume short story influenced by nothing outside of the homiletic binding of the introduction and conclusion of the sermon. But surely this text is going somewhere?

The multiplicity of genres in Scripture not only gives witness to the many situations to which it was written, but to the many situations to which Scripture is able to speak. In other words, the many genres speak not only to its variety, but to its direction. When the Scriptures were penned, they were penned to be applied in the present situation. They are limited genres speaking to unlimited situations.

Perhaps the best way to understand this is to look at the book of Revelation. Revelation is the most inter-textual of all the books, and necessarily so. As the climatic book in the cannon it comprises so many of the genres. Here we see so many genres alive in one book. The reason is simple, this book describes the final destination. It is not surprising that we find all the vehicles of transportation present. Consider the many genres in Revelation.

Revelation is narrative. Revelation begins with a vision of Christ, His word to the churches, and a sense of direction as to where these things are all headed. Many commentators see an outline to the book in 1:19, "the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this." This outline is the movement of a story, especially the narrative flow of the last section, or bulk of the book, where things move from a scene of worship in heaven (4, 5) moving toward a great battle (16:10-19:21) to the new heaven and the new earth and the descent of the new city (21, 22) leaving John in breathless wonder to cry "Come, Lord Jesus." The book is one dramatic narrative.

However this narrative contains the genre prophecy. For example the bulk of chapter 18 reads, at least structurally, like the prophecies found in the Major Prophets. And the prophets of course use the genre of poetry. So in Revelation 18 one finds the strophe structure

of Hebrew parallelism that is found throughout Scripture.<sup>19</sup> Added to this, the genre proper of the Revelation which is apocalyptic.

All of this Revelation is wrapped in a situation. The situation is that John is writing an epistle to the seven churches; a specific author and a specific audience. So in the epistle of the Revelation of John is narrative, prophecy, poetry, and apocalyptic. These individual genres are alive and they are indeed going somewhere. They are moving to a very definitive ending. The quick pace of the book of Revelation, and its use of the genres to accomplish that pace, is, in many ways, metaphorical for the whole of Scriptures: many genres used for one purpose, to move us to one end.

So, contra the flat or static approaches, the genres are themselves intentionally vibrant, and they are dynamic. In other words God desired for a limited number of genres (story, poem, and letter) to speak to unlimited number of situations. Therefore they are intentional in their placement and they are intentional in their movement toward a destination. A destination which, once understood, helps us know what to do with them when we preach them. An understanding of the genre helps us understand the relationship of the Gospel message to the text of Scripture.

### **Gospel in Genre**

There is an involved recent history in the development of a Christocentric, or Redemptive Historical (RH) preaching. The motivation for this type of preaching may be to communicate to the listener the holistic nature of the text while leading the individual to grow in their worship of, and love for, Christ. However, like all movements there are some inherent dangers in the respective approaches.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See: Leland Ryken. *Words of Delight*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2007), 477.

<sup>20</sup> For a critique of Christ-Centered approaches to preaching, see Kuruvilla, *Privilege*, 211-268; see also Ken Langley "When Christ Replaces God at the Center of Preaching". Paper presented to the Evangelical Homiletics Society. 2008.

One unintended consequence of using a RH approach appears in the use of the Meta Narrative of Scripture in every sermon. For example Graeme Goldsworthy has helpfully submitted a schematic, using Matt 1 as a template, by which the preacher may get to Christ in each text of the Old Testament. The idea is to find the nearest attending covenant, and take that covenant to the new covenant in Christ.<sup>21</sup>

For a preacher wanting to know how to preach Christ from say I and II Samuel, this is a very helpful strategy. However, for a pastor preaching *through* I and II Samuel, the sermons run the risk of being redundant. It's true that a backward look to the Abrahamic Covenant can help you understand why God did not want Israel to have a King. And certainly a forward look to the Davidic Covenant will help one understand the tragic reach of David's sin with Bathsheba. However, for so much of the text in between, pointing to the meta-narrative could be wearisome Sunday after Sunday. This is especially true if views from the Gospel crowd's nest are repetitive to the neglect of what is going on immediately in the text.

The text does have value for life and godliness alongside the Gospel presentation (not exclusive of it or with it alone). In other words, the goal of Gospel clarity, textual explanation, and current application are not exclusive of each other. And this brings us to the genre of the text.

If one preaches the genre of the Scripture at hand and uses the structure of the text to determine the structure of the sermon, the preacher must deal with the situation of the text. In dealing with the situation of the text, they must deal with the *real* situation, the situation to which the text was written, the modern situation. When the modern situation is addressed it must be addressed in a Gospel-centered way, for there is no greater need in the current situation than that the listener align himself with the Gospel imbedded in the genre of the text. In other words the reach from the ancient situation to the current situation is the Gospel. Attention to the genre pulls one back into the ancient world and once there, the fear of being tethered to the moorings of the ancient forces him to head to the shore of the modern. The Gospel is the means by which to get there.

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<sup>21</sup> Goldsworthy, Graeme. *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

Anecdotally, we know this to be true. I have found myself to be preaching and sensing from the congregation a resistance to the text. The ancient situation intersects with the current situation in a way that is provocative and even threatening. It is clear that the listeners have no intention of aligning themselves with the meaning of the text. And, as sometimes happen, I am preaching and have the sense that there is someone in the audience far from the Gospel. At that moment I decide to go off script, abandon the homiletic rules, and make the Gospel as clear as possible. Yet, think about this. Should not the homiletic rules facilitate a clear Gospel presentation and not limit it?

What we need is sensitivity to a God who in his sovereign love gave us genres that demonstrate his desire for His truth to meet every situation of our lives. When we understand that this love is behind the genre we are preaching, and all genres, we cannot preach without clearing a spot and making the Gospel explicit, plain, and clear. In this way, whether there is a type of Christ in the text, or a referent that points us explicitly to a covenant that takes us to Christ becomes less important in that moment. What becomes most important is that the situation at hand is addressed a compassion reflective of the One who Authored the text.

To say it another way, we make the Gospel plain from every genre. An explicit Gospel is demanded from the reality that a finite number of the genres speak to a God who wants to make the message plain in a multitude of ways. The situational nature of the genre screams that God is speaking into our situation. And the movement of the genres begs the question as to where are they moving. Thus, and honest look at the genre demands a faithful representation of the genres. A faithful representation of the genre means that it is represented in spirit and in truth. This leads us to the Gospel.

To reverse the trajectory: The content of the message is shaped by the genre in which it is situated, the number of situations, and the number of genres, speak to the love of God. A love that initiated the Gospel within Himself before time began.

## **Conclusion**

The text is not static, it is moving like a train. And like a train it is composed of individual vehicles whose shape is determined by the cargo

that they carry. In the same way the shape of the genres of Scripture are not things that need to be bent toward Christ, rather they exist like they do *because* of the Gospel message. This argument from the nature of Scripture gives warrant to the desire to clear a spot and preach Christ from any Scripture. The commonality is the destination. They are each moving individual, car-specific, cargo to the final destination: the culmination of God's plan in redemptive history.

The genres are limited, there are a finite number of them. The genres are situational and speak to every contemporary situation. The genres are also moving. They are carriers of a message that is complete, but a story that is not yet complete. These three realities could be summarized as such: the limited genres speak to unlimited situations that are all reaching their climax through the message of the Gospel. The genres are the individual cars that carry the entire message. Thus, the existence of different genres speaks to the compassionate nature of the Gospel.

If this is true then one can make the Gospel explicit from any genre. It is warranted in any situation, because the nature of Scripture demands it. In other words, the composition of Scripture begs for the explanation of the Gospel from it.

If this is the case, then the genres are carrying us as well. We are studying the genre, but the genres are studying us. Preaching is explaining to people how God is reading them. It is to our situation which *they* speak; therefore it is to the present situation that we must speak. And that situation demands the Gospel.

## Historical and Theological Forum

The study of Christian history and theology obviously involves much in the way of remembering what has been said and done by Christian leaders. We commemorate and celebrate the lives and achievements of those who have gone before. One expects that each year therefore, there will be the occasional anniversary of note. 2015 however, seems to be a year simply filled with numerous anniversaries of historical and theological significance. Therefore it was felt very appropriate to commence a new section within the Journal, a section where we will ask for personal comment and reflection from a variety of scholars on relevant topics.

The following is just a representative sample of the anniversaries happening in 2015, apologies are offered for those not mentioned, it is certainly not a comprehensive list: Selma (50 years); Founding of the Salvation Army (150 years); Hudson Taylor founds the OMF (150 years); Death of Andrew Fuller (200 years); Birth of Richard Baxter (400 years); Execution of Jan Hus, together with Order to exhume and burn by fire, the mortal remains of John Wyclif (600 years); Magna Carta (800 years); 4th Lateran Council (800 years); Bernard founds monastery at Clairvaux (900 years); and Consecration of Westminster Abbey (950 years).

We begin this new Reflection Forum by asking for personal reflection from Dr. Nathan Finn, Dr. Christian George and Dr. Michael McMullen<sup>1</sup>, on the significance of some of the anniversaries occurring this year. We will begin chronologically and simply work from the farthest historical events.

**MJT:** The year 2015 marks the 950th anniversary of the Consecration of Westminster Abbey in London. Quite apart from simply the incredible

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Nathan Finn is Associate Professor of Historical Theology and Spiritual Formation and Director of the Center for Spiritual Formation and Evangelical Spirituality at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary; Dr. Christian George is Assistant Professor of Historical Theology and Curator of the Spurgeon Library at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; Dr. Michael McMullen is Professor of Church History also at MBTS.

longevity of Westminster, why do you think it is a significant enough event to remember?

**Christian George:** Westminster Abbey is a masterpiece of stone and glass that boasts the burials of those like Oliver Cromwell, Geoffrey Chaucer, Isaac Newton, Charles Dickens and African missionary David Livingstone. The stones of this abbey, originally set by Benedictine monks for the worship of God, would eventually witness the composition of the King James Bible, a translation that held unrivaled tenure until the late nineteenth century. The nave of Westminster Abbey also looked down upon the Westminster Assembly, a council of Puritan theologians who forged the Westminster Confession of Faith which served as a model for the Second London Baptist Confession of 1689 and The Philadelphia Confession of 1742, both of which gave identity and trajectory to the Baptist tradition.

**MJT:** This year also marks the 900th anniversary of Bernard's Founding of the monastery at Clairvaux. Why do you believe this event to be significant enough to commemorate?

**Christian George:** Several years ago, I had the opportunity to visit Clairvaux, a small city in northeastern France where Bernard founded his religious community on June 25, 1115. Unlike the followers of Francis of Assisi in the following century, 12th century Cistercians were self-sufficient and hardworking, earning their wages by manual labor and agricultural development. Bernard's expression of Christianity is worth celebrating on this, the 900th anniversary of his monastery's formation, for it was based on the rhythm of life found in the earliest apostolic churches (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35). Bernard was one of Charles Spurgeon's favorite pre-Reformation preachers. In a sermon, Spurgeon once asked, "What Protestant can refuse to love the holy Bernard? Was there ever a more consecrated servant of God or a dearer lover of Christ than he?" Moreover, in comparing his own love for Jesus Christ with that of Bernard's, Spurgeon confessed, "I feel as if I had not begun to love my Lord."

**MJT:** The year 2015 marks the 600th anniversary of the Council of Constance, where the Order was given to exhume and destroy John Wyclif's mortal remains, though the order would not be executed for another 13 years. What is it about Wyclif that makes him a significant enough figure worth remembering?

**Nathan Finn:** John Wyclif (1320–1384) is important for a number of reasons. First, more than any other theologians in the late-medieval era, Wyclif came closest to arriving at convictions that the Reformers would later emphasize. He affirmed the supreme authority of Scripture and advocated making the Bible available in the vernacular. He is most famous for the latter, and rightly so. Wyclif's followers, the Lollards, made this a key priority in their movement and the modern-day parachurch ministry Wycliffe Bible Translators is named in his honor. Along with William Tyndale (1494–1536), Wyclif is one of the two historical "patron saints" of English Bible translation.

Wyclif also anticipated the Reformation in other ways besides his view of Scripture. He held to an Augustinian view of salvation and rejected transubstantiation, views that would later be echoed by most of the magisterial Reformers. Wycliffe also rejected the universal temporal authority of the pope and advocated an English national church separate from the Church of Rome well over a century before the creation of the Church of England under Henry VIII. Wyclif is often coupled with his near-contemporary Jan Hus (1369–1415), but Wyclif was actually closer to the Reformers in most of these views than Hus proved to be.

What really prevents us from marking the start of the Reformation with Wyclif rather than Martin Luther is that Wyclif apparently continued to hold to a medieval Catholic view of justification. Wyclif did not affirm justification by faith alone, but like most medieval theologians, he argued that justification is on the basis of a combination of faith and good works as mediated, in part, through the Catholic Church's seven sacraments. So while we should rightly honor Wyclif's because of his many important contributions, we should not follow him in his understanding of the relationship between justification and sanctification.

**MJT:** The same Council of Constance also condemned the Czech pre-Reformer Jan Hus and had him burned at the stake. Why is the life and work of Hus of particular significance?

**Michael McMullen:** We classify Jan Hus (or John Huss - c.1374–1415) as one of the three main pre-Reformers, along with John Wyclif and Girolamo Savonarola. In my Seminary office, I have a 1929 biography of Hus that I will often show to my students because of who the author is, Benito Mussolini. I will usually also read the following eye-opening section from its preface, "I hope that the reading of these pages will familiarize the public of independent thinkers with the epoch, the life, and the work of the least known of the heretics who lived north of the Alps." Mussolini also interestingly hoped that his volume might, "arouse in the minds of its readers a hatred of every form of spiritual and secular tyranny, whether it be theocratic or Jacobine."

Like Wyclif, Hus adopted a critical stance toward some of the beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church, the very Church of which he was a Priest. It was common until fairly recently, to portray Hus as simply a Wycliffite in Bohemia. One would be as mistaken in claiming that as one would in merely portraying him as little more than a forerunner of Martin Luther. While Luther certainly declared his indebtedness to Hus ("We are all Hussites without knowing it"), the Bohemian pre-Reformer was very much a man of his time theologically, as Wyclif too was in many ways, lacking as he did the doctrine of justification of faith alone. Hus's criticisms of the Catholic Church had much more to do with the life and behavior of the clergy, than with their actual theological positions. Though in saying this, Hus remains a man of extreme courage, standing against the punishment he knew only too well, would follow his actions. Hus was very active for example, in denouncing church abuses, and criticizing both the papacy and the abuse of the system of indulgences.

Hus's motto was, "Truth conquers all", and one thing we must remember and celebrate Hus for, along with his courage and stand for godliness among ministers, is his emphasis on Scripture as the source of true doctrine. As he wrote in his *De Ecclesia*, which really became his own death warrant, "And, in this way, every Christian is expected to believe explicitly and implicitly all the truth which the Holy Spirit has put in Scripture, and in this way a man is not bound to believe the sayings of the saints which are apart from Scripture, nor should he believe papal

bulls, except insofar as they speak out of Scripture, or insofar as what they say is founded in Scripture simply.”

**MJT:** This year will mark the 400th birthday of Richard Baxter. What is it about Baxter’s life and ministry that would mark him out for you as significant?

**Christian George:** Few divines were held in higher esteem than Richard Baxter, the Puritan pastor of Kidderminster whose 400th birthday we celebrate this year. A white, marble statue of him can be seen in Aberdeen, Scotland, and I have always thought, when standing beneath it, that marble was a choice stone for a man whose books, like his likeness, continue to withstand the erosion of time. The Reformed Pastor, one of his most popular works, has served as a compass for countless pastors throughout the ages who seek to marry orthodoxy and orthopraxy in ministry. Charles Spurgeon, whose personal copy of Baxter’s book is found in the Spurgeon Library, once said that it “stirs my very soul whenever I read its glowing periods.”

**MJT:** 2015 marks the 200th anniversary of the sad passing of Andrew Fuller. Why would you choose Fuller as someone we should see as significant this long after his death?

**Nathan Finn:** Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) was the leading theologian among British Baptists during the so-called long eighteenth century. He came of age in an era when Particular Baptist life had come under the influence of High Calvinism, a theological tradition that downplayed evangelistic urgency and the importance of immediate repentance and faith. Many High Calvinists were also antinomians who denied that holiness is a necessary element in the Christian life. In part through his reading of puritans such as John Bunyan and John Owen, as well as his engagement with early evangelicals, especially Jonathan Edwards, Fuller embraced an evangelical Calvinism that emphasized intentional evangelism, the necessity of personal holiness, and eventually the Great Commission to make disciples among all nations. His friend William Carey (1761–1834) is often considered the “father” of the modern

missions movement among English-speaking evangelicals.

Fuller's most famous treatise, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* (1785; revised 1801), proved to be the most important work in undermining High Calvinism among Baptists and other Dissenters. He also wrote against other theological errors of his day, including Arminianism, Deism, Universalism, Socinianism (a form of Unitarianism), Antinomianism, and Sandemanianism. The latter is especially relevant today. Sandemanians affirmed an "intellectualist" view of salvation that denied that repentance is a necessary component of saving faith. This error persists to the present day, often under the name of "Free Grace." Fuller demonstrated that repentance and belief are two sides of the same coin and argued that authentic faith always leads to transformation.

Fuller is a role model for us in many ways—especially modern pastors. First, he was a first rate pastor-theologian. Many contemporary pastors have recovered a healthy emphasis on theology from and for the church; Fuller is a key example of this emphasis from the Baptist tradition. Second, he was a missional theologian. Fuller framed all of his theology through the saving work of Christ, emphasized personal evangelism and church planting, and labored for over two decades as the head of the Baptist Missionary Society. Finally, Fuller was an apologetical theologian. He understood that a key part of the pastor's responsibility is to defend sound doctrine by both articulating biblical truth and critiquing the shortcomings of soul-deadening errors. My prayer is that God will grant us a generation of pastors who are theologians, missiologists, and apologists for the glory of God and the sake of his church.

**MJT:** The year 2015 marks the 50th anniversary of the events associated with Selma, AL. What is particularly significant to you about those events?

**Nathan Finn:** The Selma to Montgomery March in 1965 was a key moment in the history of the Civil Rights Movement. It almost did not happen because of brutal pushback from local white authorities, but the third time the march was successful. I would highly recommend that readers watch the recent film "Selma," which provides a basically

historically accurate—and very moving—portrayal of the events.

Many observers—especially among whites—felt like the Civil Rights Movement was a success because of the end of racial segregation in the South. However, Martin Luther King Jr. and others rightly understood that African-Americans could never enjoy full civil rights without having full and free access to the polls. So Selma did two things. First, it helped put voting rights front and center at a time when many politicians wanted it to remain on the legislative backburner. Second, Selma, much like the Birmingham Campaign before it, helped introduce many white Americans (especially in the North and West) to King's strategy of nonviolent civil disobedience. In fact, many northern clergymen came to Selma to participate in the event.

Selma—and the Civil Rights Movement in general—provides a helpful example of faith-based activism. Most of the key leaders in the Civil Rights Movement were ministers. While some of them were theological liberals, many were broadly evangelical, especially in their views of sin and salvation. King in particular should be included in the pantheon of faith and culture role models alongside folks like William Wilberforce, Abraham Kuyper, Carl F. H. Henry, Francis Schaeffer, Richard John Neuhaus, and Chuck Colson.

The Pulpit Rebuke:  
What is it? When is it appropriate?  
What makes it effective?<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract**

The injunction, “preach the word” in 2 Tim. 4:2 urges the preacher to reprove and rebuke as well as exhort. Despite this clear directive, pulpit rebukes are rare. This essay notes the words in the semantic domain “rebuke” and then surveys biblical rebukes to clarify who is authorized to rebuke, and under what circumstances. Next, by observing how rebukes function in the New Testament, this paper affirms some criteria for pulpit rebukes and concludes with practical guidelines for administering them.

**Introduction**

The Apostle Paul solemnly directed Timothy,

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths (2 Tim. 4:1-4).

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He told Titus to “rebuke [the lying, evil, lazy, gluttonous Cretans] sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (1:13). More generally, he said, “Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you” (2:15). This mandate is not restricted to apostolic delegates Timothy or Titus. Titus is to appoint elders for whom the capacity to rebuke is at the core of their qualifications: “He [i.e., each elder in every town] must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9).

Rebuking, evidently, is integral to preaching the word both publicly and privately. Despite that, the rebuke is seldom listed in the subject index of homiletics texts. Tim Chester and Marcus Honeysett, citing Titus 2:15, use the word “challenge” as a synonym for rebuke. “Ensure your preaching includes both comfort and challenge” (Chester and Honeysett 2014, 106). Dever and Gilbert offer wise counsel on how to rebuke under the heading, “Giving Godly Criticism” (Dever and Gilbert, 2012, 133-135). These are exceptions that prove the rule. The rebuke’s comparative rarity as a subject matches its paucity as a practice. Preachers that I hear seldom if ever rebuke their listeners. They may steer clear of rebukes out of the fear of scolding the congregation, or even appearing to do so. As Alec Motyer says, “Between ourselves, I have heard some preachers who, to tell you the truth, I would as soon go twelve rounds with Muhammad Ali as be battered around the ears again by them. Our calling is not to bruise but to heal the Lord’s people!” (Motyer, 2013, 96). Those who practice consecutive exposition of Scripture may get stuck in the original setting and not be adept at contextualizing its claims from the first hearers to contemporary ones. Another plausible reason preachers neglect the rebuke is that in large congregations, multi-site churches, or venues where sermons are broadcast or posted to the web, the preacher may not know the congregation well enough to rebuke them or reckon that the listeners do not know him (or her) well enough to *receive* the rebuke. Moreover, rebukes may have been supplanted by generalized cultural critiques of the kind so masterfully offered by Billy Graham whose influence as a model is incalculable. Whatever the root of this sin of omission, preachers who seldom faithfully apply an apt rebuke need to explore ways to realign their practice with the apostolic mandates. A valid starting point in that reformation is a working definition of the rebuke, one that helps us survey the biblical data. From

there, we may usefully note biblical examples of rebukes. Finally, we will let this clarified definition of the rebuke and our review of Scripture suggest some biblically defensible criteria for the pulpit rebuke and move us to a renewed commitment to practice it in ways that are both appropriate and effective.

### What is a rebuke?

Not surprisingly, more than one New Testament word underlies the English word “rebuke.” Louw and Nida include six words in their semantic domain “rebuke”: ἐλέγχω [1. bring to light, expose, set forth, 2. convict, convince, point out 3. reprove, correct; discipline, punish] νουθετέω, [admonish, warn, instruct], ἐπιτιμάω [rebuke, censure, warn], ἐπιπλήσσω [strike at, reprove, rebuke], ἐμβριμάομαι [scold, censure, warn sternly], and ὀνειδίζω [to reproach, revile, heap insults upon, or to reproach justifiably] (Louw and Nida 1988, 1989, 436-437; definitions from BDAG via BibleWorks). Forms of two of these words, ἐλέγχω and ἐπιτιμάω, occur in 2 Tim 4:2 cited above, the former appearing also in 2 Tim 3:16 where it describes one of four ways Scripture is profitable in equipping the person of God for every good work. Büschel says of ἐλέγχω, “with accusative of person it means ‘to show people their sins and summon them to repentance,’ either privately (Matt 18:15) or congregationally (1 Tim 5:20) . . .” (Kittel 1985, 222, emphasis added). What distinguishes the words in this semantic domain is that they address existing sins, not merely potential ones. This is a good working definition of the preached rebuke precisely because it is linked to preaching both contextually and linguistically. What the apostle affirms to be the nature and purpose of Scripture—it reproves or rebukes and corrects—should inform how biblical preachers expound it—to “reprove, rebuke and exhort” in the words of 2 Tim. 4:2. Stated this way, most evangelical preachers would acknowledge both the necessity and appropriateness of the pulpit rebuke. Listeners need rebukes because sin is deceitful, the devil is a liar, and left to themselves people tend to suppress the truth in unrighteousness. As we will see, not all rebukes should be administered from the pulpit, but some should be for reasons which will become clearer when we survey the Old and New Testament phenomena that the text describes with the word “rebuke.” That survey will enable us to develop a more complete definition and point to best

practices by drawing attention to who does the rebuking and who deserves to receive it.

### **A Preliminary Survey of biblical rebukes**

In this section, all the verses where the word “rebuke” occurs in the ESV are quoted in full so that Scripture can speak for itself and readers can experience the impact of these utterances without having to look up the passages cited. Initial underlined side headings capture the conclusions drawn from the texts cited while words in italics describe how individual verses lead to those conclusions.

#### **The LORD God himself rebukes.**

*The LORD rebukes Satan.* In a vision, Zechariah sees Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, “and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?” (Zechariah 3:1-2) “But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The LORD rebuke you” (Jude 1:9).

*The LORD is said to rebuke nature,* a figure of speech that conveys his authority over all creation. “Then the channels of the sea were seen; the foundations of the world were laid bare, at the rebuke of the LORD, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils” (2 Samuel 22:16). “The pillars of heaven tremble and are astounded at his rebuke” (Job 26:11). “Then the channels of the sea were seen, and the foundations of the world were laid bare at your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils” (Psalm 18:15). “He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved. You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. At your rebuke they fled; at the sound

of your thunder they took to flight” (Psalm 104:5-7). “He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; he dries up all the rivers; Bashan and Carmel wither; the bloom of Lebanon withers” (Nahum 1:4).

*Sometimes these rebukes are integral to God saving his people.* “He rebuked the Red Sea, and it became dry, and he led them through the deep as through a desert” (Psalm 106:9). God wants his people to know that he can save. “Why, when I came, was there no man; why, when I called, was there no one to answer? Is my hand shortened, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? Behold, by my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a desert; their fish stink for lack of water and die of thirst” (Isaiah 50:2). *Sometimes God’s rebukes of nature are pure mercy toward his covenant people.* “I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 3:11).

*God rebukes the nations.* Speaking to God, the psalmist writes, “You have rebuked the nations; you have made the wicked perish; you have blotted out their name forever and ever” (Psalm 9:5). Sometimes the nations are personified as beasts. “Rebuke the beasts that dwell among the reeds, the herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples. Trample underfoot those who lust after tribute; scatter the peoples who delight in war” (Psalm 68:30). God is not intimidated by them. “The nations roar like the roaring of many waters, but he will rebuke them, and they will flee far away, chased like chaff on the mountains before the wind and whirling dust before the storm” (Isaiah 17:13).

*Even when rebuking the nations, God’s purposes are redemptive.* “He who disciplines the nations, does he not rebuke? He who teaches man knowledge—the Lord knows the thoughts of man, that they are but a breath” (Psalm 94:10). Even his wrath is educational. “Thus says the LORD God: ‘Because the Philistines acted revengefully and took vengeance with malice of soul to destroy in never-ending enmity, therefore thus says the LORD God, Behold, I will stretch out my hand against the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethites and destroy the rest of the seacoast. I will execute great vengeance on them with wrathful rebukes. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I lay my vengeance upon them’” (Ezekiel 25:15-17). He often rebukes the nations

for the sake of his people. "When they were few in number, of little account, and sojourners in it, wandering from nation to nation from one kingdom to another people, he allowed no one to oppress them; he rebuked kings on their account, saying "Touch not my anointed ones, do my prophets no harm!" (Psalm 105:14) Sometimes it works the other way around: he rebukes his people as a way of making them an object lesson for the nations. "You shall be a reproach and a taunt, a warning and a horror, to the nations all around you, when I execute judgments on you in anger and fury, and with furious rebukes—I am the LORD; I have spoken" (Ezekiel 5:15).

*He also rebukes his own wayward covenant people.* "Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me" . . . "These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you" (Psalm 50:8, 21). These rebukes too are redemptive. Consider Isaiah 51:20-22. "Your sons have fainted; they lie at the head of every street like an antelope in a net; they are full of the wrath of the LORD, the rebuke of your God. Therefore hear this, you who are afflicted, who are drunk, but not with wine: Thus says your Lord, the LORD your God who pleads the cause of his people: 'Behold, I have taken from your hand the cup of staggering; the bowl of my wrath you shall drink no more; and I will put it into the hand of your tormenters, who have said to you, "Bow down, that we may pass over"; and you have made your back like the ground and like the street for them to pass over.'" "This is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and will not rebuke you" (Isaiah 54:9).

*God rebukes in words, and in actions.* God is understood to be the source of rebukes mentioned passively or not directly attributed to another cause. "Thus says Hezekiah, This day is a day of distress, of rebuke, and of disgrace; children have come to the point of birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth. It may be that the LORD your God heard all the words of the Rabshakeh whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to mock the living God, and will rebuke the words that the LORD our God has heard; therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left" (2 Kings 19:3-4. Cf., Is. 37:3-4). "If the God of my father, the God of

Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands and rebuked you last night” (Genesis 31:42). “David went out to meet [the men of Benjamin and Judah] and said to them, “If you have come to me in friendship to help me, my heart will be joined to you; but if to betray me to my adversaries, although there is no wrong in my hands, then may the God of our fathers see and rebuke you” (1 Chronicles 12:17). [The LORD our God] “allowed no one to oppress them; he rebuked kings on their account” (1 Chronicles 16:21).

*Job counted on the LORD’s rebuke.* “He will surely rebuke you if in secret you show partiality” (Job 13:10). To be sure, not all difficulties are validly assigned to God. Elihu connects pain and God’s rebuke in a way the book of Job ultimately does not affirm. “Man is also rebuked with pain on his bed and with continual strife in his bones” (Job 33:19). Asaph only belatedly realized that his assessment of his inner turmoil was faulty when he said, “For all the day long I have been stricken and rebuked every morning” (Psalm 73:14). Those who grasp that the LORD is rebuking them often plead with him to stay his hand. “O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath” (Psalm 6:1). “O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath!” (Psalm 38:1). There, by poetic parallelism, we learn that rebuke and discipline are closely related; God’s strokes are for our good. We see the same idea in Psalm 39. “When you discipline a man with rebukes for sin, you consume like a moth what is dear to him; surely all mankind is a mere breath!” (Psalm 39:11)

*God rebukes individuals for their sins including tampering with, mishandling, or disregarding his word.* “Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar” (Proverbs 30:5-6). To the priests who were charged with speaking for him but failed to do so he said, “Behold, I will rebuke your offspring, and spread dung on your faces, the dung of your offerings, and you shall be taken away with it” (Malachi 2:3). “You rebuke the insolent, accursed ones, who wander from your commandments” (Psalm 119:21). He could use unconventional means when necessary. “[B]ut [Balaam] was rebuked for his own transgression;

a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness" (2 Peter 2:16).

*Ultimately, God's rebukes redound to his glory.* "Glorious are you, more majestic than the mountains of prey. The stouthearted were stripped of their spoil; they sank into sleep; all the men of war were unable to use their hands. At your rebuke, O God of Jacob, both rider and horse lay stunned" (Psalm 76:6). The same idea is conveyed by Psalm 80:16 when read in its wider context. "They have burned it with fire; they have cut it down; may they perish at the rebuke of your face!" Notice also Isaiah 66:15-16 that speaks of the final judgment which is as broad as God's authority. "For behold, the LORD will come in fire, and his chariots like the whirlwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire will the LORD enter into judgment, and by his sword, with all flesh; and those slain by the Lord shall be many."

### **The Lord Jesus rebukes nature, demons, and people.**

Like his Father, *Jesus sometimes rebukes nature.* "And he said to [his disciples], 'Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?' Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm" (Matthew 8:26). See parallels in Mark 4:39 and Luke 8:24. "And they went and woke him, saying, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!' And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm." Luke 4:39 adds another example. "And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them."

*Jesus rebuked demons,* sometimes even forbidding them to speak the truth about his identity. "And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly" (Matthew 17:18). "But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him!'" (Mark 1:25). "And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, 'You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again'" (Mark 9:25). (See also Luke 4:35, 41.) "And demons also came out of many, crying, 'You are the Son of God!' But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because

they knew that he was the Christ” (Luke 4:41). See also Luke 9:42: “While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.”

*Jesus rebuked James and John for wanting to call down fire on a Samaritan village whose residents did not receive him because his face was set toward Jerusalem* (Luke 9:55). On the other hand, he declined to rebuke his disciples for praising him as the coming King who comes in the name of the Lord. “And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, rebuke your disciples.’ He answered, ‘I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out’” (Luke 19:39-40).

**People rebuke each other, sometimes appropriately, sometimes not; sometimes privately, sometimes publicly.**

Jacob rebuked Joseph as recorded in Genesis 37:10. “But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, ‘What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?’” Boaz instructed his laborers *not* to rebuke Ruth for gleaning extra sheaves. “And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her” (Ruth 2:16).

God rewards those who issue a deserved rebuke. Proverbs 24:25 says, “. . . but those who rebuke the wicked will have delight, and a good blessing will come upon them.”

A withheld rebuke reveals a false prophet’s inconsistency. “Now why have you not rebuked Jeremiah of Anathoth who is prophesying to you?” (Jeremiah 29:27)

Matthew 16:22 records how when Jesus announced that he would be rejected and killed, amazingly, Peter rebuked the Lord Jesus. “And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, ‘Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.’” (See also Mark 8:32.) Jesus then rebuked Peter and clarified why he was in the wrong. “But turning and

seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man'" (Mark 8:33).

On another occasion Jesus' disciples had to be corrected for a misplaced rebuke when children were brought to him. "Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, but Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God'" (Matthew 19:13). See also Luke 18:15.

Two blind men who cried out to Jesus for help were rebuked by a crowd. "The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the more, 'Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!'" Jesus heard their cry and healed them (Matthew 20:31). Mark 10:48 and Luke 18:39 are parallels.

Jesus actually commands his disciples to rebuke one another in Luke 17:3. "Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him,"

One dying thief rebuked another: "But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?'" (Luke 23:40).

When instructing Timothy how to handle the specific case of older men where a rebuke may seem to be called for, he says, "Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father" (1 Timothy 5:1). With regard to elders, he writes, "As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear" (1 Timothy 5:20).

2 Timothy 4:2, as we have already seen, provides the impetus for this essay. There Paul clearly links preaching and rebuking. "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching."

As we have seen, Titus 1:9 includes the rebuke as an essential practice of elders who must be qualified to do it, and places sound instruction alongside it. “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”

Paul instructs Titus with regard to reportedly evil, lying, lazy, gluttonous Cretans, “This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith (Titus 1:13).

Titus 2:15 also links rebuking to authoritative preaching. “Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.”

**Human willingness to speak rebukes and receive them varies. It is the essence of wisdom to receive valid rebukes.**

Psalm 38:13-14 adds an interesting twist. “But I am like a deaf man; I do not hear, like a mute man who does not open his mouth. I have become like a man who does not hear, and in whose mouth are no rebukes.” God’s rebuke fell heavily on the psalmist and reduced him to silence, to the muteness of the deaf. The rebukes in the last line of this couplet may convey the idea of rejoinders, self-vindicating responses to the human enemies who take advantage of David’s vulnerability, smarting as he is under God’s rebuke. David’s turn to God as his only refuge from God’s rebuke is a way of breaking his silence and is an instructive example for God’s people.

The wise receive rebukes from the upright and see their life-giving intent. “Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it” (Psalm 141:5a). The proverbs and Ecclesiastes set forth contrasts related to rebukes. Together they offer wisdom concerning giving and receiving rebukes. “A wise son hears his father’s instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke” (Proverbs 13:1).

“A rebuke goes deeper into a man of understanding than a hundred blows into a fool”

(Proverbs 17:10). “Better is open rebuke than hidden love” (Proverbs 27:5).

“Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue” (Proverbs 28:23). “It is better for a man to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of fools” (Ecclesiastes 7:5).

### **Summary of the data so far**

A few warranted conclusions emerge from this preliminary survey of the lexical data. God is free to rebuke anything or anyone in his creation. He does so for the glory of his name and the good of his people and no one can find fault with his words or works of rebuke. His rebukes of sins of commission are also, implicitly, rebukes of the sin of unbelief, a sin of omission. Jesus, God’s unique Son, shares these prerogatives. The rest of us, God’s other, imperfect, image-bearers including those called to speak on God’s behalf as preachers, must sometimes rebuke fellow humans even publicly when to do so reflects God’s love, mind, and will and guards or affirms his truth, holiness, and glory. Not all human-to-human rebukes are justified, and some that are deserved are ill timed or are delivered imperfectly.

### **Affirmations concerning rebukes rooted in a closer look at the practice in Scripture**

Clearly, there are rebukes in Scripture that are not labeled as such, so our survey of the data must now extend to include some of those. The natural question that we now pursue is how we who speak for God in the congregation can rebuke others in ways that are not only obedient to our calling as preachers, but also justified, appropriate, and fruitful. To answer that question, we offer the following assertions with scriptural examples to support them. In what follows, I assume that the examples provided by the Lord Jesus and apostles, unless their respective roles plainly state or imply otherwise, are included in the canon at least in part because they are exemplary. I also assume that dictates given by the biblical writers to Timothy, Titus, and others are directly applicable to us. When referring to examples from the epistles, I agree with James W.

Thompson who, following Ricoeur, argues that Paul's epistles may validly be treated as "a legitimate model for our own preaching" (Thompson 2001, 16). Even though we do not replicate the precise cultural forms the ministry of the word took in the first century, what is true of biblically recorded rebukes—both public and private—needs to inform our contemporary practice.

**Rebukes are to be an expression of love.**

This truism is grounded in the very nature of God. "My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproves him whom he loves as a father the son in whom he delights" (Prov. 3:11). Ephesians 5:1-21 reaffirms this by both precept and example. Beginning with the exhortation to "be imitators of God," Paul exhorts his listeners to walk in love, following Christ's example. He then spells out several ethical accompaniments of love and their opposites. These ungodly traits and practices he says are to be *exposed*. "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them" (5:11). Exposing sin is the work of the rebuke. Paul goes on to practice what he preaches, calling attention to the debauchery of drunkenness and enjoining its alternative, being filled with the Holy Spirit (5:15-21). He explains in 2 Cor. 2:4 that the painful letter he had to write earlier was written "out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you." Nor did he want his letters to frighten his listeners (2 Cor. 10:9).

**Rebukes, broadly speaking, address two kinds of waywardness: faulty beliefs and unacceptable behavior.**

There are multiple strategies for rooting them out, as we will see, but there is value at the outset in noting that zeal of God's glory and love for his people move apostolic and pastoral leaders to address both maladies because they are often intertwined. For instance, in 1 Tim. 6:2c-5 Paul instructs Timothy,

Teach and urge these things. If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

Paul instructs Timothy to address heresy and patently unbiblical behavior, because both are contrary to the truth as it is in Jesus and therefore are harmful not merely to the individuals who believe the false doctrine or live in ways they could not have learned from Christ (Eph. 4:17-20), but also, when allowed to continue, they injure the church, the Body of Christ. When such rebukes are administered publicly, they function not merely to turn some from these sins, but also to help others to avoid them in the first place.

### **Rebukes are not the only kind of corrective speech in the Bible.**

This is where the range of words used and variety of biblical examples help us nuance our preliminary observations. For instance, Paul says, "I *appeal* to you brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you" 1 Cor. 1:10. The sin of divisiveness is met with an appeal for agreement. He confessedly prefers the appeal to the command in his efforts to reconcile Onesimus and Philemon (Philemon 1:8-10). Even in his shame-based culture, Paul could write "I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to *admonish* you as my beloved children" (1 Cor. 4:14; cf. Acts 20:31). To be sure, he was not unwilling to evoke shame when necessary (1 Cor. 6:5; 15:34). He could also *urge* listeners (1 Cor. 4:16; 16:15; Eph. 4:1; 1 Thess. 4:11), *reason* with them (1 Cor. 10:14-15), *plead* with them, *offer himself as a counter example* of their unacceptable behavior (1 Cor. 10:31-33), *ask searching questions* (1 Cor. 6:5-7; Gal. 3:1-6; 5:7), *express astonishment* (1 Cor. 6:8; Gal. 1:6), *exhort* (1 Cor. 6:18), *charge* (1 Cor. 7:10), *remind* (1 Cor. 15:1). These last two practices are explicitly

transferable. He urges Timothy to remind and charge those in his care at Ephesus (2 Tim. 2:14). He could *cajole*, saying “I speak as to children” (2 Cor. 6:13). He could *entreat* by the meekness and gentleness of Christ (2 Cor. 10:1; Gal. 4:12). He could *play the fool* to make others look foolish (2 Cor. 11-12). He expresses fatherly concern that he might have to mourn over unrepentant sin (2 Cor. 12:21), and threatens disciplinary action (13:2), and makes his spiritual children’s behavior a matter of prayer (13:7-9). Indeed reporting the content of his prayers at some length was an effective way of communicating the beliefs and behavior he sought to foster (Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:9-13). He could *warn* his spiritual children of possible dangers (Phil. 3:2; Col. 2:8, 16, 18-19; 1 Thess. 4:6-8; 2 Thess. 2:3) and made it his stated objective to do so in the context of proclamation (Col. 1:28). Paul does not hesitate to *threaten* (Gal. 5:1) or even *anathematize* (1 Cor. 16:22; Gal. 1:8-9) when the grievance threatens the essence of the gospel. He expected the Lord to repay the great harm done him by Alexander the coppersmith who opposed the gospel, and whom he apparently deemed beyond reclamation by a rebuke (2 Tim. 4:14). He even used the visual aid of shaking out his garments as he said to those who opposed and reviled him, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent” (Acts 18:6). Characteristically, Paul explains things thoroughly, placing a solid gospel foundation under godly living, and points toward righteous alternatives to the ideas or behaviors he considers to be out of step with the Spirit. *Ephesians* models this strategy well. Often, his words *affirm* his listeners’ obedience as a starting point for further obedience (1 Thess. 4:1-2, 10; 2 Thess. 5:11).

In his incomplete testimony before the Jerusalem mob as recorded in Acts 21:37—22:21 Paul could even describe himself before his conversion as “being zealous for God as all of you are this day” (22:3). [This is not unlike Stephen’s speech in Acts 7 that began with affirming language before becoming more confrontational.] Paul skillfully lets Scripture itself indirectly rebuke his listeners by quoting Is. 6:9-10 in Acts 28:26-27. He affirms that in Isaiah’s words the Holy Spirit is speaking directly to his listeners’ fathers whose unwillingness to hear God’s word freed Paul to turn to the Gentiles. In effect, Paul is inviting his listeners to consider whether these words also describe them. So, Paul clearly had a range of tools in his toolbox to move beloved friends toward right doctrine and godly living. He used the ones best tailored to the needs of those addressed. He not only used the tools but urged others to use them

thoughtfully too. "And we urge you brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all" (1 Thess. 5:14).

Rebukes in the New Testament reflect this bias toward gracious speech, but sometimes a sharp rebuke is the most gracious approach. For instance, in the context of correcting faulty ideas about the resurrection, the Apostle Paul does not hesitate to utter as stinging rebuke: "Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame" (1 Cor. 15:34). As always, the apostle is alert to the corrosive impact of sin not merely on the stupefied sinner but also upon others who may be watching. Inflicting emotional pain on the one rebuked is justified when it produces the godly grief that leads to repentance (2 Cor. 7:8-13).

James skillfully develops his exhortation to "show no partiality" by means of a hypothetical situation where two worshippers, very differently clothed, are also treated differently. The rhetorical questions that follow the scenario are increasingly direct and address listeners to effect repentance (James 2:1-7). This comparatively soft touch appears elsewhere in his letter. For instance, James 3:10 says "From the same mouth comes blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so." Once again, rhetorical questions follow to drive home the point. The rebuke of worldliness in James 4: 1-10 contains the same elements but is significantly more forceful, calling his listeners "You adulteress people!" The diatribe against the rich in James 5:1-6 employs vivid images to dramatize the seriousness of the offense and the wholeheartedness of the repentance it calls for.

Perhaps the most fruitful rebukes in the New Testament come from the mouth of Peter. Twice in the Pentecost sermon Peter unambiguously lays blame for Jesus' crucifixion squarely at the feet of his listeners, even though in one of the two instances he says they did it "through the hands of lawless men" (Acts 2:23, 36). His hearers were cut to the heart and asked what they could do. Peter invited them to repent and be baptized and three thousand did so. Peter's words in Acts 3:13-15, 19 similarly blame those present for killing the Author of life and offer them the forgiveness that comes with repentance. Those who repented on that occasion brought the total to some five thousand men (Acts 4:4). When on trial for the healing recorded in Acts 3, Peter levels the same charges of rejecting and crucifying Jesus (Acts 4:10-11). The

same pattern reappears in Acts 5:30-31. (Stephen, who begins his recitation of Israel's history in a conciliatory way, addressing his listeners as "brothers and fathers," ends much as Peter did, holding his hearers accountable for betraying and murdering Jesus [Acts 7:52]. Like Peter he feels free to do so because underlying their actions was a clear rejection of God's mediated word [7:53]). When Ananias and Sapphira conspired to lie to the Holy Spirit, Peter levels his charge at Ananias in the form of questions, followed by a clear rebuke, "You have not lied to man but to God" (Acts 5:3-4). Sapphira had a similar opportunity to repent and failed the test as spectacularly as did her husband.

Later in the New Testament, when Peter urges wives to submit to their husbands and husbands to live with their wives according to knowledge (1 Peter 3:1-7), it is not clear whether he is supplying positive teaching on marital interactions because he imagines that marriages in Asia Minor fell radically short of the Christian ideal, or if he had received a report that this was a known problem in the churches that needed to be addressed. The same could be said of his exhortation to elders and others in chapter 5. So when we come to his second letter—which I take to be Petrine also—the rebuke of false teachers that occupies the whole of chapter two shows us how Peter feels when he is certain that false teachers will appear (2:2) even if they have not done so yet. His language is vivid and forceful employing multiple biblical examples and allusions, and rich word pictures. He describes false teachers as bold, willful, irrational animals, ignorant blasphemers who revel in their deceptions, insatiable for sin, lovers of gain from wrongdoing, waterless springs, slaves of corruptions, culpably worse off than before conversion, dogs returning to their own vomit, and sows wallowing in the mire. Clearly the dangers to the church that Peter excoriates are both ethical and doctrinal and the two are inseparable as are sins of commission and omission. Those he rebukes profess faith but do not demonstrate its fruit. In my judgment, this counts as a pulpit rebuke, public as it is. Like other public rebukes, it has value for those who are not—or are not yet—guilty as charged. They see the seriousness of sin and ideally are moved to avoid it at all costs. Jude alerts his readers to these dangers with similarly rich language. His letter ends with a redemptive entreaty: "And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh" (Jude 1:22-23).

The Apostle John also takes the pre-emptive approach: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin” (1 John 2:1). He writes to those who know the truth (2:20-21), “about those who are trying to deceive you” (2:26). 3 John 1:9-10 rebukes Diotrephes for his self-advancing stance, for speaking against John, for his unwillingness to acknowledge apostolic authority, and his unwarranted acceptance of the heterodox as opposed to true brothers. The latter he expels from the church for their practice of hospitality. Not only does John detail Diotrephes’s shortcomings in this letter, he promises to do so *in person* if and when he has the opportunity. Once again, we see the focused rebuke as providing a wider benefit to the church.

The letters to the churches recorded in Rev. 2-3, coming as they do from the risen and ascended Lord Jesus, provide exemplary rebukes. Jesus declares his motivation: “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent” (Rev. 3:19). The letters usually begin with some expressed or tacit acknowledgement of the circumstances of the church being addressed. This may be followed by a word of encouragement for faithfulness manifested. In the case of Sardis and Laodicea, Christ professes to know their works which, in the case of Sardis, do not match the church’s reputation, and, in the case of Laodicea, are lukewarm. In the letters to Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira, a phrase like “but I have this against you” is followed by a warning of judgment for that sin, and a call to repentance together with a promise to those who persevere and obey. Significantly, in three churches—Pergamum, Thyatira and Sardis—Jesus distinguishes between the faithful and unfaithful who will hear this letter. He goes out of his way not to rebuke the innocent with the guilty, saying “I do not lay on you any other burden” (Rev. 2:24).

**Some rebukes should be administered privately; others publicly.**

According to Matthew 18:15-20, a sinned-against individual should privately bring his or her grievance to the attention of the alleged offender. If the person so accused does not listen to the complaint, one or two others should be enlisted to determine the facts of the matter. Only then, if necessary, does the case go before the church. The text leaves unstated when the alleged sinner is actually rebuked, but the

implication seems to be that the whole undertaking is aimed at repentance and restoration. When the apostle Paul entreats members of the Philippian church, Euodia and Syntyche, to agree in the Lord (Phil. 4:2), and enlists his true yokefellow to help them obey the injunction, his implied rebuke of their *disagreement* could scarcely have been more public. Elders, having met the qualification of being above reproach (Titus 1:6, 7), are to be honored if they rule well, and those elders who labor in the word and teaching are to be accorded double honor. That honor is presumably public. Correspondingly, accusations against them must be substantiated by additional witnesses. Those who are judged to be guilty of sin and persist in it are to be rebuked very publicly so that “the rest may have fear” (1 Tim. 5:17-22). The function of the rebuke thus includes deterrence as well as correction. These rebukes do not seem to be part of the regular ministry of the word, despite the fact that they occur when the whole congregation is present. Although the text is silent concerning precisely how and when these rebukes should be administered, it seems likely that this disciplinary function is separate from the ministry of the word.

The letter to the Galatians is an example of a very public rebuke of an entire congregation who are “so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel” (1:6). Paul not only rebukes and seeks to correct the whole church, he reports that he rebuked Peter “to his face” (2:11). He did this “before them all” (2:14). His rebukes are forceful and make the most of rhetorical questions. “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?” (2:14) “O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?” (3:1) See also questions in 1:10, 2:17, 3:2-6, 3:19, 21, 4:15, 16, 21, 30, 5:7, 11 that expose the folly of this opponents’ position or advance the logic of Paul’s. [This technique reflects the Lord Jesus’ use of convicting questions that simultaneously teach the truth (Matt.15:2; 26:40)]. Paul reasons with the Galatians as a father might with a wayward child, and like such a father is aware that in the medium of writing his tone may sound too harsh. “I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you” (Gal. 4:20).

**Rebukes are not *aimed at the world, the culture, or the church in general, but are directed toward those present who are or might be***

**guilty of sin that can be repented of or doctrinal deviations that can be renounced.**

To be sure, John the Baptist could level corporate rebukes, calling his unbelieving contemporaries a brood of vipers (Matt. 3:7). He also courageously and repeatedly rebuked the powerful Herod (Matt. 14:14). Both of these recipients, it should be noted, were spoken to as part of the Jewish household of faith. Paul is realistically alert to toxic doctrinal and behavioral environments within and around the church (2 Tim. 3:1-9, 13). Yet, in that case, instead of rebuking the perpetrators, he counsels the godly to avoid them. In a statement apparently intended to clarify who he was rebuking, Paul writes, "For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. Purge the evil person from among you" (1 Cor. 5:12-13). Elsewhere, he clearly expresses his antipathy to enemies of the gospel in 1 Thess. 2:14-16, but in Philippians 1:15, he is less agitated when the gospel itself is not compromised but only others' motives for preaching the truth are questionable. He tells Titus that certain doctrinal deceivers should be silenced (Titus 1:10-11). His prescribed antidote in Crete is the sharp rebuke to be administered by Titus (Titus 1:13). In these and many other cases, the New Testament writers warn the faithful but do not directly rebuke the wayward. Perhaps, this is the apostolic application of Proverbs 9:8-9: "Do not reprove a scoffer or he will hate you; reprove a wise man and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning." Hebrews 5:11-14 is a good example of a general rebuke, applicable to all the hearers of this letter. Here the author says of them that they had become dull of hearing. By this time they should have become teachers but instead need remedial instruction. This was the case despite his listeners' commendable track record of serving the saints (6:10). There are apparently some occasions where a generalized assessment is warranted and for which the way of repentance can be spelled out. That fact leads to our next assertion.

**Rebukes, when necessary, are more likely to be received when expressed in the context of a preacher's positive aspirations for listeners that reflect God's ambitions for them.**

Paul's stated aim in sending Timothy to Thessalonica was "to establish and exhort you in your faith" (1 Thess. 3:2). Paul himself longed to come in person to "supply what is lacking in your faith" (1 Thess. 3:10). Paul told the church in Ephesus through Timothy that he wanted them to know how to behave in the household of God (1 Tim. 3: 15). He even described his aim in visiting the Corinthians again as affording "a second experience of grace" (2 Cor. 1:15). It is clear that his exasperation with the Galatians notwithstanding, Paul wanted them to experience the freedom that was theirs in Christ and to be able to manifest the fruit of the Spirit against which there is no law.

**Rebukes spoken by church leaders carry more weight than those of others and are intended to do so.**

Paul exhorted Titus, "Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you" (Titus 2:15; cf. 1 Tim. 4:11). This fact underscores the importance of neither claiming authority for pulpit rebukes that are not warranted by Scripture, nor being reticent to rebuke sin and heresy where they clearly exist.

**Intentional pulpit rebukes: follow the examples of biblical writers**

How, then should we improve the ways we administer justified pulpit rebukes? Given all these biblical injunctions and examples, it should not surprise us that pulpit rebukes are one of the ways we serve the word by letting it do the transforming work God designed it to do. These New Testament practices and directives provide the starting place for practical guidelines. The Westminster divines advised,

In dehortation, reprehension, and publick admonition (which require special wisdom), let him [that is, the preacher], as there shall be cause, not only discover the nature and greatness of the sin, with the misery attending it, but also show the danger his hearers are in to be overtaken and surprised by it, together with

the remedies and best way to avoid it (Dever and Gilbert, 2012, p. 51).

*Take seriously the biblical injunction to rebuke false teaching and ungodly behavior.* What the apostles did and instructed others to do should neither be neglected nor disregarded by contemporary preachers. If our preaching is to effect transformation, rebukes are not optional extras but integral to serving the word and serving our listeners. For good to overcome evil in the lives of our hearers they must be recognize what is evil and turn from it. We who preach should examine our own preaching to assess whether we neglect clear rebukes in the text and seek discernment concerning the root of this deficit.

*Rebuke privately first whenever you can; rebuke publicly only—and always—when you must.* In some cases, the pulpit rebuke is the last resort. If you have reason to suspect unrepentant sin, go to the individual privately to discover the unshakable facts of the case and implore the sinner to repent. If that fails, take it to the church. In other cases, where the sin is more widespread and less well recognized, address it from the pulpit in the confidence that the Holy Spirit can shine a light into the hearts of your hearers and dispel the darkness there. Sinners can repent and the tempted will be warned. Micah's searing rebuke of both rulers and prophets recorded in Micah 3:1-12 is worth careful meditation for it exemplifies the courage, vividness, specificity and logic of the pulpit rebuke. Especially searching for those called to speak for God is the warning that those who persist in the besetting sins listed can expect no further word from God.

*Rebuke publicly whatever genuinely threatens the purity of the gospel.* This will not only affirm the seriousness of guarding the gospel but will also warn the congregation of doctrinal dangers and denounce those who hold and teach errant doctrines. The frequency and fervor of doctrinal correction in the New Testament should light a fire under us who preach, kindling our zeal to guard the gospel. Conferring with godly, praying elders before you issue a pulpit rebuke can help you avoid merely riding theological hobbyhorses or taking up popular culture war causes.

*When possible, affirm good behavior before you rebuke sin* (1 Cor. 11:2, 17; 1 Thess. 4). This is not merely psychologically wise; it affirms that God is at work in those to whom you must now offer correction. This fosters faith, from which all gospel obedience flows (Rom. 1:5, 16:26).

*Use the full range of rhetorical devices Scripture employs when it records public rebukes.* For instance, Paul could create a hypothetical opponent and then sternly call that person a fool (1 Cor. 15:35-36). For some preachers seemingly everything in Scripture can be turned into a rebuke or a command. Instead, our preaching should reflect what the expounded pericope is doing and so reflect the balance of Scripture. Spell out the consequences of sustained disobedience or false teaching and the benefits or repentance (e.g. 1 Cor. 11:27-32). Scripture itself supplies ways to move people toward Christlikeness. Paint a clear picture of the two paths and where each leads (Psalm 1; Deuteronomy 27-28).

*Tailor your corrective speech to the circumstances of your listeners.* “Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters in all purity” (1 Tim. 5:1). This directive, initially written to Timothy, a comparatively young man, should encourage younger preachers who feel they have no business rebuking their elders. It would be more accurate to say that none of us—whatever our age—have any business being haughty or self-righteous when we rebuke anyone and special care must be taken when we feel compelled to point out the sins or errors of our elders. The very fact that Paul includes instructions concerning *how* to rebuke older people implies *that* Timothy was to do so. It seems that the sort of rebuke envisioned here is individual and private. Timothy may not yet have had a fellow elder to accompany him; hopefully we do.

*Model grace, wisdom, and love when you rebuke.* Accusation is the devil’s work; rebuking is what we do lovingly to turn people from their sins. Anger at sin is not the same thing as being indignant when someone else’s sin puts them on a collision course with your own desires (Matt. 20:24). Distinguish carefully between what annoys you and what God himself finds offensive; bearing with the former and rebuking the latter. Preachers are sometimes tempted to abuse their status and its privileges

to promote their own agendas and give vent to their personal and professional frustrations. Pre-test pulpit rebukes with your spouse, a trusted friend or wise elders. Invite the Lord to wash you with his word and examine your own heart. Put yourself in the shoes of both guilty and not-guilty listeners to feel how they might receive such a rebuke. Let the tone and wording of your rebuke reflect the text you are preaching. If we inappropriately soften a rebuke by a thousand qualifications, when the text itself is forthright, we do our listeners no service. If we harshly scold them when our text entreats them gently, we fail to reflect our heavenly Father's tender mercies.

*When you rebuke others, watch yourself.* Administer rebukes with a spirit of gentleness and caution, lest you be tempted either to fall into the same snare or to feel superior to the one ensnared, or even to make yourself look better by comparison (Gal. 6:1). Imitate Christ in simultaneously being above reproach and bearing the reproach of others. David bore the reproach that sinners directed toward the Lord (Ps. 69:9). Paul attributes to Christ this posture of not pleasing oneself (Rom. 15:3) and exhorts believers to take up the same attitude (Rom. 15:1). A good reputation with outsiders is to be the elder's protection against disgrace and the devil's trap (1 Tim 3:7). The only reproach or disgrace we should experience is the reproach we experience for identification with Christ (Heb. 10:33; 11:26; 13:13).

*Rely on God himself to work the sanctifying changes needed* (2 Thess. 1:11-12; 3:16; 1 Thess. 3:11-12; 5: 23-24; Matt. 11:25-27). Your skill as a preacher in crafting and delivering a pulpit rebuke will never carry the day, but God has committed himself to go to work in believers when we speak his word on his behalf to them (1 Thess. 2:13).

## **Conclusion**

Biblical preachers speak for God and are called therefore to do so in ways that reflect his speech. That speech includes lovingly and therefore firmly rebuking those who sin or stray. The transforming work of God's word, by his Spirit through preachers, will be less transformative than God intends when those who speak for God neglect to rebuke their listeners

for their good. How preachers do this effectively need not be a mystery since we have multiple examples to follow, beginning with God himself. Those who learn from these rebukes in Scripture and prayerfully restore this practice to its proper place will move toward greater faithfulness as preachers and do more good to their listeners and churches.

### Possible future research

An empirical study of representative sermons coded by NVivo or some other means could track pulpit rebukes historically and culturally to discern to what extent they are missing or muted and explore possible reasons why this is the case.

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Diaries, Manuscripts and Books:  
Andrew Fuller 200 Years On

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**Introduction**

One of the great blessings of my academic and spiritual life, has been the privilege of handling the very sheets of paper that some of the giants of Christian history have held and wrote on, it is both very humbling and very challenging. My access to such documents began as a PhD student in Scotland, when as part of my doctoral work, I had the incredible opportunity of spending two extended periods being captivated by the sermons and other mss of Jonathan Edwards in the Beinecke Special Collections Library at Yale University. My first visit to the Edwards' Collection was in 1990, and from that point on I knew what it was that gave me one of the greatest pleasures, namely the privilege of holding and reading documents from great revival periods. These were Papers that gave me a direct, tangible link to the working and moving of God centuries ago, Papers that reminded me that these were real people who had been used by God and who called us to do the same, to follow Him and to pray that he might similarly use us. I never could have foreseen that it would be anything more than that, for at that point in my life, it was enough simply to be standing amongst the Edwards Papers, marveling at what God had done through him.

My first book came five years later, a compilation of extracts from the devotional writings of the Wesleys, including much that was previously unpublished from the Journals of Susanna Wesley, the mother of John and Charles.<sup>1</sup> If handling and reading original and unpublished pieces is exciting, and for me it is, then having the

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<sup>1</sup> *Hearts Aflame*, (London, UK: Triangle Press, 1995).

opportunity of transcribing them and seeing them published, is simply incredible, but that is how God has used most of my writing history. Amongst my publications are three volumes of previously unpublished sermons from Robert Murray M'Cheyne with Banner of Truth. That was one of the highlights for me of all I have done, for M'Cheyne's *Memoir and Remains* was one of the first books I was given as a new teenage believer, and M'Cheyne's life in Christ became one of the greatest spiritual challenges to me.

This background is shared by way of introduction. 2015 marks the bicentennial of Fuller's death so I believed it quite appropriate, to share something of the life and legacy of this British Baptist. With my love for reminding the Church of her great heritage by way of transcribing and seeking to publish previously generally unknown manuscripts, it was a real joy and privilege therefore when I was invited to become part of the Andrew Fuller Project, under the indefatigable scholar Michael Haykin, especially when I was assigned the very Diary that Andrew Fuller kept during his years of ministry. Diaries for me are treasure troves of thoughts and ideas. In this, the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Andrew Fuller, it was felt very appropriate, to share something of this man's life and ministry, especially in regard to the Diary he kept, and which will soon be published in its entirety for the first time.

But who briefly, was Andrew Fuller and why does he matter? Born in 1754, Fuller is remembered particularly for his theological dismantling of the dominant hyper-Calvinistic system that plagued British Baptists especially, in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was also his groundbreaking work, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, which helped to launch the modern missions movement. Charles Spurgeon referred to Fuller as, "The greatest theologian of his century." Haykin has a great challenge to those who ask if study of Fuller is worthwhile:

Fuller exemplifies for me the best in Baptist thought and piety. He was rigorous in defence of the Christian faith and an unashamed Baptist (he did, after all, argue for a closed communion over against his close friends William Carey and William Ward). He knew that piety was the vital fire to ignite the coals of doctrine. His love for his family and friends was remarkable: Carey's three words when he heard of his death sum

it all up, "I loved him," he said. He was catholic and reformed in the best sense of those terms, and could well be described as a reformed catholic theologian, as Owen and Benjamin Keach have recently been so described. He was the main disseminator of Edwardsean theology in the UK in the nineteenth century, and true to his mentor, Edwards, passionately missional. Little wonder, Spurgeon rightly commented to his son that Fuller was the greatest theologian the Baptists had in the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

In his Journaling, Fuller followed the well-worn path of recording his concerns and supplications, and then later adding the results or the answers to prayer that he experienced! What is discovered on studying his Diary is that though he was fairly regular in making entries, it is interesting how much the quality of what he records varies. Fuller is certainly no Cotton Mather in this regard, for it is written of the latter that, "Cotton Mather made a point of having at least one good action to set down in his diary on every day of the week." One does not find that true of Andrew Fuller.

Having said that though, Fuller did generally follow the tradition of writing mostly at night, in conjunction with the reflective mood of nocturnal secret devotions. Fuller also stands in the tradition of men such as John Beadle, who in his 17th century work, *The Journal or Diary of a Thankful Christian*, wrote the following:

That just as the state has its 'diurnals' of affairs, tradesmen keep their shop books, merchants their accounts, lawyers their books of precedents and physicians theirs of experiments, wary heads of households their records of daily disbursements and travelers theirs of things seen and endured. But Christians, who like stewards or factors must one day give strict account to their Lord, have even more to gain by keeping a journal. The godly man should 'keep a strict account of his effectual calling.' If possible, he should 'set down the time when, the place where, and the person by whom he was converted.' He should make note of all

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<sup>2</sup> 'Is the study of Andrew Fuller and Fullerism worthwhile?' *Historia Ecclesiastica: The Weblog of Dr. Michael A.G. Haykin & friends*, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011.

the men and means that God has at any time used for his good, especially the services of parents, schoolmasters and patrons. He will find it singularly useful to put into his diary 'what Times we have lived in, what Minister we have lived under, what Callings we were of, what Wealth was bestowed on us, what places of Authority and Command were committed to us.' Most important of all, the Christian should record all the mercies of Providence, all the answers vouchsafed by God to his prayers. 'Indeed what is our whole life, but a continued deliverance?'

One also discovers that Fuller was like many Diarists, in that he created his own shorthand system, a system that he employed over the course of his diary-keeping. John Wesley similarly created a most intricate system of shorthand, using all manner of obstacles to stop his code from being broken. It remained so, until Dr. Richard Heitzenrater succeeded in opening to the world, all the hidden passages in the Wesley Journals. It caused quite a stir at the time! Wesley had used his code for many of the entries he made during his formative years at Oxford, 1725-1735. Heitzenrater reported of how he had, "accomplished the monumental task of deciphering the complex web of numbers, letters, and minute marks." He described moreover, how Wesley's personal code incorporated two systems of shorthand, a changing cipher, innumerable cryptic abbreviations, a series of symbols, together with a variety of complex number schemes.

It is believed by scholars that such an involved code surely intended more than the simple saving of space. What we do know for certain is that Wesley's method, though admittedly probably more advanced than most, was by no means an unusual practice. Many of Wesley's contemporaries for example, would use systems of shorthand and codes both in their correspondence as well as journals. What came as something of a surprise was when Heitzenrater revealed that the entries he now opened to the world, did not cloak, "purple passages", but consisted rather of an abundance of the mundane: books Wesley read (over 100 every year), social action he undertook, and his rules for holy living.

The present writer has similarly, no evidence from his research, to think otherwise that the shorthand sections which appear in Fuller's journals, would turn out to be any different in their content. In fact,

where this present writer has been able to decipher shorthand passages, the material consists of the names of certain individuals being mentioned, or simply of a particular issue being reflected upon. More than likely therefore, the remaining undeciphered sections, were either Fuller's way of keeping confidences, or of maintaining some degree of privacy concerning his own spiritual life. It needs to be said however, that he isn't merely hiding what he sees as his shortcomings, for one is able to read his recording many times for example, how cold and unmoved by the people or by the Spirit he believes he has been, how dead and cold he believes his preaching has been, and how little of the Spirit he believes was evidenced as he preached.

One should discover when transcribing or simply reading Fuller's Diary, that it's a spiritually difficult task, for as one reads Fuller's own account of his life, one is inevitably prone to compare their own life with his. To do so, is I believe, both very humiliating and very challenging. For one soon discovers that this is the same Andrew Fuller who rides thousands of miles a year preaching and raising funds for mission and missionaries; who was writing some of the most profound Baptist theology seen; who was being used of God to break the strictures of the then dominant hyper-Calvinism; who was Pastor of the Baptist Church in Kettering for more than thirty years; who struggles to almost breaking point with his family afflictions, including the loss of his first wife and eight of his own children; and yet who repeatedly believes that he is doing so very little of real or lasting import. Demands and pressures on him were such that he recorded his wife as saying to him, "My dear, you have hardly time to speak to me!"

Of course, looking into someone's personal, private thoughts can at times, be rather awkward. Fuller like many Journal keepers, never expected and indeed, never wanted his Journal read by all and sundry. The idea of having it published would have bewildered him, we know this for on Friday, April 30, 1784 for example, he recorded these words in his Diary

Very little exercise today. What reason have I to pray for a revival in my soul! Surely I am to a sad degree sunk into a spirit of indifference: My soul cleaveth to the dust, quicken thou me. I earnestly desire these papers and books, if I should not burn them in my lifetime, may *never be shown, except to very few*

*persons*, after my death; for such a life as mine I wish never to be imitated.

When I read the life of one whom I think was a good man, I feel apt to account his acquisitions nearly the utmost that can be attained in this life. The fear lest any one should think thus of mine, makes me write this desire.

Fuller was not alone in the wish for his personal papers to be destroyed post-mortem, for as one recent writer on the subject argued, much material from the 17th century is lost for ever because the writers hid or destroyed it. Jonathan Edwards too, gave similar instructions regarding his manuscripts in the following century. We also have the account of Joseph Green, who at the relatively young age (as far as journaling is concerned), of twenty-one, gave these quite detailed instructions for the future of his commonplace book

And if I should dye before I have committed this book to the flames; I give leave to my nearest relation to look over it; but I give a strict charge to them not to expose it to the view of any; And it is my will that this book be viewed by none unless by one person which is nearest related unto me; and now I pray God to help me to write sincerely, humbly, and without ostentation.

It was a real concern for many, that unless the journal was later going to be used as valuable source material for an autobiography or Life, then it should be destroyed soon after the Journaler's death. Cotton Mather recounts such an example from the life of Nathaniel Rogers, who though it was known he kept a diary, "he kept it with so much reservation, that it is not known that ever anyone but himself did read one word of it: and he determined that none ever should; for he ordered a couple of his intimate friends to cast it all into the fire, without looking into the contents of it."

Mather by his own hand, went on to do the very same thing, "My Diaries, wherein I had written the Course of my Study and preaching, and the Resolves of Piety upon my Daily course of Meditation, I have thrown, as useless Papers into the Fire." What treasure has therefore been lost! But that is precisely the opposite of how it was regarded. Part of the rationale for their destruction, is that it would actually be improper for

devotional journals, the very products of one's intimacy with their heavenly Father, ever to be made public. Journaling was regarded as such an integral part of the secret life with God. We also know tangentially, that Beethoven's wish was somewhat similar, that all his music be burned after his death!

It seems that Fuller's concern was that we were not to think he had reached the pinnacle of what was possible as a believer, and therefore aim only that high - which was something which really troubled him. Fuller was only too well aware that he was still a sinner, saved by grace yes, but still very much residing this side of heaven!

Andrew Fuller's Diary is held in mss form at the Bristol Baptist College in England. They are uncertain as to when it arrived there or even why it was sent! The most likely probability is that because his son joined Broadmead Baptist Church in Bristol, which really became the nucleus of the Baptist College there, he may simply have brought the diary with him and it stayed in Bristol.

The extant mss are incomplete. We know this to be the case, for the printed editions contain much more material than is preserved in handwritten form.

When the Diaries are finally published by De Gruyter, I have incorporated whatever material is available, both printed and handwritten, and that has resulted in a final word count of a little over 55,000 words, with entries beginning on January 10, 1780 and concluding on August 5, 1813.

In the course of my research, I have discovered that the printed editions and the handwritten originals do differ, sometimes remarkably so and not always for the most apparent reason! There are times when it's clear that the printed editions have added words to clarify the meaning, tenses of verbs were changed, names of people or places were omitted or abbreviated, and on occasions, sermon titles or content was added. But at other times, some very odd changes have been made, and these will be pointed out in the published volume. Fuller begins his Journal in a very appropriate spiritual way with a wonderful vow to God, a fresh renewal of his Covenant with God. He then follows this with detailed supplications: He prays that in the midst of all the religious activity of his day, that he would keep the simplicity of the Gospel close; that God would illuminate his understanding; that he would not be distracted by himself or others, from the truth of Scripture; that he would

continue to live a life of holiness; and that he would continue to declare the full counsel of God.

One major thing we quickly learn about Fuller, is something of just how much he read. In just the second entry of his extant Diary, he reveals his first book of interest, "I have been reading, in *Josephus*, the bloody reign of Herod. What pain is it to read those narrations where truth and virtue fell to the ground, and were finally overcome. I think it helps to enhance the idea of heaven, that this is a world were these shall everlastingly triumph."

From that reading of Josephus onwards, his Diary affords us a wonderful insight into his reading habits and preferences, some of which can be briefly shared here:

August 1780, he's reading one of his favorite authors, "Some savour today in reading Edwards on *The Affections*." That same month he says, "I found my soul drawn out in love to poor souls while reading Millar's account of Eliot's labors among the North American Indians, and their effect on those poor barbarous savages." The following month he is reading Edwards again, "Much affected this morning in reading Edwards's thoughts on evangelical humility, in his *Treatise on the Affections*. Surely there are many that will be found wanting in the great day. 'Lord, is it I?' I cannot help lamenting in reading in Mosheim's *Church History*, how soon, and how much was the religion of Jesus corrupted from its primitive simplicity!"

In February 1781, he is again reading *Edwards on the Affections*! And wishing that the Holy Spirit would open his eyes, and let him into the things he hadn't yet seen! In June he was,

"having some delight in reading Mosheim's *History of the Reformation* and his *History of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries*. Really I am sick in reading so much about monks, mendicant friars, etc. I could have wished the history had more answered to its title - a history of the *church*, but it seems little else than a history of locusts. Some sacred delight in reading more of Mosheim on the coming forth of those champions of the Reformation - Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Calvin, etc., into the field. I think I feel their generous fervor in the cause of God and truth. How were the arms of their hands made strong by the mighty God of Jacob!"

In July he is back reading *Mosheim*, “whose partial account of the English Baptists would lead me to indulge a better opinion of various sects, who have been deemed heretics.” The following month he’s with John Owen, “In reading *Dr. Owen*, today, the end of predestination seemed sweet to me; namely, conformity to the image of God’s dear Son.” We then have a gap in the Diary and then it is resumed in July 1784, where he is reading Edwards to some friends, his *Attempt to promote Explicit Agreement in God’s People in Prayer for the Revival of Religion*, “to excite them to the like practice. Felt my heart profited by what I read and much solemnized.”

That same month he records having read part of a poem of John Scott on the cruelties of the English in the East Indies, causing he says, “*artificial famines, etc.*” As is so often the case with Fuller’s reading, it will often result in a response of praise or prayer, or a desire for a change of behavior in his life. “My heart felt most earnest desires that Christ’s kingdom might come, when all these cruelties shall cease. O for the time when neither the scepter of oppression nor heathen superstition shall bear the sway over them! Lord Jesus, set up thy glorious, and peaceful kingdom all over the world!”

Again, more of Edwards that month as he writes, “Read some more of Edwards on Prayer, as also I did last Monday night, with sweet satisfaction.” August he’s with Owen again, “Much pained at heart today read some of *Dr. Owen*. Feel almost a sacred reverence for his character. Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man! O that I might be led into Divine truth!” Then his thoughts turn to his own writing and preaching, “Christ, and his Cross be all my theme.”

“Surely I love his name, and wish to make it the centre in which all the lines of my ministry might meet! The Lord direct my way in respect to publishing! Surely he knows my end is to vindicate the excellency of his character, and his worthiness of being loved.”

October it’s Owen again but with little comment this time, “Rode to Northampton today for an exchange with Mr. R., but a poor day, except a little pleasure in reading some *Memoirs of the life of Dr. Owen*.” In the following two months, he is delving into the sermons of John Gill,

“Reading the above sermons all day today with some pleasure.” Then it’s Bradbury’s and Wilson’s sermons, some of which he says, “I find very profitable!” In January he records that he felt “very tender in reading more of Mr. Bunyan’s *Holy War*, particularly that part where the four captains agree to petition the King for more force.” He goes on, “that same month to read Cotton Mather’s *Student and Preacher* with some profit.” Also more of Bradbury’s Sermons, “with some profit.” He records in fact, that they showed him he was, “still the subject of wretched coldness and carnality of heart!”

The following month he read part of the life of Mr. John Janeway, “with much conviction and tenderness. O my life, how low to his!” “Feel desires to live like that excellent young man, whose life I read yesterday. But O how different is my spirit and life!” In July he records that he felt great tenderness, “in reading some remains of Mr. Mason’s, author of *Songs of Praise to Almighty God*. This appeared to be a life of prayer! But mine, O what is it?”

In February 1786, he records receiving *another* treatise written against him by Mr. Dan Taylor.

“It has rather tended to interrupt me in the work of the day, though I determined not to look into it till tomorrow. Monday I read the above piece. The author discovers an amiable spirit, and there is a good deal of plausibility in some things which he maintains. My mind has been much employed all the week in thinking on the above piece. The more I examine it, the more I perceive it is (though ingeniously wrought together) capable of a solid and effective reply.”

Then there’s a major break until January 1790, when he records he believes he has gained some ground in spiritual things. “I have read some of President Jonathan Edwards’s sermons, which have left a deep impression upon my heart. Have attended more constantly than heretofore to private prayer, and feel a little renewed strength.” But only two months later, he records that his progress had relapsed into indifference, “Yesterday I read President Jonathan Edwards’s 2 sermons *On the Importance of a Thorough Knowledge of Divine Truth*, from Hebrews 5:12. Felt this effect, a desire to rise earlier, to read more, and make the discovery of truth more a business.”

In 1791 his reading of Owen on Spiritual-mindedness had such an effect on him that he records,

“I feel afraid lest all should not be right with me at last! What I have of spirituality, as I account it, seems rather occasional than habitual.” He also records that he had been reading, “several Socinian writers, viz. *Lindsey, Priestley, Belsham, &c.*, and have employed myself in penning down thoughts on the moral tendency of their system. I felt an increasing aversion to their views of things, and feel the ground on which my hopes are built more solid than heretofore.”

There will be one other document included in the volume when it appears, namely Andrew Fuller’s Booklist, and it too is held as a manuscript in Bristol. The title page of the document says: ‘List of Books belonging to Andrew Fuller of Kettering, Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society.’ The Catalogue is in his own handwriting and is signed, ‘AG Fuller.’ He numbers the books as far as 203 then simply starts listing volumes by name. It is calculated that he lists at least 350 separate works.

There are works by: Eusebius; Charnock; Bunyan’s *Holy War, Pilgrims Progress*, and *The Temple*; Gill’s *Body of Divinity*, and his nine volumes of Exposition (which he marks as belonging to the church); *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*; Calvin’s *Institutes*, and his *Commentary on Acts And on the Four Gospels*; and Locke on *Human Understanding*.

There are many hymn books including, *Erskine’s Serif Songs*; *Faucet’s Hymns*; *Rippon’s Hymns*; *Watts’ Psalms and Hymns*; and *Stennets Hymns*.

There are various collections of sermons, including those by Priestly; Gill; Stanhope; Evans; Erskine; Bradbury; Bellamy; McLaurin; Brine; Spring’s *Sermons to Children*; 2 vols. of *Latimer’s Sermons*; Prince; Shepherd; and Ryland.

There are many books on history and theological debates, including a *History of the Waldenses* and a *History of the Moravians*. There are

various biographies, including a *Life of Brainerd*; a *Life of Watts*; and a *Life of Grub*.

There are books of illustrations, as well as various Atlases and geographies.

There are several books on the subject of baptism, including Booth's *Pedobaptism Examined*; An American volume of baptism; Hall on *Infant Baptism*; and Richards on *Baptism*.

There are several Lexicons, Dictionaries and Biblical language works, including *Brown's 2 Volumes*; *Chambers in 2 volumes*; *Taylor's Lexicon in 2 volumes*; Greek Lexicons; 2 Greek Testaments; 5 volumes of the Septuagint; Hebrew Grammars; and *Van Der Hoot's Hebrew Bible*.

He has many American books, including volumes by Dwight; Hopkins; Bellamy; Isaac Backus; and Smalley.

Then there are books mentioned several times by Jonathan Edwards, including his *History of Redemption*. There are many of Edwards' Sermons, including 8 on Justification. There is also his *Miscellanies*; *On The Will*; *On the Affections*; *Qualifications for Communion*; *Edwards against Chauncy*; and *Last End of God*. There is also a copy of Stoddard's *Safety of Appearing*, and Bellamy's *True Religion Delineated*.

There are volumes too, on prophecy including Winter on *Daniel's Weeks* and *Prophecies applicable to the French Revolution*.

Of course, there are also several books on Shorthand, which he clearly utilized in his own Journals.

He includes various books by Owen, including *Understanding the Scriptures*; *Against Biddle*; *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*; *On Justice*; and *On the Light of the Holy Spirit*.

Then there are numerous miscellaneous volumes, including Manning's *Diseases of Women*; a Large Family Bible (which must be priceless if his); Milton's *Paradise Lost*; Watts' *Improvement of the Mind*; Cicero's

*Orator*; 4 volumes of Hume's *Essays*; 3 volumes of Shaftesbury's *Character*; *Belsham Against Wilberforce*; and 2 Volumes of Paine's *Age of Reason*. He also lists many and varied pamphlets, including Dan Rice on 'Slavery'; Booth on "The Slave Trade"; "Thoughts on the Plan for Social Pay"; and Voltaire on 'Philosophy'.

He also lists what he terms 'Old mss and bundles of letters'. We can only wonder at the treasures that would have been included there.

***The Theology of the Westminster Standards: Historical Context and Theological Insights.* By J.V. Fesko. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014. 414 pp. \$12.99, Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-1433533112**

The Westminster Standards, a collection of Reformed confessional documents that includes the Westminster Confession of Faith (WFC) and the Larger (WLC) and Shorter Catechism (WSC), are regarded by many Reformed and Presbyterian churches as a magisterial presentation of Reformed doctrine. Indeed, many Baptist churches who follow the Second London Confession (1689)—a Baptist revision of the WFC—are also indebted to these works. However, due to the significant passage of time between our day and publication of the Westminster Standards (1643-1649), there is a great deal the modern reader can miss or misunderstand regarding the teachings of these works. The modern reader will likely miss the intricate theological controversies and historical currents that are shaping the nuanced language of these documents. Furthermore, reading these documents separated from their historical context has led to many instances of misreading them in light of later theological developments. Thus a need for a clear exposition of these documents that situates them in their historical context is needed. It is in response to this need that J. V. Fesko's has written *The Theology of the Westminster Standards*.

Having received his Ph.D. in theology from the University of Aberdeen, and serving as a professor of systematic and historical theology at Westminster Seminary in California, Fesko is well-qualified for providing an historical and theological introduction to the Westminster Standards. Fesko is also an ordained minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. These two callings, as a scholar and as a minister, come through in the present work where Fesko provides excellent scholarship but also makes it accessible and useful to the pastor and interested lay person. In addition to these credentials, Fesko also writes with a noticeable passion and affection for these documents. He shares in the Preface that the Westminster Standards served a significant role in his own theological formation and that it had been a desire of his to write a commentary on these works from his seminary days (1). Thus, in contrast to what could be a rather dry treatment of this subject,

Fesko's personal interest and fascination with these works makes for a book that is not only informative but enjoyable too.

Fesko's treatment fills an important space among the works that expound the theology of the Westminster Standards in focusing heavily on the primary literature surrounding the creation of the Westminster Standards. Fesko is able to take the reader back to the time period of these works and illuminate many of the historical events, trends and controversies that form the background for these works. The result is an exposition that is surprisingly fresh.

Fesko shows the divines were working to articulate the faith amidst several real dangers posed to a Reformation that was still being contended and to a Europe and a nation (England) that were in real battle over the very theology that was being debated in the assembly. The divines were often hammering out this confession with the sound of canon fire outside since England was in a civil war that was partly to decide the shape of Christianity for the nation. As Fesko states, "In early modernity, theology was no ivory tower endeavor—theology often wrote checks that were cashed in blood" (48). Fesko draws the reader into the suspense, drama, and high stakes that were involved in developing these documents. Fesko does an admirable job, not only explaining the theology of these documents, but also recreating something of their urgency.

The book is divided into 13 well-organized chapters. Chapter 1 presents the rationale for the book and the chapter 2 lays out the major historical and theological issues that give the background for the Westminster Assembly. After these two chapters, Fesko takes up one doctrine per chapter, following the order of the WCF. Though he does not treat every doctrine of the WCF (to do so would make the work exceedingly long), he does address the major doctrines. The book also includes a very useful annotated bibliography in which Fesko describes many of the primary works and their role in the formation of the Westminster Standards. This bibliography will be invaluable to any student wishing to continue their studies in this area.

Chapter 4, on "God and the Decree"—one of the more controversial chapters of the WCF—is a good illustration of how Fesko's use of the primary literature helps clarify misunderstandings and allows the theology of the Confession to be read afresh as "some of the most highly nuanced discussions about divine sovereignty and human

responsibility in early modern Reformed theology” (123). Fesko recounts the prominent criticisms of the Confession’s treatment of the decree by J. B. Torrance, Jan Rohls, and others, who charge this chapter of the WCP as evidence that it presents a Reformed theology marked by “speculative determinism” and “connected to logic rather than to God’s saving action in Christ” (97). Fesko shows these criticisms to be misguided and more applicable to later developments in Reformed theology and of the Enlightenment, by showing how careful the divines were in their articulation of the decree to preserve both God’s absolute sovereignty and the contingency of secondary causes.

In laying out the Confession’s theology on the decree, Fesko calls the reader to consider the document in its pre-Enlightenment context, in which “the affirmation of multiple agents acting with different motives and ends upon the same event was not at all troubling” (104). Fesko presents the thoughts of William Twisse, one of the moderators of the Assembly, as representative of the view of concurrence employed in the Confession. For Twisse God’s decree and man’s free acts work concurrently as seen by the numerous examples in Scriptures such as Cyrus letting the Jews return to Jerusalem and Christ’s bones not being broken on the cross. In these examples God’s decree determines infallibly what will occur, but these events also come to pass as the result of the free decisions and actions of the human agents involved (104). Thus, Fesko shows that Westminster did not enshrine a cold determinism but actually upheld the twin truths of God’s absolute sovereignty and human freedom.

Fesko is also able to demonstrate the Confession’s theological articulation which is “very specific in terms of what it rejects or teaches, but at other points it is brilliantly ambiguous or vague, thus allowing various theologians to assent to the document even though it might not advocate each theologian’s precise view” (28). This is seen with regard to the decree in that the WCF is “very specific” in rejecting the views of predestination based on either foreknowledge or middle knowledge (112), but is vague on other aspects of the decree, so that both infralapsarian and supralapsarian theologians could affirm the document (117-118).

Fesko also shows that the divines were far more well-read and studied in theology than what is often assumed. It is a popular opinion to view the divines as just spouting Calvinism. However, Fesko shows

that, instead of blind allegiance to John Calvin, many of the divines “saw their views as having roots not only in the Reformation but also in the Patristic and medieval periods” (123). Indeed, the Westminster Confession’s independence from Calvin is seen in several key areas. For example, Fesko states, “the Confession—unlike Calvin . . . argues that God permitted the fall; permission is a category that Calvin largely rejected” (110). Additionally, the WCF departs from Calvin regarding double predestination, instead the divines speak of God predestining the elect to salvation while simply passing over the reprobate (119). In speaking of these departures, Fesko makes the point that the divines were “Reformed theologians, not Calvinists” (123).

By now it is evident that this is a very insightful, carefully researched, and illuminating book on the theology of the Westminster Standards, nonetheless, there are a few areas where the present author wishes the book provided a bit more. One is an introduction to the divines themselves. Fesko mentions multiple theologians and divines by name as he presents the primary literature, but he rarely gives any biography for these theologians. If the reader is not familiar with the theologians who were part of the Westminster Assembly before picking up this book, he will likely become confused. Perhaps an appendix that listed the divines and a short biography of the major ones could be added in a subsequent edition.

Second, for the Baptist reader, it is unlikely that the discussion on baptism will seem adequate in explaining the WCF’s view of infant baptism. Though Fesko does a satisfactory job of showing how Westminster rejects the Catholic view of baptismal regeneration, and holds that baptism is a sign and seal of the covenant of grace that “is first and foremost the promise of God and second the promise of the one baptized” (324), the reasoning for the assembly’s rejection of the believer baptism view is largely obscure. This, however, may be due to the unfortunate fact that the “extant records are a bit sparse” (322) regarding the debates about baptism on the floor.

In summary, Fesko’s treatment of the Westminster Standards is an exceptional resource on the development and theology of these important works in the history of the church. The book is well-researched and well-written so that the theology and history of these documents comes to life and helps these documents speak again to a new generation. This text is highly recommended for candidates for ministry in a

Reformed church and for any pastor, student, scholar, or lay person who would like to know more about these works and about this important time in the history of the Reformation.

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***Women of the Word: How to Study the Bible with Both Our Hearts and Our Minds.* By Jen Wilkin. Wheaton: Crossway, 2014, 158 pp. \$12.99, Paperback. ISBN: 978-1-4335-4176-6.**

The Foreword to *Women of the Word* by Lead Pastor Matt Chandler of Village Church makes it apparent that the author of *Women of the Word*, Jen Wilkin, avidly studies and teaches the Bible at Village Church in Dallas, Texas, and that she desires women to apprehend and grasp the true meaning of the Scriptures through systematic study. Therefore, she has written a how-to-book—a method for digging into the depths of scriptural meaning—to enable and empower more women with God’s Word beyond the reach of her local church family.

Her approach to studying came from understanding her own misconceptions about the Bible and what it revealed. Rather than being a self-help book and guide for proper living, she discovered that the Bible was the revelation of God Himself. Therefore, she realized that the self-centered approach to Bible study, and what one could derive from it for oneself, was not the goal. The other area of misconception stemmed from a heart-centered or emotionally-driven response to reading the Bible. This approach did not properly engage the mind, but rather was motivated by how one felt about a biblical passage for deriving scriptural meaning for one’s daily life.

Based on these common misconceptions, a solid case is made for the need for Bible literacy. Wilkin names many of the unhelpful habits of Bible study that are currently in practice. Most of these bad habits advocate taking a smorgasbord approach by picking and choosing passages to study based on a felt need. This picking and choosing negates any sense of context, historicity of the passage or coherence to the

surrounding text. Instead of these insufficient processes of study, Wilkin advocates the study of a given book of the Bible by taking it in its original context so that one can grow in the knowledge of God, discern truth, and understand a true biblical worldview.

The rest of the book focuses on resolving biblical illiteracy with a series of chapters based on alliterative titles that define the method: "Purpose, Perspective, Patience, Process, and Prayer – the Five P's." Wilkin views "each of these as vantage points helping us to begin to grow in Bible literacy, training us in the exercise of mind-before-heart, God-before-self" (47). Each of these chapters is written in an engaging style with many scriptural, as well as personal, illustrations that demonstrate the heart of the message to the reader. The author breaks down rather technical terms into simplistic illustrations, borrowing from methods the reader may have accrued in other forms of schooling such as high school or college.

She rightly argues for the concept that the Bible is literature. As literature, the reader then explores the different genres of each book, enabling them to grapple with proper interpretation. Wilkin refers to this process as perspective. Like Kay Arthur, Wilkin asks her readers to ponder the "who, what, where, when, why, and how" questions that reveal reasons behind the literary and archaeological framework of any text to be studied. In fact, the majority of her method echoes a popular inductive study method that has been used with great success for decades. It appears to this reviewer that she might be trying to simplify the method and provide more compelling personal illustrations in order to make Bible study more appealing. Sometimes the succinctness of the actual study method is usurped by the plethora of personal, family-type illustrations that tend to overshadow the message Wilkin wishes to convey.

The book encompasses a passion for the study of God's Word, but only relates this type of study to the teaching of women. It seems that if one develops and believes in a superior method of Bible study, that one would desire to share it with the whole body of Christ, rather than making it gender-specific. However, since Wilkin has decided to be gender specific, this book would benefit most women who are new believers or new students of Bible study, all of whom would probably fall into the category of newlyweds or young mothers within the 25-40 year-old age range. In the chapter directed to teachers, she goes into copious

detail about how women should teach women and that their unique perspective enhances how the Bible can be learned more effectively than through a male teacher. Yet, it seems that if her method of following the “Five P’s” exemplifies a sound, biblical approach to unlocking understanding of the Bible, it should make no difference whether this method is taught by either male or female to either male or female students.

Overall, this book seems to echo what others have already taught and taught well. In fact, Wilkin cites most of the popular authors of Bible study programs in her short bibliography. The main difference in her approach relates to how she plans her studies and the homework that is assigned. She states, “This is where I differ from other approaches. I don’t intend the homework to teach, *per se*. I intend the homework primarily to aid in comprehension and to begin the process of personal interpretation and application. Strictly speaking, teaching is commentary. My goal for the homework is that it would prepare the hearts and minds of my students for the teaching time” (138). If that is the only difference between what has already been written by others, this book just appears as a simplistic, gender-specific reiteration.

However, *Women of the Word* truly contains many useful suggestions and ideas for Scripture study, and presents them in an engaging way that will engross the reader, possibly one that has not previously delved into a book on biblical interpretation. Jen Wilkin definitely illustrates her passion for serious Bible study, and serves as an inspiration not only to students of God’s Word, but to Bible teachers as well.

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***Hauerwas: A (Very) Critical Introduction.* By Nicholas M. Healy. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. 160 pp. \$23.00, Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-0802825995.**

Stanley Hauerwas is both well-known and widely respected as a theologian and ethicist. The scope and volume of Hauerwas's literary product makes the promise of a critical introduction to his work a hopeful prospect. Nicholas Healy's recent book is an attempt at scholarly critique, but it falls short of its potential. It gives a cursory introduction to Hauerwas with some significant critiques, but it does little to invite the reader into a deeper study of Hauerwas or to explore the nuances of his theology. The limitations of the project are apparent from the beginning. Healy notes, "I do not discuss all areas of his work, even those that are rightly judged to be important and especially insightful, such as his contributions in the field of medical ethics and his valuable essays on the disabled." (2) The length of the book serves as a warning that this is not a thoroughly argued analysis. Despite its weaknesses, however, Healy's book deserves attention.

Healy's book contains five chapters. The first is an introduction to the approach of the book, and brief instructions on how to read Hauerwas. Chapter Two begins to outline in more detail the central points of Hauerwas's approach. This chapter is mainly introductory and offers little by way of critique. The third chapter begins to situate Hauerwas in the field of modern theology. Healy demonstrates the distinctions between Hauerwas's theological approach and traditional approaches, which largely consist in the locus of the theologies. For Hauerwas, the center of theological study is not the person and nature of God, but the church. In this approach, Healy likens Hauerwas's approach to Friedrich Schleiermacher. This comparison with Schleiermacher is woven through the chapter, as Healy outlines some of the basic areas of interest for Hauerwas, including Scripture, authority, and the Gospel of Matthew. In Chapter Four, Healy develops his critique, which largely consists of unraveling the nature of the church. Healy argues that Hauerwas's theology fails if the church lacks a coherent identity as a contrast community. Empirically, such communities do not exist, as Healy demonstrates. Additionally, the nature of the church as a contrast community entails a dialectic with the surrounding culture that leads to a loss of the distinction between the two. Hauerwas's theory, according

to Healy, is a practical impossibility. The final chapter brings together the description and critique, as Healy attempts to demonstrate that Hauerwas's emphasis on practice undermines his theology. In this chapter Healy critiques Hauerwas in much the same categories he used in Chapter Three, which provides a measure of consistency.

Healy's task is not an easy one. Hauerwas has published a number of volumes, most of which are collections of essays. Throughout his work, Hauerwas does not present a neat system to critique—he is an occasional theologian. This is a worthwhile point to consider, but it does not excuse Healy's failure to create a more coherent framework by which to introduce the reader to Hauerwas's work; it is the role of the critic to systematize as best he can, even when the subject resists neat categories. While partially filling this lacuna, Healy does not engage Hauerwas's work in sufficient detail. As a first introduction to the work of Hauerwas, the reader can escape without a firm grasp of what Hauerwas wrote and when. This leaves the novice in the uncomfortable position of having to accept Healy's critiques without a clear picture of Hauerwas's views. If the reader is skeptical, or reads Hauerwas more favorably than does Healy, his light engagement with the texts is more likely to be met with resistance. Healy delivers on his promise to be very critical, but he does so in a lopsided manner. He claims to admire Hauerwas's work greatly, but this admiration is not reflected in the short volume. This book would have benefited by another approach, which could have highlighted both the critiques and the strengths of Hauerwas's theology. The chief deficiency of this volume is that its length and scope are inadequate for the task. Healy's criticisms are well-founded but underdeveloped. An introduction to such an important theologian warrants a much more developed critique, which is more than a book of this length can hope to offer.

The main contribution of this volume is that Healy's critiques of Hauerwas are accurate. Although the presentation leaves something to be desired, Healy reads Hauerwas well and points to legitimate areas of weakness. In particular, Healy highlights Hauerwas's methodological inconsistency, the insufficiency of his ecclesiology, and the failure to ground theology in the person of God. Healy's criticisms are valid and helpful for the reader that is new to Hauerwas. Healy's second significant contribution is his comparison between Hauerwas and Schleiermacher. Since Hauerwas is a post-liberal theologian and Schleiermacher is the

archetype of the liberal approach, Healy is bold to link Schleiermacher and Hauerwas. Still, such a comparison is helpful as it demonstrates some of the ways that both theologians attempt to be distinct from traditional theologies. Healy describes the relationship as analogous to the Marx-Hegel connection, where the later thinker borrows some thought structure but upends it. For instance, Schleiermacher emphasizes inner experience while Hauerwas emphasizes doing theology in the community of faith. Healy's assessment is helpful but a more complete critique would have included comparisons to more theologians.

Overall, Healy's book is a worthwhile read. Despite its weaknesses, a critical introduction to one of the most significant theologians of the early 21st century is a welcome addition to the literature of the field. Future introductions to Hauerwas's theology will need to interact with Healy, which makes this book a useful part of a scholar's library.

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***The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology.* Jeremy R. Treat. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014. 305pp., \$26.99. Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-0310516743**

In his first published work, author Jeremy R. Treat takes the reader on a broad survey of information while looking deeply into some of the specifics regarding the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. Treat is the Pastor for Equipping and Theology at Reality LA in Hollywood, California and he holds a PhD in Theology from Wheaton College. *The Crucified King*, being Treat's PhD dissertation in popular format, is a thorough and thought provoking look into the biblical and theological relationship between the Kingdom of God and the atoning crucifixion of Christ.

The Kingdom of God and the nature of the atonement have become extremely popular, and many times opposing, topics in academic

circles over the last several years. Treat displays the prevalence of both throughout the biblical account and Christian history. He ultimately opposes the "either/or" positioning of these two concepts. Treat's proposal brings him into contact with scholars on both sides of the issues pitting *Christus Victor* (emphasizing the cross of Christ as God's victory and reign) and penal substitution (emphasizing the redemption and justification of God's people) against one another.

Treat argues for the integration of the doctrines of the coming of the Kingdom of God and the penal substitutionary atonement of Christ. In the introduction Treat summarizes the entirety of his work by giving the layout and brief explanations of each chapter. Within the introduction he gives a list of terms or concepts he feels with which the reader should become familiar before delving into the work. His work investigates the reasons behind what he believes to be a false dichotomy between a robust view of the kingship of Christ and a strong understanding and appreciation of Christ as the "Suffering Servant". Through the structure of his work, and in the work itself, Treat also addresses the relationship between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology, arguing for an integrative relationship.

Treat begins his work explaining the biblical foundation for the coming of the Kingdom of God, not as separate from the cross of Christ but as actually having been accomplished through it. He argues, "Therefore, when Jesus said, "Thus it is written, that the Christ [Messiah] should suffer" (Luke 24:46), he was not merely proof-texting Isaiah 52:13-53:12...He was interpreting his life, death, and resurrection as the fulfillment of a pattern in the story of Israel, a pattern characterized by humiliation and exaltation, shame and glory, suffering and victory" (54). By tracing the themes of victory and suffering through the Old Testament, Treat surveys the unfolding of God's redemptive story, beginning from the Fall through the history of the people of Israel.

This track through the Old Testament account culminates for Treat in the book of Isaiah. While some present the humiliation and exaltation of Christ as two mutually exclusive stations within His ministry, Treat argues the former as actually the organ through which the latter is accomplished, "[Within] the unfolding story of Israel...Isaiah not only clarifies the seed's suffering as atoning and the victory as royal, but that the royal victory will come through atoning suffering" (66). In fact, Treat attributes the disconnecting of the Suffering Servant and the

Reigning King to 19th century German historical criticism, which dissected Isaiah into multiple portions with several different sources, ultimately separating the Messianic King of chapters 1-39 with the Suffering Servant of chapters 40-55. His argument culminates by portraying the Old Testament as preparing the way for Jesus as the Messiah King.

For Treat, the dual nature of Christ's reign as the Crucified King is clearly seen in the book of Mark. He contends that it could seem that Mark first portrays Jesus as the victorious and powerful, miracle-working King and then in the second half displays Him as seemingly defeated in His crucifixion and death. However, through solid exegesis, Treat reveals the message to be the "kingdom by 'way' of cross" (88). Important to note within this discussion is Treat's insistence that we not neglect the resurrection of Christ but rather place it within this framework of understanding, "[The] cross is the establishment of the kingdom and the resurrection is its inauguration" (140).

In order to include the discipline of Systematic Theology and to delve deeper into grasping the concepts inherent in the discussion set forth in his work, Treat takes the reader through a study on the particular concepts of Christology, atonement, and kingdom and how these three doctrines intersect with one another. Treat's nearly exhaustive interaction with the realm of theology ranges from the great Medieval Theologians, such as Augustine, who corroborate his findings, to the Magisterial Reformers, such as Martin Luther, who are also given as support for his thesis, to modern day theologians, such as N.T. Wright, in whom he finds much to applaud and yet differs with on a few key points (247). The end result is that Treat demonstrates a thoroughness of research through his interaction with a broad range of theologians from both sides of the discussion.

The entire discussion within the Systematic Theology section of the book concludes with the issue of the false dichotomy between the doctrines of Christus Victor and penal substitutionary atonement. Treat argues that some within the more Reformed tradition have emphasized penal substitution to the neglect of Christ as King, whereas the opposite is true for theologians such as N.T. Wright. However, Treat argues for what could be called a "Middle-Way" that maintains integrity with the biblical testimony. This "Middle-Way" can be seen as Christus Victor by way of penal substitution or, in Treat's words, "The cross is neither the

failure of Jesus' messianic ministry nor simply the prelude to his royal glory, but the apex of his kingdom mission--the throne from which he rules and establishes his kingdom" (173).

Treat's stated purpose is found in the answer to a question found on the first page of the introduction, "What is the biblical and theological relationship between the coming of the kingdom of God and the atoning death of Christ on the cross?" (25) In approximately 250 pages Treat gives a thorough and compelling answer through his interaction with the disciplines of Biblical and Systematic Theology. He offers insightful and in-depth exegesis, evidencing a more than ample grasp of the relevant biblical material as well as a broad and, simultaneously, penetrating study of both historical and current theology and displaying a well-researched thesis. Treat demonstrates keen academic insight while simultaneously displaying a Pauline heart for the gospel, "God accomplished his mission of restoring his creation through Jesus as he was enthroned as king on the cross. The kingdom of God comes in power, but the power of the gospel is Christ crucified" (253).

For those studying the Kingdom of God, the Atonement of Christ, or Christocentric preaching, Treat's work stands as a welcome addition to these fields and one with which all students of these particular topics should interact. This work would be a welcome addition to any study regarding the gospel of Christ or the nature of the Kingdom of God. While the reader need not have proficiency in Greek or Hebrew, the amount of information given and the scope of interaction with current and historical theology is definitely not geared toward the casual reader's interest. *The Crucified King* is a refreshing and welcome addition to biblical and theological studies and is therefore highly recommended.

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*Reason, Religion, and Natural Law*. Edited by Jonathan A. Jacobs. Oxford: Oxford Press, 2014. 284 pp. \$78.00, Hardcover. ISBN-13: 978-0199767175.

*Reason, Religion, and Natural Law* is a compilation of essays focusing on the “relations between natural law theorizing and the theological considerations” from Plato to Spinoza (3). The editor of the book, Jonathan A. Jacobs, writes, “[T]his volume is meant to contribute to understanding crucial developments in the history of natural law theorizing rather than the place and authority of religious considerations in political life” (8). Hence, *Reason, Religion, and Natural Law* examines the moral aspect of natural law versus the political.

The articles in the book stem from the presentations at a two-day seminar funded by the Earhart Foundation. The essays are grouped into four sections: “Ancient Origins,” “Medieval Jewish Philosophy,” “Medieval Christian Philosophy,” and “Spinoza and the Transition to Modern Thought.” Each section has works that correlate specific philosophers and thinkers to natural law—investigating the philosopher’s relation (if any) to natural law.

In chapter 1, “The Rule of Reason in Plato’s *Laws*,” Fred D. Miller seeks to elucidate Plato’s correlation of “the rule of reason” with ethical decisions. According to Miller, natural law is deducing what is moral according to human nature. Thus, Plato, not Aristotle, first adumbrated natural law theory. Given that the rule of reason regarding human virtue is central to Plato’s thought, Miller seems to be right. Or perhaps it is best to claim that Plato’s writings are pregnant with natural law overtones, yet the concepts are fully birthed with Aristotle.

In chapter 2, titled “Stoic Eudaimonism and the Natural Law Tradition,” Jacob Klein discusses the similarities between the Stoic eudaimonic tradition and the Greek thought on natural law. He argues “that the Stoics defend a eudaemonist ethics that requires conformity to the rational order of nature as a condition of realizing the best form of life for human beings” (59). Hence, according to Klein, the Stoic tradition has some interesting correlations with medieval natural law.

Chapters 3 and 4, though interesting, seem irrelevant to corpus of the philosophical discussion on natural law; however, the authors work to convince the reader otherwise. Chapters 3 and 4 show the concurrence of natural law in the Jewish philosophical tradition.

“Natural Law in Judaism,” written by Tamar Rudavsky, is a work that argues “the Jewish understanding of natural law fits into this extended narrative” (84). By appealing to the works of Moses Maimonides, Rudavsky labors to marry Jewish thought with the medieval tradition of natural law. In “The Reasons of the Commandments: Rational Tradition without Natural Law,” Jonathan A. Jacobs counters Rudavsky’s article. He claims the Jewish understanding of commandments is not synchronous with a proper and complete understanding of the medieval view of natural law.

Chapters 5-7 seem to be the heart of the book. In chapter 5, Eileen C. Sweeney writes on the innate aspect of natural law. A chief discussion among philosophers is the convergence of natural law understood innately and the individual’s ability to determine and follow the moral course. At what point does sin erode the individual’s ability to understand and perform the right moral action? According to Sweeney, Aquinas is neither a Rousseau nor a Calvin (or Aristotle or Cicero). Aquinas focuses more on the ability to perform the right action, rather than just knowing the right action. One may not choose the right action, but one has access to knowing the right action. This, claims Sweeney, is one of the problems with his natural law theory.

Chapter 6, written by Anthony J. Lisska, is a work that compares the use of right reason (i.e., *rectio ratio*) by Thomas Aquinas and William of Ockham. Some contemporary Ockham scholars have argued that Ockham cannot be labeled an unfettered voluntarist, and indeed should be seen as close to Aquinas’ rationalist natural law ideas. To investigate such a claim, Lisska methodically elucidates both Aquinas and Ockham’s writings on the use of right reason. In the end, Lisska thinks that some contemporary scholars have been too quick in removing Ockham from a voluntarist stance.

In chapter 7 the Duns Scotus scholar, Richard Cross, attempts “to give an account of Scotus’s metaethics, focusing on what Scotus himself regards as the most important feature of the system, namely, the different attitudes God takes to various moral norms, and the ways in which God is motivated to take these attitudes” (177). To draw out Scotus’s view on constructivism and divine motivation, Cross contrasts it with Aquinas’ view of moral justice.

Chapters 8 and 9, the last two chapters, wade into the bog of Spinozan compatibility with natural law ethics. According to Jon Miller,

the author of chapter 8, “Spinoza and Natural Law”, there is an “ongoing dispute among Spinoza scholars regarding how his [Spinoza’s] ethics relate to natural law ethics” (201). Miller argues that there is both harmony and disharmony between the two. His final assessment is somewhat controversial in Spinozan scholarship, but quaint: the compatibility of Spinozan ethics and natural law ethics is solely dependent upon how one interprets natural law ethics.

*Prima facie*, Douglas B Rasmussen and Douglas J Den Uyl in chapter 9, “Agent Centeredness and Natural Law”, make the same claim as Miller. The chapter seeks to find if there is any symmetry between Thomistic natural law and Spinozan agent centeredness. Ultimately, the authors claim that Aquinas’ ethic is best understood as God-centered rather than agent-centered. Conversely, they argue, Spinoza has a robust view of agent centeredness. Hence, according to Rasmussen and Den Uyl, there is little symmetry to be found between the two.

It is quite obvious from the chapter descriptions that one would be much better served to have a working, detailed knowledge of natural law ethics and the representative philosophers discussed while reading this volume. This is not a failing of the authors or the book. Indeed, the intent of this project was to advance the scholarly achievement of natural law work. I believe the authors have achieved their goals. It may even be fair to claim a few have taken natural law to new realms of discourse that have yet to be fully developed—even in the given works. One of the significant strengths of the book is that it brings natural law into a contemporary dialogue, while at least alluding to the ancient conception.

Furthermore, one should not approach the volume with ossified views of Thomistic natural law or the works of the classical and modern philosophers. At times it may appear as if the authors have distorted or contoured the traditional understanding of natural law to fit a mold it was never intended to fit. The problem lies in the various definitions attributed to natural law. Eileen C. Sweeney writes, “The divisions over how to interpret Thomas Aquinas’s account of natural law cut deep, and range broadly up to and including whether it is grounded in nature and whether it is law...” (133). Thus, the authors (and the readers by extension) are simply caught in the quagmire of philosophical interpretation. Perhaps (and this may be the present author’s opinion alone) one would find more joy in the work, if he or she were to immerse

him or herself solely in the authors' arguments and parley, while only giving a congenial nod to the conventional insight of natural law.

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